

Bible Study at Surabaya - Monday, February 05, 2007

Today we confer about the last struggle written in **Colossians 4:18**

18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

This is the struggle of the apostle Paul in preaching the word.

We struggle to grow up our spirituality, resist the world, and fulfill the ministry, and so did Paul, but he also struggled to preach the word of God.

There are two kinds of the word of God preached by Paul as follows:

1. Ephesians 1:13

13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

that is, the gospel of salvation / the word of gospel which is intended to bring sinful men/gentiles to believe in Jesus and be saved.

Here is the complete process of being saved:

- a. faith / believing in Jesus by listening the word of God
- b. repentance / stopping sinning and returning to God
- c. baptism of water / deliverance from sins / hating sins
- d. receiving the anointing/fullness of Holy Spirit

The word of gospel is important to increase and fill up the quantity of the perfect Body of Christ.

Romans 11:25-26

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

Actually Gospel was only intended for Israel, but most of them hardened their heart and refused Jesus/Gospel so that the space is partly empty. The gospel was then preached to gentiles until the quantity is fulfilled. To get a clear picture of this, we can notice hand; a perfect hand must have five fingers, otherwise, it is not perfect although precious rings are put on it. The "all Israel" as mentioned in verse 26 refers to the Body of Christ to be saved/perfected.

This is Paul's struggle in preaching the word of God:

Ephesians 4:18

18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

It is necessary to preach the word of gospel.

2. After the quantity is fulfilled, the quality must also be met; or else, the Body of Christ is not perfect either.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

The second kind is called the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ revealing Jesus' second coming in His glory as the heavenly Groom and King of kings. This word is commonly known as the teaching word or the Bride Tidings, which is significant to improve the quality of the Body of Christ to the degree of perfection.

The word of gospel has brought thousand millions of people to believe Jesus and be saved, but what is next? The quality of their spirituality must be improved through the teaching word. Therefore, both the word of gospel and the teaching word must be preached in church; if not, the Church cannot become perfect. If there were only the teaching word, the quantity would not be multiplied, and if there were only the word of gospel, only few would be chosen even though a great multitude had been won since the quality did not meet the measure of perfection.

Hebrews 5:11-13

11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

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

"become dull of hearing" = make no difference to all shepherdings

Esau and Jacob, for example, represented Christians giving themselves for the ministry. Esau was red and hairy; implying that he

repented and walked under anointing of Holy Spirit. In a word, Esau had found his salvation. Unfortunately, Esau loved hunting while Jacob dwelling in tents (being shepherded). Many people are all the same to churches, whereas the fact reveals the converse and it can be seen from the result of sanctification. Esau finally cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, but Jacob rejoiced with an exceedingly great joy for receiving the birthright.

Milk points to the word of gospel. Without the teaching word, the Church grows very slowly (remaining a babe). Seeing that, we should not be careless, but be able to set apart milk and solid food; and what we really need to seek is solid food. By solid food, we will not grow sluggishly, but agilely to become the Bride of God – as no babe ever becomes a bride.

The sluggish Church usually goes astray for a babe is quickly carried about with heresies. They will finally lost and get involved in the forming of the body of Babylon and become the bride of Satan.

Ephesians 4:14

14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

One of the measures of being full age is being able to hold fast the only one true teaching word. If we are easily tossed and fro by regarding all teachings the same, it indicates that we are not of full age yet. For that reason, we must be sure of the only true teaching word. The late Rev. Totalijs said: if a pastor/Christian regards that all teachings are the same, he is going astray. We accordingly need a sensitive heart to distinguish good and evil.

Hebrews 5:14

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.

Without the teaching word, furthermore, the Church will become blind, without vision and mission – even if the vision and mission are shouted about. Actually, vision and mission have been contained in the word, not in ourselves, for we are simply the ministers of God and the one who has vision and mission is God.

Proverbs 7:2

2 Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye.

For the Church, the teaching word is like the apple of the eye. Without the teaching word, therefore, the Church is blind; they do not know direction to New Jerusalem/the City of Light and not even to reach there. This needs to be confirmed.

In short, these are consequences of having no teaching word:

- The Church grows sluggishly, remaining a child and never becoming bride.
- The Church is quickly deceived and goes towards Babylon.
- The Church becomes blind.

Let me reconfirm; the word of gospel is important and required for salvation, but it is not enough and must be continued with the teaching word so that our destination is not wrong, that is, the City of Light/New Jerusalem.

Colossians 4:18

18 This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

In preaching the word, Paul faced two threats or obstacles as follows:

1. Paul's hand was bitten by a viper
2. "Remember my chains"

Paul's hand was bitten by a viper

Acts 28:3

3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out

It was a threat for Paul's hand since Paul always said, "This salutation by my own hand".

Why was Paul's hand bitten by a viper? Because Paul wrote epistles with his own hand. Here are some proofs:

1. **1 Corinthians 16:21**

21 The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.

2. **Galatians 6:11**

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

3. **2 Thessalonians 3:17**

17 The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

The epistles were written with Paul's own hand. As such, the viper bit in order that Paul could not write and preach the word until the end of the age, and we cannot read the word until the end of the age, primarily the Bride Tidings as Paul wrote about marriage both physically and spiritually. Although Paul did not commit himself to marriage, he was used to write and preach the word of God, especially the Bride Tidings. It is a real wonder of God.

Paul's hand was bitten by a viper because Satan knew that God was restoring broken marriage of Adam and Eve which viper had destroyed in Eden. Therefore, viper bit Paul's hand so that he could not write/preach about Bride Tidings by which God restores the broken marriage to reach the degree of spiritual marriage/the marriage supper of the Lamb.

To know whether we have been bitten or not, we can check from the following bite's effects:

a. **Acts 28:6**

6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

Swelling up (according to people there, the viper's bite would make one swell up and die).

Swelling denotes pride, with these practices:

- Getting a swollen head when being praised or honored
- Getting a swollen heart (angry/emotional) when being exhorted by the teaching word/the hard word.
 - If a pastor preaches the word emotionally or vengefully, it shows that he has been bitten and the Church will not accept or understand the preached word.
- Unwilling to be shepherded nor be obedient

1 Peter 5:5-7

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

1 Peter 5 particularly denotes shepherding. The proud, who are not clothed with humility, are not willing to be shepherded for they feel strong. In such condition, they must be worried about many things. If someone is worried about his destiny, it shows that he is a proud man depending on his own strength. By being shepherded, however, it is said in verse 6 "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God"; meaning that the Hands of God will care, protect, and exalt us in due time.

Thus, the shepherded can cast all worries and undergo God's mighty hands working in their lives.

The proud will swell up and fall down dead (his spiritual life will die and perish). Therefore, we should be careful with the viper's bite. Soon after it bites, we must become proud and angry/emotional if the word rebukes, and unwilling to be shepherded so that worry always haunts our lives. Nonetheless, by being shepherded, we can cast all worries upon God and live under His mighty hands caring, protecting, and exalting us in due time.

b. **Acts 28:8**

8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.

Being taken dysentery – pain in the belly.

Viper's bite did not only cause swelling, but also pain in the belly of Christians/pastors; meaning that the Christians/pastors have their belly as their god. That is to say, they reject the Cross.

Philippians 3:18-19

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

Romans 16:17-18

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

The word 'avoid' does not mean that we should have hostile attitude, but lest we have fellowship with them. One who is deceived is the simple. If Church is not simple, it cannot be deceived because of the same condition they have.

I exactly become the first to be inspected, whether I am bitten or not. If a viper bites pastors, they will surely be taken dysentery; meaning like this:

- o having their belly as their god / rejecting the Cross.
- o serving their belly/teaching religious beliefs contrary to the teaching that we have accepted and experienced.

For the Church, being taken dysentery means as follows:

- o they accept heresies – teachings which reject the Cross/sufferings with Jesus.
- o they serve God simply with the purpose of seeking and satisfying their own pleasure (they have their belly as their god).

In actuality, God says that we must through many tribulations to enter the kingdom of God. This word is now reversed to be like this: "in this world we through many troubles and sorrows to earn money, why we should have more sufferings in church?" This statement sounds logical, but implies no spiritual meaning because belly becomes god and many priests are in such condition.

Students of Lempin-EI, you have been in glory since God has called you to serve His work. All of God's work is glorious and so is to become a pastor. Nevertheless, we cannot become glorious instantly; we must go through the Cross. The late Rev. Pong Dongalemba always said: "Enjoy the moments when we have to suffer with God, so we will not fall down when being well up."

In brief, the followings are the symptoms of dysentery:

- o rejecting the Cross and having belly as their god
- o rejecting to suffer with Jesus
- o always seeking fleshly pleasure
- o serving the belly = teaching heresies to gain advantages

Paul confirmed in his epistles: "But even if an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed."

It is a bold statement.

We have to be careful about Cross/teaching about cross and Bride Tidings as written in Romans 16. Do not accept other teachings but avoid them! Do not have any fellowship with them. Flowing from that, we should not have hostile attitude toward them because God never teaches us to do so, seeing that Jesus could fight against Pharisees when they wanted to lay hands on Jesus but He avoided them.

Here are the practices of being taken dysentery:

- o The mind is merely set on earthly/fleshly things.

Philippians 3:19-21

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Someone being taken dysentery always comes to the church / serves God just to gain worldly/fleshly/physical things.

I said to the students of Lempin-EI: if you want to be a pastor because you suppose that it will generate much money, better you go home now than waiting till graduation. It would be better that during these six months you worked to earn an income than you are imaging earning money by becoming a pastor. If you do have such planning, watch out for your "belly"!

"whose god is their belly", meaning that they only serve their belly until the belly will someday burst like Judas' bursting open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out – his wickedness was shown and he perished.

Or perhaps someone enters Lempin-EI just to find his/her destiny.

- o "whose glory is in their shame"; living in or retaining shame/sins

If a shame is revealed, one will wonder. A shame is truly cannot be hidden, like Judas' bursting open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out and he found no forgiveness. It is better now we confess our shame and others know them than we hide them and sometime they burst.

Even until the Holy Communion was being served, none knew Judas' wickedness. Only Jesus knew it and He got him to go, while the other disciples thought that Judas was a good man so God supported him to share with the poor. On the other hand, what actually happened is Judas kept shame.

Maybe you have a shame, but you are afraid of your wife's reaction; also you wives, children, or pastors, are afraid, but you must confess to God and the others (that is called the Cross/suffering). God is ready to forgive you.

- o Having no renewal of life (verse 21)

The citizens of heaven consist of those undergoing the renewal of life. Thus, if someone rejects the cross and holds different teachings, he will not be renewed to be a spiritual man and remain the flesh. If he was a harsh husband, he remains harsh; and if she was an opposed wife, she remains in opposition, and so are disobedient children towards their parents.

Dysentery physically causes frequent defecation, but spiritually makes the belly burst and all entrails gush out. It is just what happened to Judas; he found no more mercy and perished forever.

Acts 1:18-19

18 (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.

19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

Judas burst open in the middle, Jesus was being crucified, and the veil was torn. They all took place at the same time. It was a real pity; Judas did not want to tear his flesh so only his belly was torn and his wickedness was revealed.

Seeing that, better we now tear our flesh to confess our shame and we will receive His love.

c. **Sick of a fever**

Thus, viper disadvantages us with swelling, dysentery, and fever.

Acts 28:8

8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.

Fever = neither cold nor hot = lukewarm

We must take heed to ourselves when listening to the Bride Tidings since the viper is ready to make our hand swell up and strike our belly with dysentery, so that we will retain and refuse to confess our shame although the word has revealed it, because we feel ashamed and regard nothing happened, just like Judas saying: "Lord, is it I?"

The mother of Peter's wife was also sick with a fever.

Matthew 8:14-15

14 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.

15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

Besides in an island called Malta, fever also hit the Church of God, that is, the mother of Peter's wife. Peter was the groom and the son-in-law of the mother, so it meant that the mother had a daughter. Thus, Peter's mother-in-law symbolizes pastors whose duty is to prepare the Church to become the Bride of God. A lot of pastors and Christians who had previously held the Bride Tidings for years now become lukewarm, even mix this teaching with another.

A mother-in law must be old; implying that the first holding Bride Tidings even become lukewarm. Based on this fact, I do hope that students of Lempin-El who are the last will be first -- for the first have become the last.

If someone becomes lukewarm towards the Bride Tidings, he must also become lukewarm in ministry.

Below are the spiritual meanings of fever:

- Being neither cold nor hot= being lukewarm towards the Bride Tidings and consecration (service and ministry).

Job 30:30

30 My skin grows black and falls from me; My bones burn (Indonesian: mengering get dried) with fever.

It is a real pity to know that someone who formerly accepted the teaching word/Bride Tidings with enthusiasm now has become lukewarm.

Lukewarm towards the teaching word = lukewarm towards consecration = the spirituality is getting dried like dry bones casted/fallen from the forming of the Body of Christ (**Ezekiel 37**). Being lukewarm raises hesitation about and distrust to Bride Tidings. That's why, students of Lempin-El should not follow a man, but Jesus. For if the man sometime leaves the world, everything will be still all right.

- Being infected (fever causes infection)= something wrong in our life.

In such condition, we cannot serve ourselves, not mention to serve God. Perhaps there is something wrong in our life because of the viper's bite. How then will God help us?

Matthew 8:15-17

15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

16 When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."

Actually, one who has something wrong in his life is separated from the Lord, but He is ready to help through a word He had said on the cross before he died "It is finished."

John 19:29

29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.

Jesus had to die to help those sick with a fever and dysentery; He had born sour wine so that He could stretch His Hand and heal Peter's mother-in-law. Everything was restored. That is how God works.

The viper bit, but God came to save by drinking sour wine and crying out "It is finished!" What was finished? It was sour wine; pointing to our sins, bitterness, weaknesses, and sicknesses, as written in Matthew 8. We come to Jesus for He had died on the Cross so He could stretch out His Hands.

The Holy Communion represents the stretched Hands of God to settle all things in our lives. Jesus cried out a word, "It is finished!"

and we just need to worship and cry out a word as well, "God, help me!" God will surely help us. Just remember what the disciples had in the midst of windstorm and waves; they were frightened and trembling because of death, but God had saved them. One single word will be replied with one single word too; we cry out, "God, help me!" and God will stretch out His Hands and cry out, "It is finished!"

God bless you!