

Bible Study at Surabaya - Monday, February 18, 2008

The book of Exodus chapter 32 is overall divided into five parts as follows:

1. vs. 1 – 6 about golden calf
2. vs. 7 – 14 about God's wrath
3. vs. 15 – 20 about the two tablets of stone being broken (signifying redemption)
4. vs. 21 – 29 about the wrath of Moses toward Aaron and the people of Israel (signifying sanctification)
5. vs. 30 – 35 about the prayer of Moses over the people of Israel (signifying the ministry of reconciliation)

Today we are starting learning the second part.

Exodus 32:7-11

7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

8 "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'

9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!

10 "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?"

The Lord's wrath burnt hot against the people of Israel because of these three things:

1. They had corrupted themselves (vs. 7 "And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves")
2. They had turned aside out of the way of the Lord (vs. 8 "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!')")
3. They had made themselves a stiff-necked / hard-hearted people (vs. 9 "9 And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people!")")

Now we will discuss the first reason, i.e. the people of Israel had corrupted themselves.

Genesis 6:11-12

11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

Men have corrupted their way since in the days of Noah, continued in the days of Israel until in the end of this age, **in these three matters:**

a. Marriage

Genesis 6:2

2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

Marriage is corrupted by the following acts:

1. the sons of God took wives of the daughters of men = Christians get married with non-Christians. Why do they do this? It is said, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were beautiful"; meaning they seek their mates by sight and heart desire. This corrupt way will bring about divorce, marrying and giving in marriage.
2. adultery

Youth has to take heed to the time of friendship or engagement, lest it is corrupt, as well as during the time of marriage.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

We must keep the holiness of marriage by the true teaching word / the word disclosed its mystery.

John 15:3

3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

The word which God has spoken is the word disclosed its mystery and the verses can explain one another. This is called the true teaching word or the word sharper than any two-edged sword. Only the teaching word is able to keep the holiness of marriage from the beginning of marriage, during the marriage is going on, until the marriage comes into the marriage supper of the Lamb. For that reason, every church must have this word. Or else, none of us (including pastors) can guarantee the holiness of life and marriage.

3. disobedience and dishonor toward parents

Proverbs 28:24

24 Whoever robs his father or his mother, And says, "It is no transgression," The same is companion to a destroyer.

b. Godliness

There are an inseparable connection between godliness and marriage, as both are the greatest mysteries written in the Bible. You can read the mystery of marriage in Ephesians 5 and the mystery of godliness in the second epistle of Timothy, chapter 3. If a man corrupts his marriage, he will be also corrupt in godliness, and vice versa.

Exodus 32:5

5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD."

A feast to the Lord refers to godliness.

Here are the practices of being corrupt in godliness:

1. to commit idolatry

= to serve and minister God with the purpose of seeking material things only.

= to insert and apply the worldly manners into the church service system

To give a clear picture of this, we take an example of Israel's abomination as they worshiped the golden calf. Why did they make a calf? For while they were being afflicted in Egypt, they saw the Egyptians worshiped a calf. They then remembered and made it of the gold. Egypt symbolizes the world so they committed service according to the way of the world. Our service and ministry now, whether in singing, playing musical instruments and preaching in church should never use worldly manners, or else there is idolatry.

One day a young man told me to change the method of playing musical instruments to attract more young people. I said that it was not necessary; if they want to come, better they come because of the word of God, not because of the music. We can see this clearly from baby Moses put into an ark of bulrushes and laid in the reeds by the river's bank. Moses represents the Church and the river symbolizes the world. Now people see the things of the river are good (for example, the method of singing, managing money, and playing music instruments) and want to apply them into the church ministry system. If they really do it, they were to draw the water of the river and put it into the Moses' ark. What will happen? It is not a progress, for sure, but a regress – since the ark would sink into the river.

2. to cause the others to stumble

Romans 14:20

20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense.

Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food = Do not cause the others to stumble in godliness.

We should not be easily offended and cause the others to stumble; just let the big things be small and the small things be nothing.

3. to become slothful/unfaithful in godliness

Proverbs 18:9

9 He who is slothful in his work Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

This will draw the wrath of God to come.

c. Their own lives

Men have corrupted their own lives by these two desires:

1. money

Ecclesiastes 7:7

7 Surely oppression destroys a wise man's reason, And a bribe debases the heart.

Why do people love to receive bribes? Because they are bound with money. This is the evil desire debasing the heart. If the heart, which is the center of our spiritual life, is debased, the whole life is corrupt.

2. adultery (the unclean desire)

Proverbs 6:32

32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.

These two desires are connected one another to destroy our lives, whereas it is said that we are the temple of God and if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. God bless us if we truly become the temple of the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of righteousness (meaning we have to walk in righteousness), and which is the Spirit of holiness (meaning we have to walk in holiness). As the result, God pleads us.

The corrupt men are like a vessel being broken in pieces until there is no use at all. They live the rest of their life simply for the wrath of God.

Isaiah 30:14

14 And He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel, Which is broken in pieces; He shall not spare. So there shall not be found among its fragments A shard to take fire from the hearth, Or to take water from the cistern."

Maybe your marriage and everything in your life are broken in pieces until you cannot see anything anymore, but death. But, hear His words! God is still here for you and loving you.

Jeremiah 18:1-6

*1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:
2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words."
3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.
4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.
5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:
6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!*

We should not give up even if we have been broken in pieces. God, the Potter, still gives us a chance of restoration.

Romans 9:20-24

*20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"
21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?
22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,
23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,
24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles,*

The broken vessel is not let to be the vessel of wrath, but is made again to be the vessel of mercy and glory.

How to restore the broken vessel?

As for God

- Jesus Christ was marred and corrupted to death to restore the corrupt men. Previously, God took clay, created and blew it to become a man according to His image but after the man was corrupted, it cannot be created anymore as the first time. Nevertheless, God is wonderful, He gives His mercy through Jesus' death on the cross.

Isaiah 52:13-14

*13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
14 Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;*

If Jesus had not been destroyed on the cross, the broken vessel would have not been restored again. Yet, Jesus had really been corrupted and destroyed to restore the corrupt men in destruction until they sometime become as glorious as He is. It is amazing!

- God is longsuffering, which means He always gives a chance.

Romans 9:22

22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of

wrath prepared for destruction,

As the late Rev. Pong Dongalemba always said, this is a lesson for shepherds: if we face a man walking out of the truth, we may not set him aside but give him a chance to repent.

The longsuffering of God is that He does not come the second time yet and we still breathe this life. It means we still have time to be made a new vessel.

As for us, we have to be in rest and quietness.

Isaiah 30:15

15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not,

This is the way out for the broken vessel being restored, but many people would not do it until they despair themselves.

being in rest = making introspection

When we are broken in pieces, we should look into ourselves and should not blame the others. After finding a sin or a mistake, we have to confess it to God and others, and never do it again (= repent = stop sinning and return to God). If we do not repent, however, we will be broken more and more until we cannot be restored anymore. As soon as we repent, the destruction is stopped and the fragments are restored again.

being in quietness = controlling ourselves

Lest there be any emotion and ambition, for they will throw and break us again. By quietness, we will be able to pray and worship God, believe in and surrender to Him.

See, God has made a way and the next is up to us. Only in rest and quietness, we will see a miracle.

1 Peter 4:7

7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

Do not be emotional, ambitious, desperate and disappointed, even to hope the others! Just be serious and watchful, also believe and surrender to God! In worship, we are reformed to be a new vessel for the glory of God in serving the others. This is called renewal of life.

The broken vessel cannot be restored if it remains stiff. That's why, everyone who walks in the newness of life must become tender. An example of the broken vessels was Mary Magdalene, who was possessed by seven demons. The figure seven symbolizes perfection. It means she was shaken by seven demons and had her perfect destruction. However, the Lord still could shape her into a new vessel by His mercy and longsuffering, as if the Two Hands of the Potter were holding on her.

Luke 8:2-3

2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons,

3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

Verse 2 shows a vessel broken in perfect pieces, while verse 3 shows ministry/ new vessel. Although we have broken in pieces, we are still given a chance to serve God according to the talent He has given, just like Mary Magdalene. After being despised as a harlot, she was made the vessel of mercy and glory to glorify His name.

If we give ourselves to be formed into the vessel of the mercy and glory of God, we will get the following results:

- **Our lives, rights, and rewards are reserved in the merciful Hands of God**

Isaiah 49:3-4

3 "And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.

4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.'

The broken vessel is renewed for the glory of God.

Thus, every minister we do should be done to glorify the name of God. Provided we can do this, God will keep our lives, rights, and rewards in His merciful hands. We may get a big salary, but it is not enough if we do not live in the merciful Hand. We cannot determine the numbers of people with a high job position but they still do corruption. This is to manifest that a big salary is not enough. On the contrary, even though our salary is very small – that people judge we would not live – we will

still live by the merciful hand of God, just like five loaves and two fish were enough for five thousand men.

In short, we should not see the little amount of money, but the great mercy of God.

Mark 6:34, 38, 44

34 And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.

38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." And when they found out they said, "Five, and two fish."

44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men.

The merciful Hand had made five loaves and two fish enough for five thousand men. We often forget this because we only see how much our money is and forget how great the mercy of God is. We have to earn money to live, but we should not forsake God just to get money, for we will lose the great mercy, which is greater than our salary – no matter how big it is – and greater than this world.

In prayers, I was made more understand about my teacher's words, saying: "A five thousand rupiahs that you receive from God is completely different from the one you receive from the world." What makes it different? The great mercy of God does. The mercy of God is not only to care us marvelously, but also to do miracles that we may cope with anything.

Matthew 14:14

14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

God will make a way; everything that seems to be impossible will be made possible and every illness will be healed.

• **We are made holy and blamless.**

Ephesians 1:4

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

God keeps on working on us until we are transformed as glorious as He is. When He comes back the second time, we will be the men of His glory, not His wrath.

Therefore, we should live in the Hand of the Potter by giving ourselves to be the vessel of His glory and should not harden our hearts and grieve the Lord's heart. Be tender like Mary Magdalene, who even though having broken in pieces, was made the vessel of glory. She walked in the mercy until she was glorified.

While we are talking to become tender, we remember a man who was hard in heart, that is, Judas. Judas had been warned many times, but he still hardened his heart even when he came at the last chance at the feast. Finally, Judas became the vessel of wrath.

Lest we be like Judas! No matter how many fragments we have broken in, we should remain in the Hand of the Potter. The rest and quietness are enough to bring us to the Merciful Hand until we are renewed as glorious as He is – even if the world says that we cannot live.

God bless you!