

Public Service at Surabaya - Sunday, January 07, 2007

Today we continue with **Colossians 4:12-13**

4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

4:13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

There are two spiritual grades which God desires; they are (verse 12):

- maturity
- being strong and of good courage

Epaphras labored and so must we, in order that the spirituality improves to the degree acceptable unto God.

Spiritual Maturity

The spiritual maturity is not determined by how long we follow God, but by the following things:

1. Hebrews 5:13-14

5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Being able to eat solid food = accepting the teaching word (the Table of Shewbread).

There are two kinds of the preaching of the word of God:

a. The preaching of Gospel/milk

It is to draw sinful men to God that they are saved through this process: believing Jesus (the Gate), repenting (the Altar of Burnt Offering), having the baptism of water (the Laver) and of Holy Spirit (the Door). That is the salvation (the Court of Tabernacle), but the spirituality is still at the degree of babe. Therefore, it must be improved.

b. (Verse 14) the preaching of the teaching word/solid food

It is to mature the spirituality of the Church in so far as becoming as perfect as Jesus is. Based on the Tabernacle Teaching, the solid food is shown with the Table of Shewbread. If we are able to eat or accept the teaching word (having patience in Bible Study Service and Holy Communion), the heart and the five senses are sanctified.

The five senses reflect the heart; the heart is angry, the face gets red. Thus, the heart equals to the face. The heart, which is the barn of sin, needs sanctifying from evil and unclean lusts. There are a lot of lusts in the heart, but they are divided into two groups:

- the evil lust is the bond of money, which is a root of all kinds of evil. Judas, for instance, desired for money that he stole God's possession, namely, tithe and special offering. As a consequence, he had to go to hell.
- the unclean lust is sexual sins and eating drinking.

The five senses are sanctified, firstly the tongue so as not to tell a lie. It is written in James that the tongue is the rudder of life; if the tongue or saying is right, the whole body is also right. Yet, if the tongue is wrong, the whole body is wrong. The tongue determines.

We should pray that the teaching word which is sharper than any two-edged sword truly sanctifies the heart and the five senses. By being sanctified, we can discern good and evil. If we do not do the evil, it means that we do not commit sin. At this rate, we someday cannot sin anymore as we will have been as perfect as Jesus. Not only good and evil, we can also discern the true teaching and the false. By this, we, primarily pastors, have the spirit to ponder.

If the heart is holy (the five senses are sanctified), we are able to discern between good and evil until we cannot sin like Jesus. Furthermore, we can also discern the true teaching and the false. A false teaching brings perdition; it is so dangerous.

2 Peter 2:1

2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

The late Rev. Pong Dongalemba always said, if a shepherd commits adultery, he goes to hell alone; the Church does not go along. If he teaches a false teaching, however, all of the Church will go astray and perish.

There was a city called Nineveh whose people could not discern between the right hand and the left; they regarded them the same. If the Christian are not sanctified by the teaching word, the word which is sharper than any two-edged sword, they will be like the people of Nineveh who could not discern between their right hand and their left.

Jonah 4:11

4:11 "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

They could not discern between their right hand and their left; the evil was regarded equal to the good and so was the sinful.

They permitted themselves to commit sin. Also, false teachings were regarded equal to the true one; they generalized all teachings.

The late Rev. Totajis said, "If the Christian and pastors consider that all teachings are the same, they are in the first step of going astray (since they do not have a sensitive heart because the heart and the five senses are not sanctified)"

The people of Nineveh could not discern between their right hand and their left. Finally, they merely committed sin until their wickedness came up before God.

Jonah 1:2

1:2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

It was not their goodness that came up before God, but their wickedness. It was because they could not discern between good and evil, and the true teaching and the false. Their wickedness came up before God and the judgment of God was ready to come down. Seeing that, we know the importance of the spiritual maturity with the first sign: being able to accept the teaching word = willing to be sanctified = continuing steadfastly in the Bible Study Service, to be able to discern between good and evil, the true teaching and the false. In such a manner, we will become holy and perfect like Jesus, not committing a sin.

The right hand is different from the left, of course, but the people of Nineveh could not discern them. Therefore, we must be mature in spirituality (being able to eat the word = continuing steadfastly in the Bible Study Service and the Holy Communion to be sanctified).

2. Ephesians 4:11-13

4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

4:12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

4:13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

Verse 11 shows the priest's offices.

The second sign is to have the priest's offices and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

This year we struggle like Epaphras; he struggled that the Church of Laodicea and Hierapolis grew in their spirituality to be mature, strong, and complete/perfect.

The spiritual maturity is not determined by how long we follow God, but by being able to accept the teaching word, continuing steadfastly in the Bible Study Service, to be sanctified. Besides, we are considered mature after having the priest's offices and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be used by God in the forming of the Body of Christ. The offices are various, such as singing, playing a music instrument, cleaning the church, etc. As the Christian, we must have the priest's offices and may not be idle.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is a marvelous capability to do the ministry according to the priest's office. For example, the shepherd has a gift to ponder a spirit and a music player has a gift to play the music instrument. There is the priest's office and there is also the gift. We cannot do the ministry by our own capabilities; instead, it is all because of the marvelous capability of the Holy Spirit.

In Tabernacle teaching, the priest's offices and the gifts of Holy Spirit point to Golden Candlestick meaning patience in General Service in which there are songs, testimonies, and the preaching of God's word. In such a manner, we minister God with the gifts of Holy Spirit seriously.

Here are the practices of the ministry based on the gifts of the Holy Spirit (not with our own capabilities):

Luke 17:7-10

17:7 "And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?"

17:8 "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"

17:9 "Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

17:10 "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

- Ministering God without demanding the right, but simply doing the duty.

Students of Lempin-El, as the full-timers, we should not demand money, praise, or position because such a ministry is not of the gifts. We must minister God simply by doing our duties.

- Ministering God while girding ourselves = Ministering God in righteousness and faithfulness

Isaiah 11:5

11:5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

Luke 17:8

17:8 "But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'?"

The ministry based on the gifts of the Holy Spirit must be done in righteousness and faithfulness, and such satisfies or pleases God. In such a manner, the result is "you will eat and drink", meaning that God by His Own Hand cares for our lives.

Numbers 1:2-3

1:2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male individually,

1:3 "from twenty years old and above—all who are able to go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

Being able to go to war.

war = fight against the weak flesh and all of its lusts. This shows the Pray and Worship Service (the Golden Altar of Incense).

Thus, if we are really mature in spirituality, we must be patient in the three main services:

- the Bible Study Service (the Table of Shewbread) = being sanctified
- the General (the Golden Candlestick) = receiving the priest's offices and the gifts of Holy Spirit
- the Pray and Worship Service (the Golden Altar of Incense) = fighting

For example is when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane.

Mark 14:36-38

14:36 And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

14:37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour?"

14:38 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

This is what God teaches: one-hour prayer to fight against the flesh and all of its evil lusts/wills.

We fight against the flesh to tear or defeat it:

a. In order not to enter into temptation

We have to fight through praying much more when we are in temptation. But now let us fight much more also with one-hour prayer (prayer of Gethsemane) to defeat flesh whose lusts and wills are contrary to the will of God. In such a manner, we will not fall into temptations bringing us into death.

James 1:14

1:14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

That entering into temptation is because he is drawn away by his own desires. For example, a man wanted a big television. Because there was not enough money, he was then on credit. While the credit was not settled yet, he wanted a motorbike. The credit was not settled yet, again, he wanted a refrigerator, and so on until he sometime could not settle them and fell into temptation. The man then claimed that the temptation came from God. He was totally wrong, since the temptation came from his own desires. If such continues, the temptation brings forth death.

James 1:15

1:15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Committing a sin in temptation brings forth death or perdition. We must be careful with this.

Students of Lempin-EI: If you someday want to build a huge church by having debts, you will commit a sin by telling a lie when the debt collector comes. Such brings forth death.

Do not follow the flesh; instead, we must fight against the fleshly will to reach the spiritual maturity and not enter into temptation. So do young men; they may not follow the fleshly will in the case of marriage partner. Although there is no one faith, you follow your will so you fall into temptation bringing forth death. In view of that, we must pray for one hour in order not to enter into temptation and perish. In Revelation 17, it is written that Babylon is a great harlot.

It is better to fight with God for one hour than perishing with Babylon in one hour.

b. **Revelation 18:10**

18:10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

In order not to fall into the sin of Babylon, namely, sexual sins and eating-drinking, which lead men to perdition. We must be bold to the sin of Babylon, fighting against the wicked fleshly will - since it is not along with the will of God - through one hour prayer.

In one hour Babylon will be destroyed and for one hour we kneel and pray to tear the flesh until there is no more evil and unclean wills. In such a manner, we become mature in spirituality.

The Gospel leads us only to the Court of Tabernacle (belief, repentance, and salvation) and it is not enough. After that, we must be able to accept the teaching word and it is called the spiritual maturity which in Tabernacle refers to these things:

- the Table of Shewbread = patience in the Bible Study Service, in which we are sanctified to be able to discern between good and evil, true and false. That is to say, we walk in holiness till perfection.
- the Golden Candlestick = patience in General and fellowships, in which we get the priest's offices and the gifts of Holy Spirit to minister God.
- The Golden Altar of Incense = patience in Pray and Worship Service, in which we fight against the flesh so as not to enter into temptation and fall into the perishing sin of Babylon, but prevail with God.

Shortly, the three signs of the spiritual maturity denote the Holy Place of Tabernacle. Thus, the spirituality grows up to maturity only in the Holy Place, which now refers to the shepherding. We, firstly pastors and followed by the

sheep, must be shepherded (continuing steadfastly in the three main services) to be mature. Both a pastor and the Church must be shepherded to have the spiritual maturity. Being outside the shepherding, a wandering pastor will get dried and so will the Christian loving to wander. They will get dried like the fig tree by the road.

By being shepherded, then:

Psalms 23:1

23:1 <<A Psalm of David.>> The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

There are two implied meanings in the words "I shall not want":

- We are cared by God in this hard day until we do not want.
- We are spotless and without blemish, spiritually being mature, being as perfect as Jesus is.
So, we must truly struggle in the shepherding system that we grow up in the spiritual maturity until we do not want, being as perfect as Jesus is.

This is about being strong and of good courage.

Colossians 4:12

4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Standing perfect and complete = being of good courage.

The spiritual maturity is important so that we can reach spiritual maturity like Jesus has.

Psalms 27:14

27:14 Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!

Being strong and of good courage is important to welcome Jesus' second coming.

We must be strong and of good courage in facing these things:

- temptations or multi-dimension crisis.
That we must be strong and of good courage in facing temptations means we are not doubtful, but hopeful in God like a baby having no strength and totally trusting her mother, not the other.
- inducements or sins
A sin does not only tease, but also forces. By being strong and of good courage, we will not easily commit a sin, even have no desire of sin although being induced and forced. In fact, when a sin teases, we often fall. Then, what would it be when we are forced to commit a sin?
- false teachings
That we must be strong and of good courage in facing false teaching mean we may not be doubtful or moved because of teachings, but hold the only one of the true teaching word. Colossians 4:12 terms strong with stand perfect to the only one of the true teaching word. By standing perfect to the only one of the true teaching word, we will not want to be changed. Why do many change their teachings? They have A this year, A+ next year, and A- after that. It all happens because they do not stand perfect. If we have really stood perfect to the only one of the true teaching word, we will not change like Jesus who never changes yesterday, today, and forever.

Approaching the second coming of Jesus, we must be strong and of good courage in temptations; we may not be doubtful, but hopeful only in God, although we have no more worth and there is no more way out according to the world. When we are confined and hope a paranormal, not Jesus, even though we are the Christian, our faith has moved and will fail. Such happens to many people, even pastors.

We must be strong and of good courage in facing sins also. Although sins tease and force, we do not commit them. This is worth keeping. Furthermore, being strong and of good courage is needed in facing false teachings. Lest we be doubtful/tossed to and fro, but hold fast the only one of the true teaching word!

These are the results of being strong and courageous in temptations, inducements, duress, and false teachings:

a. John 16:33

16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

We walk with God to overcome all worldly problems, since God has overcome the world. If we are strong with God, we will overcome all worldly problems. God promises us this and we must hold it firmly. By being shepherded/mature in spirituality, we will not want because God cares and we will get the power of victory, even become as perfect as Jesus.

b. 1 Chronicles 19:13

19:13 "Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight."

We should not be desperate or disappointed, but be strong, so that God will make everything good in His sight. If we are doubtful, desperate, or disappointed, we will be broken. However, if we are strong – even though we have been broken -, God will make the broken good.

Perhaps the marriage or economy is broken; we should not struggle for it, but for the improvement of the spirituality as Epaphras so that:

- our spirituality becomes mature, we are shepherded and cared

- we are strong and courageous – so that God will make everything good.
If we struggle by our own ability, we will fail. Let us struggle to improve our spirituality until we are strong and courageous - so that God will make everything good.

c. **1 Thessalonians 3:13**

3:13 so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

We are strong and courageous until we are worthy to welcome the second coming of Jesus and we will be with Him forever more.

We struggle for many things, but primarily for the improvement of the spirituality to the degree acceptable unto God, that is, the spiritual maturity.

What does the spiritual maturity mean?

- Being patient in the Bible Study Service = being able to accept the teaching word
- Being patient in General = being able to minister God
- Being patient in the Pray and Worship Service = being able to fight or worship God.

By being shepherded, we are cared and shall not want. The king David did not say, "I am a king; I shall not want." It is not so! Instead, he said, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Let us be mature in spirituality! Even though I am a shepherd, I must be shepherded and so must the other shepherds. Or else, the Church will not be shepherded, either. Therefore, we should not let ourselves be deceived; the shepherds and the Church must be shepherded so that "I shall not want" – being cared forever by God.

Besides, we must be strong and courageous. Do not be desperate or disappointed, but only hope God! In such a manner, we get these results:

- victory over all problems
- God makes everything good
- God perfects us to be worthy to welcome Jesus' second coming; we will be with Him forever more.

God bless you all!