

18 Feb 2005

Pluck the Bud

Good morning teachers and students,

This morning, I am glad to welcome you all back to the school after the Lunar New Year. I hereby wish you all a successful year ahead. As it is the Year of the Rooster (Cock), I also wish you all a life like fighting cocks (that is, wishing you enjoying the best possible food or living very well).

A few days before the Lunar New Year Day, I went to buy a bunch of sword lilies (劍蘭) for my family. I selected those plants which carried many buds. I paid the cost. As I was leaving the flower shop, the lady who sold me the flowers suggested that I plucked the tiny bud at the upper end of each plant. She then explained that all the other buds, from the lower end to the upper end, would bloom more brightly. I followed her suggestion even though I found that the tiny buds looked healthy and beautiful. Because I knew that the tiny buds would hinder the other buds from blooming brightly if they were not removed, I did as she told me.

The most important thing is to keep the buds (not the tiny ones) in good condition and let them bloom brightly.

I discover a parallel to the buds of sword lilies in my own life. Day after day I find that many attractive but less important things use up most of my time and energy, leaving me with little time and energy to do the most important things. Sometimes, I even complain that I have no time to do the most important things.

I want to spend time to study the Holy Bible each day, but many community activities and social gatherings often pull me away. As a result, when I review my to-do list before I go to bed each night, I usually find that I have not studied even a single word in the Holy Bible on that day.

Dear teachers and students, is it that way with you? Is it that you have been paying too much attention to those less important things so that you miss out on some things which are more important? Because so many things that seem to be good come to us every day, and even though we want to give attention to what is the most important, we always find it difficult to do so.

As teachers, we want to spend more time to take care of our students each day, but many requests pull at our sleeves, urging us to give attention to this or that, and doing so can use up our time and energy. We finally miss out on chances to take care of our students.

As students, you may want to spend more time to complete your assignments each day, but attractive TV programmes and happy chatting on the telephone can use up your time and energy so that you do not have sufficient time to do so.

The main point is, tiny things can often keep us from the most important things.

The Holy Bible says that each of us is doing trading (selling and buying) each day. We sell a day of our lives for something. We use our time and energy to do something and, in return,
we may gain or lose our health;
we may gain or lose our wealth;
we may gain or lose our reputation; or
we may gain or lose recognition.

The question is, do we use our time and energy for something which is most important (or worthwhile) to our lives?

As a matter of fact, we all know what are the most important things in our lives. When we gather together in the school campus, we know that "Quality Teaching (優質教學)" is the most important thing to each teacher. Likewise, we know that "Quality Learning (優質學習)" is the most important thing to each student.

For teachers, it is worthwhile using much time and energy to teach better so as to make better students. For students, it is worthwhile using much time and energy to learn better in order to achieve better results.

The main point is, keep the most important things and get rid of the tiny things. When you are faced with choosing to do or not to do something, remember that the most important things must come first. You will then enjoy a successful life in the years ahead.

Let us pray:

Our Heavenly Father,

We thank you for being our guide in the previous year. We now sincerely pray for your presence with us when we are faced with another new year. Teach us to focus our attention to the most important things in our lives. Give us courage to get rid of those things which will hinder us from growing. Bless us so that we are all healthy in spirit as well as in body.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.