

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

Song of Songs 3: 11 - 4: 1

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. We'll continue to read Song of Songs, and today we will read Chapter 3 verse 11 to Chapter 4 verse 1.

The journey of spiritual life growth in the second stage is, in principle, always in the wilderness. This is where God shepherds His people, and also where He perfects them. Moses was shepherded by God in the wilderness for forty years, and through that process, he became ready to take up God's commission: to lead the Israelites out of Egypt's slavery and toward the Promised Land of Canaan.

After the Israelites left Egypt, they also entered the wilderness, where under Moses' leadership, God shepherded them for forty years. In the end, it was the new generation of Israelites that was able to follow Joshua into the good land of Canaan. Similarly, this lover of the Lord—this saint—during the second stage of spiritual experience, was also shepherded, adjusted, worked on, and perfected by the Lord in the wilderness. Now he comes up from the wilderness, and he is a completely transformed person. So much so that the seasoned saints in the church marvel and exclaim: "Who is this coming up like pillars of smoke!"

Some mature saints even liken him to the Lord's couch—a resting place where the Lord can repose at night. He has become a place of rest for the Lord because he is joined to sixty valiant men, each one expert in warfare, each with a sword at his side, ready for battle. The sword at the waist can refer to the scabbard, but the Hebrew word for "waist" here can also refer to the thigh—that is, the warriors had a second short sword strapped to their thigh for close-range combat, prepared for nighttime attacks from the enemy.

Some other mature saints liken him to the Lord's palanquin; it is the means by which the Lord moves during the day. And this palanquin is made by the Lord Himself. The body of the palanquin is made of cedar wood from Lebanon, indicating that he, like

Christ, possesses a noble character in his humanity. The pillars are of silver, signifying that his old man has been redeemed, and only in his new man can the humanity full of Christ's virtues be manifested. The base is of gold, showing that he has been redeemed. Now, through the growth of spiritual life, he has begun to partake of God's nature—God's eternity and God's faithfulness—enabling him to bear the Lord's commission. The seat is of purple; through the Lord's dispensing, he has grown into a kingly function, able to provide rest for the Lord. The seat is covered with the love of the daughters of Jerusalem.

Although he himself has grown into a mature stature, he still maintains close fellowship with all the saints. Because he loves the Lord, he draws a group of saints to run after the Lord together with him. He has grown into the glorious seat of honor for the Lord. When the Lord is seated in rest, what He enjoys is the love of all the saints toward Him. A group of mature saints in the church have a very fitting description for this saint who comes up from the wilderness: he is a pillar of smoke, he is a couch, and he is also a palanquin. This leads to the praise of him in verse 11.

Verse 11: "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and see King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, the day of the gladness of his heart."

This verse is quite difficult to understand. First of all, who exactly is giving this praise? In this verse, the saint who came from the wilderness is compared to the crown that Solomon wears on his head, and people are called to go out and look. Therefore, it should not be the Lord speaking, nor the saint himself speaking, but rather the ones speaking are likely the same group of mature saints who were speaking earlier. This statement is a conclusion to the preceding description. There are many different interpretations among Bible expositors; what I am offering here is also just an interpretation. I personally believe it is the Holy Spirit who has heard the words of these mature saints and is responding to them.

It begins with, "O daughters of Zion." Previously, it only mentioned the daughters of Jerusalem. We know that refers to the saints who have been saved by grace

together on the foundation of peace. So then, who are the daughters of Zion mentioned here? We know that in Jerusalem there is the temple, which is the place where the people of Israel praise, worship, and give thanks to God—that is, the place where every saint today may come to worship the Lord. Therefore, the daughters of Jerusalem refer to the many saints who have received grace and salvation.

Zion is where David's royal palace was located; it symbolizes the place where the Lord can find rest. The city of Zion is adjacent to the city of Jerusalem, on its southern side, and it is 36 feet higher in elevation than Jerusalem. Therefore, the daughters of Zion are in a higher place and represent a place where God can rest. The daughters of Zion typify the overcomers in the church. Previously, it was the mature saints in the church life who were speaking. Based on their past experiences, they described the saint who came up from the wilderness as being like a pillar of smoke, like a couch, like a palanquin. What they described was beautiful and fitting.

But now the Holy Spirit is speaking—to the overcomers among them. It says, "O daughters of Zion, go forth and behold Solomon." The Holy Spirit is calling upon the overcomers among them to go out and see King Solomon, and to look closely. We know that King Solomon is a type of the Lord Himself. It turns out the Lord is coming up from the wilderness together with this saint. From a distance, what could be seen was a pillar of smoke, a couch, and a palanquin. But now they are drawing nearer, and we can see more clearly. So the Holy Spirit reminds them to behold the crown that Solomon wears on His head.

The overcomers in the church have a higher knowledge of the Lord, a deeper appreciation, more surpassing experiences, and a more complete obedience; only they are able to appreciate the crown upon King Solomon's head. Solomon is a king, so of course he has a royal crown on his head. And these overcomers—because of their matured life, rich experiences, and manifest function—will also receive crowns when Christ returns.

In the New Testament, there are three types of crowns mentioned for the overcomers. The first crown is called the crown of life. In James 1:12, it says,

“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.” Therefore, the crown of life is promised by the Lord to those who love Him and are willing to endure various trials, so that their life may mature.

The second crown is called the crown of glory. In 1 Peter chapter 5, Peter exhorts the elders among the saints to shepherd God’s flock according to His will. In 1 Peter 5:4, it says, “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” The crown of glory is what the Lord has promised to those who faithfully serve in the church according to God's will.

The third crown is called the crown of righteousness. In 2 Timothy 4:6–8, Paul says, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

The crown of righteousness is what the Lord gives to those who love Him more than their own lives—the martyrs; because they were faithful unto death and kept God’s word, God gives them the crown of righteousness. Each of these overcomers has their own crown, and here the Holy Spirit especially reminds them to observe that the Lord also has a crown on His head. But this crown is not Solomon’s royal crown, because the following words say, "on the day of his espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart, his mother crowned him."

This sentence is truly difficult. Why do we say it is not the king’s crown? Because a royal crown is received when he ascends the throne, passed down from his father. But this crown is received on the day of his espousals. The Chinese Union Version (CUV) translates it as "wedding feast," but the King James Version (KJV) translates it as espousals, or betrothal. Personally, I believe betrothal is more fitting, because Christ's marriage to the church as His bride takes place at His return, and the church must be fully prepared and adorned—only then will there be the marriage feast.

This saint has not yet completed the journey of growth in life, but now he has entered the third stage—he is already quite experienced and mature. The Lord is ready to establish a betrothal with him, and at the time when the Lord is joyful in His heart over this engagement, his mother places a crown on him. This is a word spoken by the Holy Spirit to the overcoming saints, calling them to go out and look at the crown on the Lord's head. And is not that very crown the saint who came up from the wilderness? Now he is to be betrothed to the Lord; he has become the Lord's joy, and he has also become the crown upon the Lord's head—how exceedingly glorious this is! He has become the Lord's boast. A mature, seasoned, and deeply experienced saint can become the crown of the Lord. This expression is very special.

Paul also had a similar expression regarding the saints in Thessalonica. In 1 Thessalonians 2:19–20, Paul says: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy." Paul had only stayed in Thessalonica for three weeks before suffering persecution and being forced to leave. His heart remained burdened for that city, so he wrote a letter encouraging the saints in Thessalonica to stand firm until the Lord returns. They would then become Paul's boast—they would become Paul's crown.

Paul labored among the Thessalonian saints, and if they could stand firm, they would become his crown. In the same way, the Holy Spirit worked in the life of this saint who came up from the wilderness. The Holy Spirit arranged all the aspects of Christ's grace within this saint, making him not only a pillar of smoke, a bed, and a palanquin, but also testifying that he has entered into a betrothal with Christ. He becomes the crown of the Lord, placed on the Lord's head by the Holy Spirit at the time of the betrothal. This brings great joy to the Lord's heart. Therefore, the Holy Spirit specially tells the overcoming saints to go out and look at the crown on the Lord's head, because they too will one day become the crown on the Lord's head.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have all received grace and been saved—we have become the daughters of Jerusalem. But we must go further, continue to grow, and take another step forward to become the daughters of Zion, the overcomers in the

church. At the time when we are betrothed to the Lord, we too shall become the crown upon His head.

When is the moment of our betrothal to the Lord? In chapter 2, verse 16, we see that this saint realizes, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." At that moment, he recognizes that the Lord belongs to him—that the Lord preserves him, gives grace to him, and perfects him. And that he belongs to the Lord—that part is conditional. Now, having entered into a betrothal with the Lord, he declares that he is the Lord's.

This world is not worthy to possess him; sin cannot entangle him; the flesh cannot dominate him—he belongs to the Lord. He is one who willingly accepts all kinds of restrictions for the sake of the Lord. He is dead to the world, dead to sin, and dead to the flesh. Such a declaration brings his relationship with the Lord into an entirely new chapter.

Chapter 4 follows immediately after the Holy Spirit speaks to the daughters of Zion. Then, the Lord Himself begins to speak—He begins to praise the saint who has become betrothed to Him. From verses 1 to 5 of chapter 4, the Lord's praise is very specific and very real. It starts from the head and moves downward to the waist, covering a total of eight features: eyes, hair, teeth, lips, mouth, temples, neck, and breasts.

Don't underestimate these praises—they reveal that these parts of the saint's being have now been possessed by the Lord. He has surrendered his sovereignty over them. He can no longer use his eyes, his hair, or his teeth at his own discretion or according to his personal preferences. That means he no longer decorates or expresses himself freely through these parts, because their ownership has been handed over to the Lord.

Of course, he is still not perfect at this point. Therefore, the Lord's praise stops at the breasts; the parts below the waist are not mentioned yet. That represents areas in which he still needs to grow in the future. Today, we will read only Song of Songs 4: 1.

Verse 01: “Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove’s eyes behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.”

At the beginning, the Lord says, “Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair!” In the Hebrew original, there are actually two interjections of “Behold! Behold!” that are not translated in some versions. A more direct rendering from the Hebrew would be: “Behold! You are truly beautiful, my beloved; behold! You are truly beautiful.” The Lord is speaking with admiration, loudly proclaiming His praise—this is a declaration intended to draw the attention of others: “Look! The one I love is truly beautiful!” Then, the Lord begins to praise her, starting with her eyes: “Your eyes are like doves behind your veil.” The dove’s eyes signify this saint’s singular devotion and purity toward the Lord, so much so that she is full of spiritual vision.

In the first stage, the Lord had already praised her eyes, saying they were like doves’ eyes. Now that she has entered into a betrothal with the Lord, His first praise is once again for her eyes being like doves’—but now “behind the veil.” This means she has covered her face with a veil—she has hidden herself, closed herself off. Previously, her heart toward the Lord was singular and pure, but it was not veiled. The world could still see her, Satan could still observe her; and if she faltered even slightly, she was vulnerable to being tempted or lured by the world and the enemy.

But now, she belongs only to the Lord. She has closed herself off to everything that is not the Lord. She even hides her pure and singular eyes behind the veil. Previously, the saints in the church might have praised her single-hearted devotion to the Lord. They might have said she was like a pillar of smoke, leading the church forward; or like a bed, giving the Lord rest; or like a palanquin, moving in union with the Lord. But none of these praises matter to her anymore. Her only desire now is to please the Lord. And so, she veils herself. She hides from all else. She belongs wholly to Him.

The second praise from the Lord is: “Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead.” Hair represents a person’s ability and glory. Samson was a

mighty judge raised up by God to resist the Philistines. Samson had a fatal flaw—he was lustful. He revealed the source of his strength to the harlot Delilah. In Judges 16:17, it says: “Then he told her all his heart, and said to her, ‘No razor has ever come upon my head, for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man.’” Later, Delilah betrayed Samson and had his hair shaved off. His strength then left him, and he was captured by the Philistines. Therefore, hair represents a person’s ability.

In Proverbs 20:29, it says: “The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray head.” And in 1 Corinthians 11:15, it says: “But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.” Here, it speaks of her hair being like a flock of goats lying down on Mount Gilead. We can imagine the slopes of Mount Gilead, lush and green with grass, and a large flock of goats lying down peacefully on the grassy hillsides. From a distance, it looks like long hair draped over the shoulders. This tells us that she hides her own ability and glory, and lies down resting beside Mount Gilead.

Goats were used by the Israelites as sin offerings, which means he knows there is still a sinful nature within himself, so he dares not take the lead. He hides himself and lets himself rest beside God’s appointed Mount Gilead. Dear brothers and sisters, seasoned saints will always hide their own abilities and glory, allowing themselves to be fully submissive to the Lord and to rest in Him. For example, if a brother marries a capable sister, and this sister wants to show her abilities in everything, if she takes control in all matters, the home will certainly not be a place of rest. Therefore, wise sisters will hide themselves, even appropriately pretend to be “foolish,” so that they may submit to the brother’s leading. Even when the brother makes mistakes, she can give him appropriate space to realize and correct them on his own. In this way, the home will be filled with an atmosphere of harmony. And the brother will eventually realize the sister’s wisdom, and will learn to consult her before making decisions, so that he may avoid repeating his mistakes and taking unnecessary detours. Therefore, the Bible teaches wives to submit to their husbands—this is a very practical truth.

This saint who has entered into a marriage covenant with the Lord submits to the Lord—his hair is like a flock of goats, lying down on Mount Gilead. Mount Gilead is a special place; it is the place where Jacob made a covenant with Laban. Jacob went to Padan Aram and served Laban there for twenty years: fourteen years for his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and another six years for his own possessions. Because God blessed Jacob, his flocks increased greatly, and Laban's attitude toward him changed—it was no longer as favorable as before. So Jacob took the opportunity, while Laban went to shear his sheep, to secretly depart from Padan Aram with his two wives, his two maidservants, his eleven sons, and all his flocks, intending to return to the land of Canaan. When Laban found out, he set out in anger with a group of men to capture Jacob.

On Mount Gilead, Laban caught up with Jacob. But the night before, God appeared to Laban in a dream and warned him not to speak either good or bad to Jacob—he was to let Jacob go. Then Laban and Jacob made a covenant on Mount Gilead. In Genesis 31:51–53, it says: "Then Laban said to Jacob, 'Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us.'"

This covenant testified to God's protection of Jacob. It also reminds us that we do not need to rely on our own striving and effort—God will protect us. If we learn to submit, if our hair is like a flock of goats lying on Mount Gilead, then all we need to do is rest and lie down—God can protect us. This saint has entered a marriage covenant with the Lord, and the Lord's praise of him becomes very practical.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for such a glorious grace. When we are able to declare that our entire life belongs to You, that we have no other desires outside of You, no other pursuits apart from You—when we are willing to enter into such a covenant with You—we shall become the crown upon Your head. You will praise our eyes as dove's eyes behind the veil, and our hair as a flock of goats lying down on Mount Gilead. Lord, we all long for such a glorious vision. Help me; grant me mercy and grace, that I may learn these lessons—to put You first in all things; to not strive

for myself, nor seek for myself, but to know that all You have prepared for me is the best. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ, Amen!