

Public Service at Surabaya - Sunday, January 14, 2007

Colossians 4:12-18 is about struggle.

So far we have learned it up to verse 13 and 14, that is, struggle to face the world.

Now we read **Colossians 4:15-16**

4:15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

4:16 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

Nowadays we struggle for not being lukewarm in spirituality like the Church of Laodiceans.

There was an epistle for the Church of Colossians to be read in Laodicea, and there was also an epistle for the Church of Laodiceans to be read in Colosse.

Thus, there were two spiritual contradictory conditions of the Church:

- The Church of Colossians who stayed apparently at qualified spiritual grade/in worship (Based on Tabernacle Teaching, the epistle Colossians refers to Golden Altar of Incense).
- The Church of Laodiceans who showed off and was satisfied merely with worldly things – so that they spiritually fell off and became lukewarm.

Here is about the Church of Laodiceans.

Revelation 3:14-17

3:14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:

3:15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

3:16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

3:17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

Lukewarm means neither cold nor hot. Cold here is different from cold in Matthew 24 "Love will grow cold". Cold desired by God ("I could wish you were cold or hot.") has positive meaning as follows:

- cold = death experience which results in peace.
not being cold = having no peace because of keeping evilness and uncleanness
- hot = resurrection experience which results in fervent spirit to minister God.

This is the meaning of being neither cold nor hot:

- not being cold = having no peace
- not being hot = lagging in diligence/not being fervent anymore, even forsaking ministry or performing ministry as a habit
Furthermore, being neither cold nor hot = being neither dead nor raised = not being renewed/having no renewal of life.

Thus, these are the conditions of the Church of Laodiceans:

- having no peace and not being fervent anymore, even forsaking the service and ministry
- being neither dead nor raised/being neither cold nor hot = having no renewal of life

Revelation 3:17 reveals the reason; why such happened.

3:17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

They retained egoism. In Indonesian, the "I" is clearly written three times; "I am rich, I have become wealthy, and I have need of nothing." And fortunately, they mentioned the "I" only three times. If they have mentioned it five times, they would have been conformed to Satan (Isaiah 14) and wasted away; there would have no more chance for repentance.

Satan was actually son of the morning. As he was proud by saying "I will" five times, however, he was brought down/wasted away and found no place for repentance.

To sum up, this is about being lukewarm:

- not being cold = having no peace
- not being hot = being fervent no longer
- not being renewed = keeping egoism

As such, spirituality will fall off.

Revelation 3:17

3:17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—

Naked is emphasized.

God said, "I will vomit you out of My mouth." If we are spiritually lukewarm, even naked, we will be vomited/separated from God and not taken again. As it had happened in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were driven out/separated from God soon after they were naked. They might not remain in the Garden of Eden because the naked are men of flesh and blood and may not enter into the kingdom of heaven/New Jerusalem.

The term "vomited" is equal to "driven out and not enter into the coming paradise/not inherit the kingdom of heaven". Seeing this, we must struggle in order that tragedy of Eden/condition of Laodiceans/nakedness does not occur again.

God said, "I could wish you were cold or hot."; meaning that we must be peaceful and fervent in serving and ministering God, also renewed through death and resurrection experience so as not to retain egoism.

Although the Church of Laodiceans was in such awful condition, God still helped and gave chance for repentance.

Revelation 3:18-19

3:18 "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

3:19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

God lifts up spirituality of the Church by two ways as follows:

- rebuke and counsel, which are typically known as the teaching word (verse 18 and 19).
Only the teaching word is able to improve spirituality of the Church at the end of the Church (the Church of Laodiceans) whose spirituality has fallen off and become lukewarm / naked.

2 Timothy 4:2

4:2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

The teaching word convinces/declares guilty, rebukes, and exhort with longsuffering.

With longsuffering = God repeats the word, since HE wishes to improve spirituality of the Church of Laodiceans, who are all of us, the Church at the end of the age, in order not to be lukewarm.

- chastisement (verse 19)
If rebuke/teaching word is ignored, God will chasten. In spite of that, it is still the goodness/love of God to lift up our spirituality – so that we will not be wasted away and destroyed, but enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whoever does not inherit the kingdom of heaven must perish forever.

Revelation 3:20

3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

When God rebukes and exhorts by the teaching word, or even chasten through economic or health problems, it means that God knocks our heart.

There are two good things implied in the word "God knocks our heart", i.e.:

- God's longsuffering; if we have not opened our heart yet, God will knock again.
God's longsuffering is to wait for our opening the heart. For illustration, if we go home or visit someone, we will knock and wait with longsuffering until the door is opened. In Song of Solomon chapter 6, it is written that the Groom remains knocking until His head is covered with dew; meaning that He has knocked all night.
God's longsuffering knocks again and again (preaching the word continuously) until the door is opened.
- People usually knock the door with right hand, except the left-handed. Knocking the door will bring about sound because of vibration. Thus, if God knocks our heart, He stretches out His Right Hand, which is full of mercy and grace, to help/lift up our lives.

God knocks our heart = God preaches the teaching word = God chastens us.

Let us not misunderstand when we are chastened in the field of economy or health because it means that God knocks our heart. Chastisement will not disadvantage us; instead, it is indeed the stretch of merciful and graceful Hand of God.

When God knocks our heart through teaching word and chastisement, we should not harden, but open our heart; meaning that we must be gentle/meek by confessing all of our conditions and accepting the will of God – even though it is contrary to our will or ideal. In such a manner, God will help us.

God always knocks men's hearts from age to age (according to the map of ages – PETA JAMAN) below:

1. The age of Father God – from Adam to Abraham (approx. 2000 years)

This age was represented by the days of Noah. At that time, God knocked men's heart in which they were engaged in peak of sin, that is, eating drinking and marrying and giving in marriage. Therefore, they were threatened with perdition through floodwaters.

1 Peter 3:18-20

3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

3:19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

3:20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

However, God had previously knocked their hearts through the word of the Gospel that they were saved and not destroyed by floodwaters. Unfortunately, only eight people (Noah and his family) were saved, while the others rejected and veiled/hardened their hearts; they were not willing to be meek and keep on eating drinking and giving and marrying in marriage. Thus, these people sinned against God twice:

- they hardened their hearts
- they remained in their fleshly lusts and committed sins relative to eating drinking and giving and marrying in marriage until they were destroyed by floodwaters.

Today the world is threatened with fire judgment from heaven. For that reason, God knocks our heart and we should open our heart to accept His will and should not keep our own will which brings sin. If anyone of us has fallen into sin – any kind of sin -, we have to confess it and then accept the will of God to walk in righteousness and holiness, so that we are kept away/saved like Noah.

2 Peter 3:11

3:11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

By walking in righteousness and holiness, we will be saved from the coming fire judgment.

Actually, the fire here contains two meanings as follows:

- fire from heaven = judgment of the world
- fire of temptation coming upon the entire world, i.e., antichrist for three years and a half.

In the days of Noah, God knocked men's hearts through the preaching of the word, while in these days through the word and chastisement. Thus, we should accept it by confessing our conditions to receive forgiveness, and not keep fleshly lusts which lead us into sin.

By opening the heart, we are protected from these fires:

- fire of temptation which will come upon the entire world (the most terrible temptation), that is, antichrist
- fire of judgment of God and fire of hell (the lake of fire burning with brimstone)

Once again, we should not keep sinful will and lust which encourage us to commit sin, but should open the heart to accept the will of God (to walk in righteousness and holiness).

2. The age of the Son of God – from Abraham to Jesus' first coming (approx. 2000 years).

This age was represented by Job. God knocked Job's heart which remained in self-truth.

Job 32:1-2

32:1 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

32:2 Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he justified himself rather than God.

The practices of self-truth are mentioned below:

- loving to blame or judge the others
- blaming God/justifying himself rather than God by the following acts:
 - considering God unfair; "I am diligent to serve, but not blessed; he is not diligent, but blessed. This is not fair!"
 - not accepting even blaming the true teaching word (God is the word)

We should keep ourselves not to remain in self-truth like Job. Therefore, we must hold to what the senior pastors (the late Rev. In Juwono, the late Rev. Totaijs, the late Rev. Pong Dongalemba) had taught that we live by the word of God. We are trusted by God the true teaching word which was revealed to the late Rev. Van Gessel, that is, Tabernacle Teaching. We must hold and not hesitate this teaching, since it is revelation and proved that nothing is wrong, even it has been lasting for more than seventy (70) years. Only those holding to self-truth cannot accept, even blame the teaching word.

Job was also righteous in his own eyes; he blamed God and the others and his spirituality fell off, so that he should have been punished and destroyed.

Seeing that, God knocked him through chastisement.

In the days of Noah, Jesus was not real as the flesh, but the Spirit who preached Gospel/salvation through the ark of Noah. Nevertheless, it was rejected. While Job was knocked not by the word, but chastisement; he was chastened bitterly and God made him lose everything he had. Fortunately, Job then opened his heart. In such condition (being chastened by God), we should not harden our heart or get angry by regarding God unfair. Instead, we open our heart like Job to feel the Right Hand of God, which is full of mercy and grace, to do good.

Job 42:5-6

42:5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

Job opened his heart; meaning he confessed himself dust with a lot of faults. It is not God or the others who is wrong, but I am. It is not the teaching word that is wrong, but I am. As God chastened, Job opened his heart by repenting in dust.

Repenting in dust = confessing himself dust with a lot of weaknesses and sins, being unworthy and unable.

Dust is worth for nothing, but trampling down. When Job was unable, the Right Hand of God which is full of mercy and grace recovered him doubly.

Job 42:10

42:10 And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

As soon as Noah opened his heart, he accepted the will of God – even though people mocked him for there was no rain. Yet, soon after he entered into the ark, the Right Hand of God which is full of mercy and grace protected him (protects us from the coming fire).

Likewise is Job; after Job repented and opened his heart by confessing himself dust with faults and weaknesses, the Right Hand of God which is full of mercy and grace immediately recovered him doubly. God recovered his spiritual life which had fallen off because he considered himself righteous; he cannot accept the truth of God and it meant that he was not a right man. (The Christian who reject the word of truth must walk in unrighteousness). Job was recovered that he walked in righteousness and holiness. Besides, his physical life was also recovered. The Right Hand of God, which is full of mercy and grace, is able to recover the broken economy if we are willing to open our heart when God knocks and confess ourselves dust.

The Right Hand of God, which is full of mercy and grace, is ready to:

- protect us if we open our heart and not retain our own will, but follow God's will like Noah did.
- protect and recover us if we do not retain self-truth like Job, but accept the truth of God.

3. The end of the age – from Jesus' first coming to His second coming (approx. 2000 years).

This age is represented by the Church of Laodiceans.

Today is 2007 and it does not mean that the map of ages (PETA JAMAN) is wrong. PETA JAMAN is never wrong. Someone sent me a message and said about it. If it was true, PETA JAMAN would not be applicable anymore. Those who say that PETA JAMAN is wrong take a literal meaning. The fact is, it is the longsuffering of God to knock our heart, giving us time to open the heart.

The last knock comes to the Church of Laodiceans, denoting the Church at the end of the age, with these conditions:

- spiritually : lukewarm and naked
- physically : blessed and egoistic

Those conditions must be given to God when He knocks our heart.

Revelation 3:20-21

3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

3:21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

This is Paul's complaint:

Philippians 2:21

2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

The Church of Laodiceans focused on their own sake, not the Body of Christ – so they became lukewarm and naked. Therefore, God knocked Laodiceans (the Gentile) that they open their hearts.

Opening the heart means giving our own sake and accepting God's sake, that is, forming of the Body of Christ. It does not mean that we may not work; it rather means that our own sake is headed toward the forming of the Body of Christ:

- in marriage: a husband or a wife should not be egoistic in order to become one in the Body of Christ.
- in shepherding: we are busy but must prioritize the service and ministry for the sake of forming of the Body of Christ.
- inter-shepherding is also headed toward the sake of the Body of Christ.

If we prioritize the sake of the Body of Christ, the Right Hand which is full of mercy and grace will act.

Revelation 3 "I will"; to him who open his heart by confessing weaknesses and prioritizing the forming of the Body of Christ, the Right Hand of God which is full of mercy and grace will do the following things:

- (Verse 20) lifting up to dine together; meaning as follows:

- We are cared and full of joy like in feast.
If we truly prioritize the forming of the Body of Christ by sacrificing anything, including our own will, but not the true teaching word, the Right Hand of God, which is full of mercy and grace, will care and bring joy into our lives in this hard and unreliable world.
- We are lifted up to the marriage supper of the Lamb till paradise/kingdom of peace a thousand years.
- (Verse 21) giving us victory over enemies until we sit on the throne of God (the last victory).
The Right Hand will lift us up to the highest place forever, i.e. the throne where the Bride will sit with God/the throne of New Jerusalem.

This teaching is very simple; God knocks our heart through the word or chastisement and we just need to open our heart.

In a word, PETA JAMAN is divided into three ages as follow:

- the age of Father God which was represented by the days of Noah.
At that time, men only concerned with their own will and lusts so that they became disobedient. Learning from this experience, we should not retain our own will and lusts, which lead into sins, but give them to God. In such a manner, we will be able to walk in righteousness and holiness and the Right Hand of God will save us from fire of antichrist (the most terrible temptation) and fire of judgment/hell. In the days of Noah, judgment came in the form of water.
- the age of the Son of God which was represented by Job.
At that time, men were righteous in their own sight and locked their hearts, and finally blamed God. We should not be righteous in our own sight, but repent in dust; confessing our faults, weaknesses, and powerlessness. By this way, the Right Hand of God will recover the broken, either spiritually or physically.
- the end of the age which was represented by the Church of Laodiceans.
The Church of Laodiceans retained their own interest that they became lukewarm and naked. Therefore, we should not retain our own interest when God knocks.

Nowadays we have to prioritize the forming of the Body of Christ and be sure that the Right Hand of God never lies to us. The Right Hand will:

- care and bring joy into our lives in the unreliable world, and lift us up to heavens/marriage supper of the Lamb and then we will return to paradise
- give victory over enemies in the world and deliver us to the throne of New Jerusalem

God bless you!