

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Song of Solomon 2: 14-15

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Song of Songs chapter 2, verses 14 to 15.

A saint begins to love the Lord and has passed through the first stage of spiritual growth. He has had some subjective experiences and has indeed developed a measure of spiritual life, cultivating spiritual gifts and beginning to serve in the entrusted ministry. These initial gains are, of course, very precious, and he values them greatly. However, the difficulty lies in his unwillingness to let go. Holding tightly to good things can prevent you from pursuing better things. Because of this mindset, unknowingly, a thick wall has formed between him and the Lord. This wall separates him from the Lord—he is inside the wall, and the Lord is outside.

The Lord leaps over mountains and hills to come to the wall and opens a window of grace, but the saint puts lattice on it. He knows the Lord in his own way, unwilling to be adjusted or changed. The Lord gently calls him to arise and go with Him, for the winter has passed, and spring has come—a time of renewal. The flowers bloom, the birds sing, and it is the season for pruning the vines. The fig tree's fruit is ripening, and the vines are blossoming, giving forth fragrance. The Lord calls again tenderly, urging him to arise and go with Him.

Verse 14: "O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely."

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the cliff. Yesterday, we said that Christ is the Rock, and when struck, living water flows from its clefts to quench the thirst of many. In the clefts of the rock, there is space for hiding, where

God placed Moses, covering his face. Only after God passed by and removed His hand could Moses see God's back.

The cleft of the rock should be the safest place, a place of intimacy with the Lord. Unfortunately, this saint, in the cleft of the rock, has found a hiding place for himself. This is not prepared or ordained by God but is something he has sought for his own benefit, to satisfy his own needs, in his own way, like the Edomites, finding a comfortable refuge for himself.

Dear brothers and sisters, when we consecrate ourselves to follow the Lord, at the beginning, we truly do not realize how mixed our motives are. Having consecrated ourselves, we should surrender our autonomy and fully obey the Lord's arrangements—go when He says go, stop when He says stop. I believe every saint serving the Lord full-time has faced struggles. When personal interests are at stake—whether wealth, reputation, or status—can we still boldly follow the Lord's leading?

The Lord knows we are imperfect, yet He still calls us His dove. This is both encouragement and a reminder to have spiritual vision, to focus solely on the Lord. He is on the cliff, in a transcendent heavenly place, having prepared a secret place for us where there is no human disturbance, a place of rest with Christ's abundant heavenly supply.

At this moment, the Lord says to him, let me see your face, let me hear your voice. The Lord takes a humble posture, making a loving plea to this saint hiding behind the wall. The Lord is the King, with heavenly authority and glory. Not only did He empty Himself completely during redemption, becoming a lowly servant and giving His life as a ransom for many, but even today, seated in the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest, He intercedes for us before the Father.

When a saint becomes stagnant, the Lord still humbles Himself, saying to him, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely. At this stage, the saint's spiritual measure is small, and his spiritual experiences are shallow, hardly worthy of such praise. But what the Lord sees is

not his current state but the potential of life in every saint and the height he can reach—that is the reality every saint should attain in eternity.

The Lord is not bound by time; He is eternal, and He views every saint with an eternal perspective. If we can often step out of our current circumstances and respond to the Lord's plea with an eternal perspective, we can run swiftly after Him, and our spiritual life can grow by leaps and bounds.

The word “face” does not merely refer to physical beauty but also includes a pleasant demeanor and radiant expression. The same word is used in Genesis 12:11 to describe Sarah's beautiful appearance, in Genesis 24:16 to describe Rebekah's exceedingly beautiful appearance, and in Genesis 29:17 to describe Rachel's lovely and beautiful appearance. God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their wives—Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel—were all beautiful in appearance. A saint's sweet voice and lovely face are not external traits but the fruit of the Spirit produced after the growth of inner spiritual life, manifesting outwardly as a sweet voice and a lovely face.

Verse 15: “Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.”

This is a command without a clear subject, spoken in a forceful tone: catch us the foxes. It is not entirely clear who is speaking. The verb “catch” is in the masculine plural, so most commentators believe it is the bridegroom speaking. Some think it could be bystanders, perhaps the brothers mentioned in 1:6, while others believe it is the bride. The bride, spoiled and with a princess-like attitude, speaks to the bridegroom in a commanding tone, lacking the gentleness a woman should have—a reflection of this stage of spiritual life.

Why are there so many interpretations? Precisely because the tone of this verse is abrupt. The bridegroom was just pleading humbly with the bride; how could he suddenly switch to a commanding tone? Similarly, the bride's words after this verse

are full of love, inconsistent with a command. This may be why some suggest a third party, such as church leaders or the brothers.

However, the previous dialogue has been between the bride and bridegroom, so there is no reason to introduce a third party here. I am not entirely certain, so today, I will treat this as the bridegroom's words, concluding this stage of his speech to the bride. Next week, when we read the bride's words to the bridegroom, I will take a different perspective, treating it as the bride's speech.

This is the challenge of interpreting poetry—there is much room for interpretation from different angles. This is also what makes poetry captivating, as its ambiguity allows for varied meanings based on context. Thus, there is no right or wrong in interpreting poetry, only differences in the depth of insight, which depends on the spiritual measure of the recipient. May we all approach it with an open heart, receive it, bring what we receive before God for guidance, and choose the interpretation that best suits us.

If this is the Lord speaking, perhaps He realizes that His humble plea has not moved the saint hiding behind the wall. Thus, He adopts a sterner tone, directly pointing out the problem: catch us the foxes. Foxes are destructive, especially in vineyards, where reckless foxes cause significant damage by running rampant.

Who are the foxes? Some say they are Satan's messengers. In fact, foxes live in dens, and in the previous verse, we said the cleft of the rock refers to the den of the Edomites, chosen by the flesh. The Lord is reminding this saint that because his flesh has not been dealt with, he has found a den for himself. When the flesh emerges, it becomes a fox, damaging the vineyard. Thus, the Lord reminds and even commands him to catch the foxes, meaning to crucify the flesh. Galatians 5:24 says, "And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." Not only must the flesh be crucified, but its passions and desires must also be nailed to the cross.

Let us read the next phrase: "the little foxes that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Little foxes are mischievous and disruptive, plucking blossoms in

the vineyard, preventing the vines from bearing fruit. If foxes represent our flesh, little foxes refer to the passions and desires of the flesh.

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists fifteen works of the flesh: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” If we are honest, we must admit that many little foxes remain in us, and these are the primary reasons our Christian lives fail to bear fruit. The Lord leaps over mountains to come to the wall, issuing a resurrection call to the saint hiding within. The winter has passed, spring has come—arise and go with Him. The second stage of spiritual growth is about to begin; he can no longer hide behind the wall. The Lord clearly tells him that to move forward and grow, he must follow His footsteps.

The time for pruning the vines has come. By hiding in his self-chosen den, indulging the flesh and its desires, he cannot bear fruit. A Christian’s testimony is forged through trials, remaining in affliction for a long time, receiving the Lord’s heavenly supply. The fragrance of the Lord’s presence is imparted to him, enabling him to emit a sweet aroma. This is the process every saint must undergo to live out a testimony of life. The Lord calls us to crucify both the flesh and its passions and desires, for the redemptive work completed on the cross can address all our difficulties.

Dear brothers and sisters, tomorrow is Good Friday, so our daily Bible reading will pause for a day. May we all reflect on what Christ accomplished for us on the cross, especially the seven sayings He spoke in His immense suffering—three directed toward humanity and four toward God. Let us review last year’s daily reading from Mark 15:33-38 and give thanks to the Lord together.

Let us pray: Dear Lord, thank You for accomplishing redemption for us on the cross! Even when we did not know You and were Your enemies, You completed salvation. In each of our life experiences, You sent messengers of the gospel to help us

recognize our unworthiness. You granted us the wisdom to be saved, enabling us to accept You as our lifelong Savior.

But Your grace does not stop there. As in the second stage of Song of Songs, when our spiritual growth stagnates, and we remain in our self-chosen dens, You personally issue a loving invitation, calling us in resurrection to arise and go with You. The time for pruning the vines has come, to bear more fruit, to produce the fruit of the Spirit in us, and to forge the testimony of the fig tree in our lives. Lord, help us, soften our hearts, that we may promptly respond to Your call and follow You forward. Bless my life. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ.