

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

Song of Songs 5: 11-16

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Song of Songs chapter 5. We will read verses 11-16 today.

A mature and experienced saint, in the fourth stage of his spiritual journey, failed to immediately respond to the Lord's calling—to go into the night and suffer together with the Lord for the building up of the Body of Christ. At that time, he did not understand: having taken off the garments, how could he put them on again? Having washed the feet, how could they be defiled again? When he saw the Lord's nail-pierced hand reaching in through the hole in the door, his heart was stirred, and he immediately wanted to rise and follow. But it was too late—the Lord had already turned away and departed. He became disoriented, distraught, and anxiously searched for the Lord everywhere. In this process, he was struck by the city watchmen who patrol, his cloak was taken away by those who guard the city walls, and he received no help.

He could only entrust a group of ordinary saints in the church, telling them that if they encountered the Lord, they should let Him know that he is lovesick. These younger saints could not understand how he could pay such a great price just to seek the Lord. What was so special about his Lord? Then he began to testify to these saints about what kind of Savior his Lord is. First of all, He is white and also red—He is holy, and yet full of the vitality of life. He is outstanding among ten thousand, for He was lifted up on the cross and will draw all people to Himself.

Then, from verse 11 to 16, he goes on to describe his Lord in great detail, from top to bottom, listing ten features: His head, hair, eyes, cheeks, lips, hands, body, legs, His appearance, and His taste. We will go through each of these one by one shortly. In 4:1–5, the Lord also once described her beauty, also from top to bottom, listing eight features, stopping at her two breasts.

If we compare these two sets of descriptions, the description of the Lord does not include teeth, because teeth represent the ability to chew solid food and absorb spiritual nourishment; the Lord Himself is the source of spiritual food, so there is no need to describe His teeth. Nor is the neck mentioned, because the Lord has always been submissive to God the Father—His fellowship with the Father has never been interrupted; therefore, there is no need to describe the Lord's neck either.

Verse 11: “His head is like the finest gold; His locks are wavy, and black as a raven.”

The first description is of the Lord's head: His head is like the finest gold. In the original Hebrew, this phrase consists of only three words: rosh, kethem, paz—translated directly into English as head, gold, refined gold. In Chinese, it is also three terms: 頭 (head), 金子 (gold), 精煉的金子 (refined gold); in fact, gold is mentioned twice—first as gold, and then as refined gold. The head is the most important part of a person; it represents who the person is, including his thoughts, his disposition, and his richness.

Hebrews 1:3 describes Christ this way: “who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,” and Colossians 2:9 says likewise, “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Gold symbolizes the divine nature, and Christ, being the second person of the Divine Trinity, inherently possesses all the fullness of God's divinity. Yet it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is our Savior—so perfect and without blemish—and even so, in order to accomplish redemption, He still had to be incarnated and pass through the process of a human life. Through this process He was tested again and again, making Him refined gold, so that He could take the place of mankind and be crucified on the cross, and rise again after three days. As Romans 1:4 says, He was “declared to be the Son of God with power.”

When this saint described the Lord's head as gold, and as refined gold, it was as if he found a direction toward resolving the question in his heart. At the end of the third stage, he had already reached the height of the new creation—he had become a locked garden, full of fragrance and delightful fruits, bringing mutual joy to the Triune God, and both God and man were satisfied. He was already in the new creation, and yet even the new creation must go through trials. This is for the building up of the church, to fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. It turns out this was the Lord's wise arrangement—that through testifying to the younger saints about the Lord he knows, he would, in the process, find the answer to the questions in his own heart.

Next is the second feature: the Lord's hair—"His locks are bushy, and black as a raven." Hair represents a person's strength and glory. In 4:1, the Lord once praised, "Your hair is like a flock of goats, going down from Mount Gilead," which speaks of him hiding his strength and glory, resting under the Lord's protection. Now, as he praises the Lord's hair, he sees the Lord's vast power and abundant glory; thus, he praises the Lord's hair as bushy and flowing, indicating that the Lord will cover him with His strength and glory. His experience of the Lord's hair has continued from the first stage all the way to this fourth stage. On the Lord's side, nothing has changed—He is still so fresh and powerful. "Black as a raven" speaks of eternal youth, always full of vitality; he experiences that the Lord never changes.

Verse 12: "His eyes are like doves, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set."

This verse speaks of the third feature—the Lord's eyes. The Lord once praised her eyes, saying they were like dove's eyes behind his veil, which expressed his purity and single-hearted devotion toward Him, untouched by the distractions of the world. Now, as he describes the Lord's eyes, he also says they are like dove's eyes—so pure and clean. The difference is that he adds three modifiers: by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.

“By the rivers of waters” speaks of the Lord’s eyes being clear and bright, able to instantly see through the hidden matters in a person’s heart. Everyone stands before the Lord’s eyes fully exposed, unable to hide; the Lord’s clear eyes cause people to feel ashamed of their impurity. When people see their own filthiness, the clear flowing waters can come to cleanse, washing away the evil desires and selfishness in the heart.

The second modifier, “washed with milk,” refers to milk as a source of nourishment. Water washes away the negative, while milk supplies the positive, bringing forth spiritual growth. After being cleansed, a person can grow in spiritual stature and no longer return to their former state. The third modifier, “fitly set,” indicates that this process of cleansing and nourishment is peaceful—without tension or pressure. This shows that even this saint, in the new creation, still needs to be tested and to grow, but this process is peaceful and comforting.

Verse 13: “His cheeks are like a bed of spices, Banks of scented herbs. His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.”

This verse speaks of the Lord’s cheeks and lips. The fourth feature is the cheeks—human cheeks occupy the largest area of the face and determine the shape of the face. Therefore, a person’s beauty or ugliness is largely determined by their cheeks. In 1:10, the Lord praises her cheeks as beautiful because of her braids; she knew she was not very attractive, so she braided her hair to make her cheeks look more delicate and beautiful. However, the Lord’s cheeks are not meant to be seen by people, because except for the only begotten Son in the Father’s bosom, no one has ever seen God, yet people can come into the light of God’s face. Numbers 6:25 says, “The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you.” When God’s face shines upon us, He grants us grace.

What kind of grace is given? Here, two kinds of grace are mentioned: the garden of spices and the spice towers. The garden of spices is a rectangular plot of land on the ground, planted with various aromatic trees that provide different kinds of fragrant powders. The spice towers here are plural, meaning many tall towers were

built, each filled with soil and planted with various spices, also meant to produce fragrant powders. In 3:6, the Lord is compared to a merchant selling all kinds of fragrant powders. The Lord's fragrant powders come from the garden of spices and the spice towers. The fragrance from the garden of spices symbolizes the aroma of death; the spice towers, being high up, symbolize the aroma of resurrection. When this saint remains in the light of the Lord's face, he can emit both the fragrance of death and the fragrance of resurrection.

The fifth feature is the Lord's lips. Lips are the organ for speaking. The Lord's lips are like lilies—pure and without any motive or mixture. Just as the Lord said in Matthew 5:37, "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one." The Lord's own words are that pure and clean; the words He speaks are truth, and this truth is built upon the Lord's death.

When the Lord told Nicodemus that those who believe can receive eternal life, His mouth dripped with myrrh, because the price for people to receive eternal life was that Christ must die on the cross. When the Lord told the woman caught in adultery, "Your sins are forgiven; go in peace," His mouth also dripped with myrrh, because He was taking upon Himself the punishment deserved for her sins. The Lord Himself never sinned, yet He bore the punishment meant for others. This saint seems to have some understanding of why the Lord went out in the night, why His hair was wet with the night dew—because there were still God's people who had not heard the Gospel, still God's children who had not yet returned home.

Verse 14: "His hands are rods of gold, set with beryl. His body is carved ivory, Inlaid with sapphires."

This verse describes the Lord's hands and His body. The sixth feature is the Lord's hands; His two hands are like gold rings set with beryl. The Lord's two hands speak of His actions, including protection, support, guidance, and provision. The gold rings symbolize folding and turning, meaning His hands can reach everywhere, signifying that the Lord's nature never changes. The rings represent the means through which grace is conveyed. The Lord's two hands faithfully transmit grace—grace for

protection, grace for support, grace for guidance, and grace for provision—delivering it to us in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, whether in victory or defeat, strength or weakness. The Lord's hands faithfully deliver grace to everyone in need.

Set with beryl, beryl is a type of green gemstone commonly known as emerald, a precious stone traditionally passed down through generations in the bride's family—from grandmother to daughter, and from daughter to granddaughter. The emerald symbolizes steadfastness and unchanging nature, expressing that the work the Lord accomplishes in us produces something like emerald—firm and everlasting.

The seventh item speaks of the Lord's body, described as carved ivory, surrounded by settings of sapphire. The body here refers to the chest and abdomen, the place where a person's heart and mind reside. In Song of Songs 5:4 it says, "My beloved put his hand by the latch of the door, and my heart yearned for him." The word for "heart" there and the word for "body" here use the same Hebrew term—when referring outwardly, it means the body; when inwardly, it refers to the heart or mind.

"Like carved ivory" symbolizes that the Lord's body is both strong and powerful, standing firm like ivory. Ivory itself is hard and able to withstand pressure, indicating that the Lord's body is not only strong but also finely carved, showing that the Lord's innermost being is full of delicate workings and wisdom. The process of carving is meticulous, symbolizing that the Lord's control and love over our lives is careful and detailed. "Surrounded with sapphire" refers to Exodus 24:10, where sapphire symbolizes heavenly glory and holiness, indicating that the Lord's body is not only strong but also full of heavenly radiance and honor. The sapphire, resembling a clear sky, reveals the Lord's purity and majesty, helping us understand that the Lord's life transcends the worldly and possesses the dignity and glory of the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord's body is strong and upright, His heart delicate and keen, surrounded by a heavenly atmosphere. On one hand, this saint describes the Lord he knows, and

on the other hand, he begins to recognize that this is the work the Lord is doing in him. The Lord is a great sculptor, holding a delicate carving knife, shaping His body into a heavenly image.

Verse 15: "His legs are pillars of marble, set on bases of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."

This verse speaks about the Lord's legs and His form, or His appearance. The eighth item is the Lord's legs, which are like white marble pillars set on a base of refined gold. Legs signify a person's ability to stand and walk. The Lord's legs are as solid and reliable as pillars, but not ordinary pillars—they are pillars of white marble. This white marble is pure marble that, after polishing, forms pillars that are clean, smooth, and without any flaw. This describes that the Lord's stance and the path He walks are righteous and holy, without any crookedness or impurity.

Set upon a base of refined gold, the refined gold speaks of God's eternal purpose and unchanging nature. The place where the Lord stands and the path He walks are all according to the Father's eternal will, in harmony with God's unchanging character. This is how he describes the Lord, and it also becomes his own aspiration for himself.

The ninth item is the Lord's shape or His appearance. His shape is like Lebanon, and beautiful as the cedars. The word for shape is translated as "countenance" in the KJV and "appearance" in the NIV, so a better translation would be "countenance" or "appearance." This saint responds to the question from the daughters of Jerusalem, asking, "What is your beloved more than another beloved?" He begins describing the Lord from His head down to His legs, which are set upon a base of refined gold. After describing each part of His body, he returns to an overall description, speaking of His countenance or His appearance, which is like Lebanon and beautiful as the cedars. Lebanon is a mountainous region in northern Israel, referring to a high, heavenly place. Lebanon is known for its cedars, which are tall and majestic and were used as material to build the temple. The Lord's appearance is so heavenly, majestic like the cedar trees.

Verse 16: “His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!”

This verse includes the final description, the tenth item: His mouth is exceedingly sweet. This does not refer to the physical organ of the mouth, but rather to the overall feeling the Lord gives; therefore, the mouth here refers to the taste or fragrance of what comes from His mouth. Some people, when they open their mouths, emit a foul odor that makes others reluctant to come near, but the fragrance from the Lord’s mouth is exceedingly sweet, drawing people close. In the Gospels, we see that everyone who came before the Lord Jesus Christ—whether blind, lame, paralyzed, bleeding, or demon-possessed—He not only healed them but also spoke words saying, “Your sins are forgiven.” The Lord’s mouth is full of fragrance, making people willing to approach Him.

He described ten aspects of the Lord’s body, and the final conclusion is that He is altogether lovely! The Lord’s being, His works, what He has accomplished, His manifestation, His testimony—every part of the Lord is altogether lovely, all drawing people to Him, all making people linger and never want to leave.

At this point, he lifted his head and looked at the young saints who were asking him questions, and he said, “O daughters of Jerusalem, this is my beloved; this is my friend.” By introducing Him this way to the daughters of Jerusalem, he was encouraging them: This is my beloved, the one I love—you also should love Him; this is my friend, and He can become your friend as well.

This saint who searched everywhere for the Lord, wounded by the leaders in the church and shamed by his companions who took away his cloak, seems to gradually understand through the questions of the young saints and his own descriptions of the Lord he knows, why the Lord left with such seeming hardness of heart. The answer lies within his own response. Just as the Lord passed through Gethsemane to accomplish redemption, He also calls this saint to, for the sake of building the church, put on the garment he has already taken off, and with his cleansed feet, walk once more into the world to seek God’s people. The Lord requires him to make up in his own flesh what is lacking in the Lord’s sufferings.

This saint who loves the Lord, in the fourth stage, seemed to have lost the Lord because he could not keep up with the Lord's call. Yet through his testimony to the young saints, he came to understand and knew where to find the Lord. Although this stage of experience is very high—something many of us have not yet gone through—more or less, when we lay down our own difficulties and serve those in need within the church, often our own troubles are naturally resolved. Therefore, every saint must find their place of service in the church and faithfully fulfill their duties.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You. Through the description in the Song of Songs, we come to know how deeply You love Your church, and how the building up of the church requires every saint—whether young or mature—to faithfully fulfill their role within the church. Even the young saints, through their questions, can help the seasoned saints understand Your will in their lives. Therefore, Lord, help us to examine our own condition. Whether our spiritual life is immature or mature, may we be willing to place ourselves within the church life, so that through the interaction among the saints, we may come to know Your support, guidance, and provision for the church. Bless the church where I am, and we pray all this in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.