

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

Song of Songs 8: 11-12

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 8, verses 11 to 12.

Yesterday we mentioned that Song of Songs 8:5-14 can be viewed as the church life of a mature saint before the rapture. The seasoned saint in the church, coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon the Lord. On one hand, the Lord testifies of the manifold labor of grace in him, resulting in his current stature; on the other hand, he also testifies of his love for the Lord. The mark of the Lord's love is already upon him, and the indwelling Holy Spirit serves as the seal, proving that he belongs to the Lord. He asks the Lord to set him as a seal upon His heart and as a seal upon His arm, which is truly touching.

A mature and seasoned saint testifies not of his own ministry, not of his own service, nor even of the maturity of his life or the manifestation of his stature, but of his love for the Lord. This love is something every saint has from the beginning of following the Lord, and of course, after many years, the love for the Lord becomes richer, a love full of experience.

When I was young, I heard the elders in the church introduce the life of Darby. He was a great Bible teacher and a powerful preacher; he spent his life running to and from for the Lord, serving churches in various places. What impressed me most was that, near the end of his life, while still traveling and ministering, staying in a small inn and arranging to meet with brothers there, one brother arrived early and overheard Darby, nearly 80 years old, praying alone to God, saying: "Lord, how I love Thee, though my body is old, my heart of love for Thee is ever fresh."

Loving the Lord is the testimony of every one of us throughout our lives, for ultimately, the church will become the bride of Christ; that is the completion of the testimony of loving the Lord. After fulfilling the testimony of loving the Lord, the

most important role in church life is the nurturing of life, especially the nurturing of young saints. The church is a family, and when the little sister in the family has not yet developed her breasts, preparations should begin for the day of her betrothal. Only proper nurturing can help the little sister in the family reject Satan's proposal.

If she is a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; that is, through Christ's redemption, she is protected from the enemy's disturbance. If she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar; that is, if she opens herself to the Lord, she will be surrounded and protected by the upright and strong humanity of Christ. The most important role in the church is to help saints grow into walls and doors, growing into the eternity of the New Jerusalem.

There is the aspect of life ministry in the church, and there is also the aspect of working for reward. Church life must be balanced, meaning love and faith must grow together. In love, nurture the saints, helping their lives grow to maturity. In faith, equip and perfect the saints, helping them develop their gifts and serve in their functions. Speaking of the work aspect, it must be taken seriously, addressing the issues of giving an account to the Lord and receiving the Lord's reward. In Song of Songs 8:11-12, the work of the church is addressed, and today we will look at these two verses in detail.

Verse 11: "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver."

Solomon is a type of Christ. During Solomon's peak, Israel was at its most prosperous, with the widest boundaries, fully possessing the land God promised to Israel, and all nations came to pay homage. Thus, Solomon prefigures Christ in the richness and reign of the kingdom age. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon, and Baal-hamon is likely a place name, the location of which is now unknown. Therefore, we can only understand the spiritual meaning of this name from its literal sense.

“Baal” means lord or husband. In Isaiah 54:5, it says, “For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name” (KJV). Here we see that God is the husband of His creation, and the Hebrew word for husband here is Baal. In 1 Kings 16:31, it is recorded that King Ahab took Jezebel as his wife and followed her to worship Baal. The Israelites were supposed to take Jehovah as their husband, but in Ahab’s time, they took a foreign god as their husband, which greatly offended Jehovah.

The Israelites’ unfaithfulness to Jehovah led to their deepest fall, for they took a foreign god as their husband. Thus, Baal means husband. The word “hamon” means multitude or crowd. Baal-hamon, meaning the husband or lord of the multitude, refers to the Lord Jesus Christ.

On one hand, Christ is the bridegroom of the church, which is a collective term for the church as a whole. On the other hand, Christ is also the husband of every saint individually. This means that every saint serves the Lord as a wife serves her husband, with the husband as the head; the husband is the lord, and everything must be in obedience to him, while diligently serving him.

A wife who pleases her husband will surely know who her husband is, understand his preferences, know what he wants to do, how he does it, and why, so that she can properly protect his interests and prevent him from being harmed. Saints today read the Bible daily to know the Lord and understand His will, purpose, and plan for us, so that we can appropriately serve our Lord, who is our husband.

The Lord has a vineyard in Baal-hamon, and He has entrusted this vineyard to keepers. This vineyard is for every saint, and the Lord has only one vineyard, which is the ministry of the New Testament. This vineyard is vast enough to accommodate every New Testament saint, and the Lord’s New Testament ministry is inclusive enough to encompass the roles of all saints. The vineyard speaks of the work aspect of the church. In Matthew 21:33-34, it says, “Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and dig a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it” (KJV). This is the parable of

the vineyard spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself. The Lord has a vineyard to let out to husbandmen, and when the time comes to collect the fruit, He sends His servants to receive it.

Since the vineyard speaks of work, it must involve giving an account. The Lord entrusted the vineyard to keepers, and the keepers are plural, referring to everyone capable of bearing responsibility. If you are still a babe in the church, unable to bear responsibility, your task is to eat well, sleep well, and grow quickly until you can bear responsibility. Then you must seek before the Lord what your commission is.

Every keeper has their own commission and must give an account to the Lord for it. This commission is in life, organic, and obtained through fellowship with the Lord in the inner chamber. It is not a contract or a legal document but a burden grown in life. When the Lord returns, it will be the time for every keeper to give an account.

For the fruit thereof, they must bring a thousand pieces of silver. In the original text, the word “shekel” is not present; it simply says a thousand pieces of silver. We know that silver typifies redemption. From the perspective of life, through the redemption of Jesus Christ, we have received a new life. From the perspective of service, our natural abilities must also be redeemed, and our natural abilities and talents become gifts for service. A thousand pieces of silver, without a specified unit in the original text, may be understood with the number “thousand” as the unit.

Numbers in the Bible have specific spiritual meanings. For example, 1 typically represents the one God, 7 represents completeness in time, 12 represents completeness in eternity, and 1000 usually relates to God’s number, connected to God’s plan. For instance, God sees a thousand years as one day; the cattle on a thousand hills belong to God; God shows mercy to a thousand generations; Christ will reign for a thousand years when He returns, and Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Additionally, in the first six chapters of Genesis, before the flood, people lived long lives, but even Methuselah, the longest-lived, only reached 969 years, not 1000, because 1000 is God’s number.

Every keeper of the vineyard must give an account to the Lord, presenting a thousand pieces of silver, or rather, the redemption ordained by God as the account for their work. What does this mean? We must use two parables spoken by the Lord Jesus in the New Testament to explain the thousand pieces of silver that the keepers must render. The Lord Jesus spoke two parables, one in Luke 19:11-27 and the other in Matthew 25:14-30. Both parables describe the Lord leaving, entrusting silver to His servants, and settling accounts with them upon His return. Since my burden is not to expound these two passages but to use them to explain the thousand pieces of silver here, I encourage saints to review the daily Bible reading for these two passages. I will provide the links in the comments section for saints to study on their own. Understanding the spiritual meaning behind these two passages will help us appreciate the rich implications of the thousand pieces of silver mentioned in Song of Songs.

In the parable in Luke, the silver is given to ten servants, each receiving one mina, which is a measure of life. This means everyone receives one unit of life without distinction. When the time comes to give an account, the one who earned ten minas, meaning his life grew tenfold, will rule over ten cities. The one who earned five minas will rule over five cities, based on the principle of proportion.

This means the reward varies according to the proportion of life growth. However, the one who wrapped his mina in a handkerchief will be punished. The word translated as “handkerchief” in the Chinese Union Version appears three times in the Gospels, with the other two instances referring to a burial cloth. This means wrapping the life in a burial cloth, preventing it from growing, and such a saint will face punishment. According to this principle, the reward is based on the proportion of life growth. The one who earns one mina can rule one city, which is the minimum standard. Since God gave one unit of life, you must redeem that unit of life, or you will lose the reward.

In Matthew’s parable, it is different. The Lord distributes silver according to ability: some receive 5,000, some 2,000, and some 1,000. The word translated as “thousand” in the Chinese Union Version is “talent” in the original text, a very heavy unit of weight, with the least being 1,000, which is one unit of God. A talent is a

measure of gifts, and gifts are given according to natural abilities. Since everyone's natural abilities differ, the gifts received naturally vary. When the time comes to settle accounts, the one with 5,000 earns another 5,000, and the one with 2,000 earns another 2,000. Although their gifts differ, their rewards are identical: both enter into the joy of their Lord.

Saints may find it strange: why can't the one given 5,000 earn 2,000? Indeed, they cannot, because gifts are given according to ability. This means a person's ability must be redeemed to be used by God. The ability itself does not increase or decrease; it was originally used for oneself, but through redemption, the ownership is transferred to the Lord, and the ability becomes a gift for His use.

The one given 1,000 pieces of silver, who hid it in the ground, used his ability for the world. His ability was not redeemed at all and was not used in the work of service. At the time of accounting, since his ability was not redeemed, he will be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. In this parable, we see that every saint has at least 1,000 pieces of silver, meaning at least one unit given by God. If this redeemed ability is used in service, at the time of accounting, they will receive the same reward as those with 5,000 or 2,000.

With this background, we return to Song of Songs 8:11. Every keeper of the vineyard, whether in life or service, has received at least one unit measured by God. If they work diligently in the vineyard, at the time of accounting, they will surely render this one unit of rent. This means their life has been redeemed, and their natural abilities have been redeemed, which is the thousand pieces of silver they must deliver.

Verse 12: "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred."

The previous verse describes the principle of this mature and seasoned saint working in the Lord's vineyard. This verse is his accounting for his own work before the Lord. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me." Although the Lord has only

one great and vast vineyard, sufficient for all His workers to labor in, this saint clearly knows his commission, the burden and responsibility assigned to him by the Lord. Therefore, he dutifully tells the Lord, “My vineyard is before me,” which is the responsibility the Lord gave him. He does not shirk it and invites the Lord to inspect his work. Saints, remember this is the moment of giving an account.

When he was young, in the first stage of life growth, he complained to the Lord that his vineyard had no keeper because his brothers from the same mother made him keep their vineyards. Now his mindset is completely different from that time. Back then, he was in a competitive mindset, hoping to make his vineyard flourish to gain the envy of others, driven by personal interests, which produced an improper attitude. But now is the time of accounting, the time to let the Lord clearly inspect, the time when failing to give an account will result in loss. Therefore, he honestly lays his entire life’s work before the Lord.

“O Solomon, a thousand pieces of silver belong to thee.” That is to say, “Lord, this is the thousand pieces of silver I owe. My life has been redeemed, and my natural abilities have been redeemed; the ownership of my abilities has been transferred, becoming gifts fully used in the service of the vineyard. Lord, this is Your redemption manifested in me; this is Your thousand pieces of silver.”

In serving the Lord, he did not waste time, did not waste the abilities the Lord gave him, and did not waste the environment, people, matters, and things arranged by the Lord. Whatever burden came from the Lord, he faithfully completed. “Lord, this is Your thousand pieces of silver.” May each of us, at the time of accounting, be able to say clearly to the Lord, “Lord, this is Your thousand pieces of silver.” But the Lord’s grace always exceeds what we ask or think, and His provision far surpasses what we need.

There are also two hundred pieces of silver for those who keep the fruit. Similarly, in the original text, the word “shekel” is not present; it is simply two hundred pieces of silver. As mentioned earlier, a thousand is God’s number, ten is the number of human completeness, and ten times ten is complete upon complete. Thus, one hundred is the most perfect number for man on earth. In Mark 10:29-30, it says,

“And Jesus answered and said, Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life” (NKJV).

Jesus promised that what we give up for Him and the gospel in this age will be rewarded a hundredfold in this age. One hundred is the greatest reward God gives to man in this age. Two is the number of testimony, and here the keepers of the fruit are plural, indicating that this saint’s faithful service is not done alone but with co-workers serving together. He works in the principle of testimony, represented by the number two. The reward the Lord gives him is also in the principle of testimony, ensuring that all who serve receive complete provision. This is the Lord’s special reward, the two hundred pieces of silver for this saint and those who keep the fruit with him.

We see that he works in testimony and receives reward in testimony, sharing the reward with his co-workers. He does not encroach on their glory or seize their reward but shares the reward from God in the principle of testimony. For every person who serves the Lord, they receive the Lord’s perfect provision, a special reward from Him.

Dear brothers and sisters, serving the Lord is truly not difficult and is full of glory. What belongs to the Lord is based on the principle of His redemption, requiring us to surrender our ownership. In the process of serving, we receive the Lord’s complete provision as a reward. Such a light and glorious work—only a fool would be unwilling to serve the Lord.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You! You have shown us the work aspect of the church, that one day we must give an account to You. Lord, on the path of following You, help us establish a life of fellowship with You in the inner chamber, to understand Your commission for us. In Your vast vineyard, help us find our own role. Thank You! In life, You have given each of us one mina of silver, and in the gifts of service, each of us has at least one talent of silver. Help us, in the principle of

redemption, to offer ourselves, transfer our ownership, and at Your return, give an account to You. May we enjoy Your hundredfold reward in this age and receive eternal life in the age to come. Bless our daily lives. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.