

March 27/28, 2021

From the Pastor's Desk: Rev. Raphael Chow

Lavender

Turning March, the lavender in the garden wakes up unnoticeably! When I did spot it, it was grinning to me with its new gray green foliage, as if greeting a long missed friend! I returned a blissful smile.

Lavender is one of my favourite flowers. With bluish violet florets, thin gray green leaves grow on its slim stem, displaying lilac blossom on the tips! Flowers dangles, covered with starry fine hair! These charming florets liberate a drowning mint-like scent, with a hint of the pungent of the camphor. An extraordinary light sweet aroma! It is such a beautiful portrait to imagine yourself hanging around in a lavender field, seeing piles and piles of this sweet plant in the breezes. This unique fragrance refreshes our heart and mind, sweeping away all the worries and frustrations!

Lavender originates from the Mediterranean area, e.g. Spain and Portugal. It is now mainly grown in Provence in France, Hokkaido in Japan, Caucasus mountain in Russia and Ili River Valley in China. Lavender is a resilient plant, capable of withstanding the tough winter. When spring comes, it surges to life, releasing its charming fragrance in tranquility once again. No wonder it is called the "Fragrance Plant of Serenity" and the "Queen of Herbs"!

Lavender is not only pleasing to the eye, its fragrance helps to calm mood, relieve pressure and energize spirit. Its essential oil helps detoxification and beautification. Other usages include painkilling, relaxation, improving sleep and anti-depression. A small pot of lavender can soothe the mind! I would pick a lavender stem occasionally, crush it to release its fragrance, which will drown me for a good part of my day.

Lavender is also a special plant. You never see a lonely one, but usually in a big bush. Besides, lavender needs pruning, too. It flourishes in spring if it is given good trimming and fertilizing the winter before.

Somehow, being Jesus' disciples is a lot like the lavender. We don't compete against each other, but share our charisma together. We won't get defeated by one blow, but get through the harsh test by staying together. We don't care only for ourselves, but we go into the world, think for the world and go against the world. We don't just look over the world, but going to be the salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13). Jesus' disciples need pruning and trimming, too. We are so grateful of our Heavenly Father pruning and trimming us constantly, so that we are capable of bearing more fruits (John 15:2). When people get to be among Jesus's disciples, their souls and minds should be soothed: getting the blessings from the gospel and a full acceptance. Thus, people's lives can be changed, become new persons in Christ and be blessings to others.

Would you like to live a life like the lavender?

薰衣草

周力行牧師

踏入三月，園子裏的薰衣草已不知在何時醒了過來。當我發現時，它那初長而灰綠的小葉帶着含蓄的淺笑在向我點頭，彷彿是久違不見的朋友在問好。我也報以欣悅的微笑。

薰衣草是我所喜愛的數種花卉之一。薰衣草有着紫藍色小花，細長的莖干上長着窄長而灰綠的葉片，襯托着末梢上淡紫的花朵。花型如小麥狀，上面覆蓋星型的細毛。迷人的紫色小花沁發淡而醉人的芳香，薄荷裡帶着微微的辛辣，淡得異常的甜香。置身薰衣草田，每當和風吹過，宛如紫色波浪層層迭迭上下起伏，異常美麗。加上薰衣草獨特的淡淡的芬芳，沁人心脾。這時，一切的煩惱，一切的鬱結，都被一掃而空。

薰衣草原產於地中海地區如西班牙及葡萄牙。現今已傳至世界各地。今天，世界四大產地是法國的普羅旺斯，日本的北海道，俄羅斯的高加索山，以及中國的伊犁河谷。薰衣草的生命力極強，能抵禦嚴寒。每每冬去春來之時，乾枯的薰衣草又再度生長起來，又再靜靜的展示迷人的花朵，散發醉迷的淡香。薰衣草也是全球最受歡迎的香草之一，被譽為「寧靜的香水植物」及「香草之后」。

薰衣草不單是悅人眼目，其芬香更能穩定情緒，舒緩壓力，提振精神。薰衣草精油可以清熱解毒，也能美顏。薰衣草粉除了能養顏美容外，更有止痛鎮定，緩解神經，改善睡眠，消除沮喪等作用。一盆默默開放的薰衣草能安撫心靈。我不時在園子裡摘下一株薰衣草，搓揉着，讓它的香氣透徹地散發，足夠半天的陶醉。

薰衣草也有它的特色。我未見只有一株薰衣草獨立生長的，都是一叢一叢的。薰衣草也需要修剪打理。若然每年在冬季以前修剪施肥，在翌年則生長得更茂盛。

在某角度看，主耶穌的門徒也像薰衣草。不是爭妍鬥麗，而是聚集一起時就發出迷人的美麗；不是一擊即敗，而是經得起嚴冬的考驗；不是獨善其身，而是共同進入世界，服侍世界，也抗衡世界；不單是只能觀賞，更是在世界之中是鹽是光(太 5:13)。門徒的生命也需要修剪及打理。感謝天父，因他不停的修剪我們，讓我們結果子更多(約 15:2)。當世人進入眾門徒之中，心靈可得安撫：一方面得着福音帶來的祝福，另一方面得着完全的接納。如此，生命就得改變，在基督裡成為新人，繼而成為他人的祝福。

你的生命像薰衣草嗎？