

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

Song of Songs 4: 12-15

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time again for our Bible reading. We will continue reading Song of Songs chapter 4, and today we will read verses 12-15.

A saint has accepted the Lord's heavenly calling, following the Lord from Lebanon to the peaks of Amana, Senir, and Hermon. Standing in the position of Christ's accomplishments—holding fast to truth, wearing the full armor provided by the Lord, and, through Christ's cross, destroying the devil who holds the power of death—he can look down from heaven upon the dens of lions and the mountains of leopards, recognizing the devil's strategies and schemes. This saint has grown in stature, able to understand the essence of spiritual warfare and become a soldier of Christ, resisting the enemy's attacks against the church.

Though he is greatly useful in the Lord's hands, what the Lord values is not what he can do but that he, as a person, satisfies the Lord's heart. The Lord delights in his love, which is better than wine; the Lord enjoys the fragrance of his ointment, surpassing all spices; his lips drip with honey, his garments are full of fragrance, his words are refreshing and sweet, his actions are filled with heavenly aroma, and his humanity is truly beautiful. From verses 12 to 15, the highest praise of the Lord for him in this stage is brought forth: his entire life is solely for the Lord, living to please Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, we may not yet have reached such a state, and we might wonder, "Must it really be this way? Isn't this a bit excessive?" How much we are willing to offer to the Lord depends entirely on how much we treasure and value Him. This treasuring and valuing grow as our life matures and as we gain true knowledge and experience of the Lord. One day, when you feel the Lord is worthy of your entire life, you will reach this stage of spiritual experience. The Lord never forces us to offer, so we need not strive reluctantly.

However, no matter our current spiritual state, we need to know that such a high state exists, and this is only the third stage of spiritual experience. This means every saint has vast room for growth. We should not limit ourselves, for what the Lord has prepared for us far exceeds what we ask or think. We only need a humble heart, not content with what we currently have, knowing that the Lord has higher revelations and deeper riches, and we can more fully obtain them and become more fully aligned with Him.

Verse 12: “A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.”

The Lord still calls him “my sister, my spouse,” indicating that his life and nature are aligned with the Lord’s, and he has entered into a betrothal with Him. At this time, the Lord likens him to a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed. Let us first consider the three adjectives: enclosed, shut up, and sealed. They signify that everything about this saint is solely toward the Lord, for the Lord, and satisfied in the Lord. From the moment he began to love the Lord and put Him first, the Lord could begin working in him.

In truth, people are complex, often unaware of their own mixture. Step by step, the Lord leads him out of his feelings, his selfish desires, and his natural preferences; even further, he must come out of the blessings and grace given by the Lord, out of the work entrusted by the Lord, and out of the sense of value derived from fulfilling that trust, becoming a person who purely loves the Lord.

At this point, the Lord likens him to a garden enclosed. The word for “garden” is the same as that for the Garden of Eden. In the beginning, God created man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to live and work. Now, this saint has grown into the Lord’s garden, solely for the Lord. This is not a public park but an enclosed garden; only the Lord can enter, and only the Lord can enjoy it. This enclosed garden has no gate, so the world cannot enter, Satan cannot enter, and even his friends, spouse, or children cannot enter. This garden is exclusively for the Lord. You might ask, “Is this really necessary? What about my spouse and children?”

Dear brothers and sisters, when you are willing to give yourself wholly to the Lord, remember that the Lord is far richer and more generous than you can imagine. When you give yourself to the Lord, He gives Himself to you. What you offer to the Lord is but a small thing to Him, yet the little He gives you is enough to enrich your entire life. Thus, the grace and riches you receive from the Lord not only far exceed what you ask or think but also become your gifts. When you use these gifts in your relationships with your spouse and children, they receive true blessings poured out from heaven. When we serve others with the grace from the Lord, we do not place demands on them. Those we serve have the freedom to follow the Lord according to what they have received.

The Lord also likens him to a spring shut up and a fountain sealed. The Chinese translation is beautiful but not entirely accurate. The Hebrew word translated as “well” (gal) originally means “waves.” For example, in Psalm 42:7, it says: “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me.” Here, the word is translated as “waves,” its original meaning.

A spring shut up, a fountain sealed. The KJV translates it as “a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,” a vivid image of a fountain entering the garden and being sealed; the fountain’s waves cease, becoming a tranquil pool filled with living water. The Chinese translation renders this pool as a well, or we could say a reservoir well. A garden needs water for irrigation so its produce can grow well.

This saint not only becomes an enclosed garden for the Lord to enjoy but also a fountain within the garden. This fountain is sealed, and “sealed” also implies ownership. This fountain belongs to the Lord. The living water of this fountain enters the garden, becoming a reservoir pool or well, calm and restful, without waves. This is truly a serene and beautiful pastoral scene, a garden where the Lord can rest and delight.

Verse 13: “Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard.”

The Hebrew word for “plants” (shelach) means “sprout” or “shoot,” or in Chinese, “bud.” This means the pomegranate trees in the garden have borne pomegranates, producing pleasant fruits. Here, we see that this is a pomegranate orchard. In chapter 1, this saint was concerned with his own vineyard and lambs, but the Lord showed him that there is only one vineyard in En Gedi. Early in his journey of following the Lord, he focused on his own service and its results, which are important. But what the Lord truly cares about is not what this saint can do for Him or how great his work is. His service for the Lord is merely a means for the Lord to work in him.

The purpose of the Lord’s work in him is for him to bear fruit, the result of the Holy Spirit’s work in him. Now, this saint begins to bear fruit, and once he does, it becomes clear that this is a pomegranate orchard. Pomegranate fruits are vibrant, beautiful, and full of seeds, prefiguring abundant life—a testimony he has produced.

Dear brothers and sisters, do you know what kind of garden you are? How the Lord longs for each of us to grow into a garden, one exclusively for Him. Not only to become a garden but to bear fruit befitting our life. In this garden, there are also henna and spikenard. Recall in 1:12-14, his spikenard ointment gave off fragrance, and he regarded his Beloved as a cluster of henna in the vineyards of En Gedi. Now, he has grown into the Lord’s pomegranate orchard, yet henna remains in the garden, meaning the Lord is also present. There are spikenard plants that produce spikenard for making spikenard ointment.

He has grown into the Lord’s pomegranate orchard because he continually regarded the Lord as henna, gazing solely at Him, while in his spirit, he consistently emitted the fragrance of spikenard ointment. The Lord has always been his goal, and the Holy Spirit has been the means of his growth. No matter how abundant his life becomes, he remains inseparable from the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

Verse 14: “Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.”

Besides bearing pleasant fruits, which are his testimony, this garden has many spices: spikenard, saffron, calamus, cinnamon, trees of frankincense, myrrh, aloes, and all the chief spices. The KJV translates “chief spices” as “all the chief spices,” but a better translation might be “all the finest spices.” Fruits are the result of the Holy Spirit’s work, manifested as a testimony in us.

Spices are more precious and costly than fruits; a small amount can emit a strong fragrance. These spices include ingredients for holy anointing oil, like myrrh, cinnamon, and calamus; frankincense for offerings; and myrrh and aloes for wrapping Jesus’ body. Thus, these spices prefigure the Holy Spirit weaving the various graces accomplished by Christ into us, enabling us to emit the fragrance of Christ.

A testimony is seen, but a fragrance is smelled. Often, before seeing Christ’s testimony, one can smell the fragrance of Christ. This fragrance delights people, preparing their hearts to see and accept Christ’s testimony. The fragrance is varied, attracting different people to the same testimony of life—the pomegranate orchard.

Verse 15: “A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.”

Let us compare the KJV translation: “a fountain of gardens” (gardens in the plural), “a well of living waters” (living waters in the plural), and “streams from Lebanon” (streams in the plural). Generally, we consider the Lord the fountain of living water, but here, the Lord says this saint is a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters. In John 7:38, Jesus says: “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” Every believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit, connected to the heavenly fountain of living water, so rivers of living water can flow from their heart.

This saint is quite mature, not only becoming the Lord’s enclosed garden but also a help to many. Every saint must grow into the Lord’s garden, and during this growth,

some gardens have not yet developed a sealed fountain. This saint's fountain becomes a fountain for many gardens, meeting their needs. Some gardens have living water but lack a reservoir well; this saint's well can hold their living water and supply their garden's needs at any time.

This saint has gone with the Lord to Lebanon, connected to the heavenly fountain of living water, becoming streams flowing from heaven, ceaselessly quenching the thirst of many. At this stage, the saint has developed a specific function, able to supply the needs of others. Strictly speaking, charisma, or operational gifts, at this stage enables him to serve the saints in his commission.

Let us pray together: Lord, may we all be an enclosed garden, a shut-up spring, a sealed fountain, becoming a garden in this life where You can rest and enjoy Your fruits. This garden not only bears the testimony of fruits but also various spices, emitting the fragrance from knowing Christ. Lord, though we have not reached this stage, we have a longing for our life to grow, for the Holy Spirit to freely define and work in us, making us a testimony of Christ and emitting the fragrance of knowing Him. Raise up saints with such functions in the church to be a supply and protection for all saints. Bless my church and church life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.