

Bible Study at Surabaya - Monday, September 17, 2007

We are going to read Jude which tells about badger skins/ the covering of condemnation. Badger skins/ the covering of condemnation now mean the protection and blessing from God to His true churches and the separation from the false churches. The true churches are like ripe wheat which give priority to the word of God and are going to get into the barn. Meanwhile, the false ones are similar to coarse grasses which are going to be condemned and burnt forever.

Jude 1: 20, 21 --> The characteristics of true churches

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

The characteristics of true churches are:

1. building themselves on the most holy/ perfect faith
2. praying in the ointment of Holy Spirit
3. keeping themselves in the love of God/ living in the love of God.

We have discussed about the third point that is why we have to keep ourselves in the love of God. The answer is because the love of many will grow cold like ice and lawlessness will abound like burning fire in the end of the world and these two things invite the condemnation of God to this world like in the era of Noah and Lot.

The shelters to keep the love of God are:

- home/ marriage
- the shepherding service system

We have learned about those two things.

Now, we are still learning about keeping ourselves in the love of God by comparing the process with Tabernacle as following:

1) KEEPING OURSELVES IN THE FIRST LOVE OF GOD

So, the love of God starts from the first love. Hence, the first love may not be lost since the first love is Jesus' love which He gave on the cross. The first love happened in the first coming of Jesus. Thus, we have to keep ourselves in the first love.

What is the practice of the first love? In Tabernacle, the first love refers to the court of Tabernacle and the practice is we get into the gate that is belief/ faith in Jesus. We get the first love from the cross and the practice is we are able to believe in Jesus. Thus, do not doubt because if we doubt, our first love is quenched.

I've witnessed that when I was a young man, one said: 'how could God be a man and have a son?' Then I doubted. If you doubt, it means that your first love is blurred and cold like smoked fire.

Once again, the practices of keeping ourselves in the first love are --> **Romans 10: 17** *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

- a. faith/ believing in Jesus (the court of Tabernacle) (http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_the+court.html). It means there is no doubt. Faith comes by hearing the word of God which is in the ointment of Holy Spirit and cannot be limited with everything. In short, the measure of the first love is our way in hearing the word of God.

Jeremiah 15: 16

16 Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

I ate your words = there is the first love. When we eat our favorite food, we will enjoy it so that we do not want anyone disturb us. Likewise, we have to enjoy the word of God when we are hearing it. Now, let us correct ourselves whether we have the first love or not like the congregation of Ephesians.

In the previous part, I have explained about faith --> do we frequently doubt God? If yes, it means that our first love is getting blurred. Our first love is measured by our way in hearing the word of God since faith comes from hearing the word of God. If we eat the word of God, it means that our first love is still burnt.

The signs of burnt first love are:

- we are able to eat the word of God
- the word of God is our fondness.

Eating the word of God means:

- hearing the word of God wholeheartedly
- understanding and believing in the word of God
- liking the word of God

In hearing the word of God, we have to eat it and it becomes our fondness because hearing the word of God wholeheartedly is the proof of the first love. There are some people in church who are happy when they praise God and hearing witnesses, yet they are not happy in hearing the word of God even they are bored and sleepy. These people do not have burnt first love. Therefore, do not be deceived because we can cry when we praise God as well as people cry when they are hearing earthly songs.

However, if in hearing the word of God we are able to be joyful, we will be joyful too when we are praising God and it is not emotion, yet it is the pure first love. Hence, correct our life immediately!

- b. repent/ the Altar of Burnt Offering(http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_the+altar+of+burnt+offerings.html) -> stop sinning and back to God. If we keep on sinning even though we have known it and Holy Spirit has reminded us, we will lose the first love. Thus, we have to correct our first love nowadays because we have to keep ourselves in the love of God whose basic is the first love of God on the cross and the processes are:

- faith/ believing in God -> we hear the word of God joyfully
- repent -> - stop sinning and back to God and stop judging and punishing sinners.

The sinners live in sorrow. If we judge and punish them, they will be hopeless and disappointed since they are not able to endure their conditions anymore. In contrast, we may not make allowances for them freely. The right attitude toward sinners is bringing them to God/ church or at least we can pray for them. I hope we can understand it.

- c. water baptism/the Brazen Laver(http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_the+brazen+laver.html) . We get into water baptism/ we are buried with Jesus and rise in a new life that is life in truth since the first love is truth.

Truth starts from small things such as making your identity card and when you are driving your vehicle because it is related to the first love. If we keep on doing wrong things, we will lose our first love. I hope we can understand it.

- d. thedoork/ Holy Spirit baptism/ the ointment and fulfillment of Holy Spirit(http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_door+of+tabernacle.html) -> **John 3: 6-8**

6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

8 "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

We are born of the Spirit so that we are similar to wind. In Psalms 104, wind is the partner of burnt fire. So, wind and fire describe one who is born of Holy Spirit = servants of God.

Burnt fire= being faithful and fervent -> this is the first love. Now, correct our life whether we serve God in burnt fire/ being fervent or not. Compare our ministry now and the previous whether we are still serve God fervently. If we are faithful and fervent, we will be in the first love. Do not serve God habitually -> you are faithful in coming to the church, but you feel nothing -> it means you lose your first love. Let alone if you are not faithful, it is surely you lose your first love.

The servants of God are also like **wind**.

Wind means:

- bringing peace . The servants of God may not cause quarrel and fight or opposing one side against the other because such people lose the first love. In short, being the servants of God is not only in the church, yet in every step (beat) of our life. It means that everywhere, every time and in any condition we are the servants of God. We may not quarrel in marriage, school, and our work's places since wind brings coolness/peace, e.g. we look at Jesus on the cross to make reconciliation between men and God -> it is the first love. Nowadays, the situation of the world is hot and needs coolness. Hence, we have to be wind that brings coolness/peace.
- obedience, wind will blows left or right where it wishes left or right = according to God's wishes.

These all are the first love, that is we keep ourselves in the love of God through these following processes which starts from the love of Jesus on the cross (in Tabernacle, it refers to the court):

- o faith/ believing in Jesus -> we hear the word of God, eat it and then we repent/ stop sinning and judging other
- o water baptism -> we live in righteousness
- o Holy Spirit baptism -> we become the servants of God who are like wind and fire -> faithful and fervent, bringing peace/ coolness and obedient.

This is the peak of the first love that is we are able to be obedient like Jesus who was obedient until He gave His life on the cross. The measure of our service and devotion to God is obedience. Hence, do not fight against the word of God intentionally.

The congregation of Ephesians was honored, yet God said against it because it did not have the first love and it deeply fell for the first love is the foundation. Do not serve God faithfully and actively but you are bored and sleepy in hearing the word of God! Be watchful of it!

Revelation 2: 2-4, 5, 7 -> threatening from God

2 "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;

3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.

4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

5 "Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent.

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

Vs. 2 -> there were works, labor, and patience and contrary to those who are evil. Let us go back to our first love when we hear the word of God fervently and serve God for the first time -> vs. 5 'do the first works'.

Vs. 7 is related to Paradise like Adam and Eve who were sent out of it because of their disobedience and it is now meant we lose our first love.

I said previously that the peak of the first love is obedience. If we keep ourselves in the first love, we will be able to be obedient starts from:

- believing in Jesus
- repent
- living in truth
- being obedient

It means that we are going to be brought to the Paradise/ have life in the atmosphere of Paradise. Where there is first love, we will feel the atmosphere of Paradise and we will go to the truly Paradise.

On the other hand, if we do not have the first love, we will be in the contrary condition --> Adam and Eve were sent out to the earth so that the ground was cursed. In short, there is only the atmosphere of curse outside the first love. Nevertheless, let us go back to the first love/ Christ's sacrifice through these following practices:

- we believe in Jesus
- we wholeheartedly hear the word of God
- we repent and live in truth

Our service has to be like fire and wind that is we turn to the first love/ in the atmosphere of Paradise. Maybe our marriages are in the atmosphere of curse, yet let us turn to the atmosphere of Paradise until we are in the Paradise/ The kingdom of a thousand peaces. In contrast, there is only the atmosphere of curse outside the first love that is we live in tears and are going to go to the hell. God also corrects me whether I have the first love. This is the first process to keep ourselves in the love of God that is we keep ourselves in the first love.

2) Joshua 23: 11 "Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God.**BEING PATIENT IN LOVING GOD FOR OUR SALVATION.** In Tabernacle, it refers to the Holy Place. The term 'being patience' is equal to our life.

The practices of being patient for our salvation are:

1. being patient in the Holy Place = being patient in the three kinds of devotion = the shepherding service system. So, being patient in the shepherding service system for our salvation = being patient in loving God.

Do not doubt even though we have to suffer physically, such as going to church right after we finished working or studying, to be able to be patient. Our patience is for our life. May God make it stress for you and me. Being patient in the three kinds of devotion/ the shepherding service system is for our life and it cannot be changed by anything. Do not be late and regret it later!

If we are careless about anything in this world for instance we are not patient in our school, we will not pass the exam, yet we can join the next exam. On the other hand, if we are careless in the patience in the shepherding service system and we cannot get into heaven/ our life is not safe, we will not be able to repeat it again because we cannot be redeemed twice.

Hence, we have to be seriously patient in the shepherding service system/ in three kinds of primary devotion; they are:

- (http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_golden+candlestick.html) the Golden Candlestick --> the patience in the Public Service;
- (http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_table+of+showbread.html) the Table of Showbread --> the patience in Bible Study devotion;
- (http://www.gptkk.org/tabernacle_the+golden+altar+of+incense.html) the Altar of Burnt Incense --> the patience in Pray and Worship devotion.

These three devotions are called as patience for our life. It will be fruitless if we come to church only to get earthly blessings such as a student goes to church to get good mark, because it is too simple than the patience for our life. In the shepherding service system, we can grow in the love of God. The first love is the basic which will be able to endure the next growing of the love of God. In John 21 there is a dialog between Jesus and Simon Peter --> God questioned three times about the shepherding service system and three times refer to the three kinds of devotion in the shepherding service system and Peter's love grew in it.

John 21: 15-17

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, sonof Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, sonof Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, sonof Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep."

The first question-> Jesus asked whether Simon loved God with the love of Agape/ the love of God and Simon answered that he loved God with the love of Filio/ the love for fellows. So, Simon did not have the love of Agape/ the love of God, he only had the love for fellows.

The second question-> Jesus asked the same question and Simon answered with the same answer as the first question.

The third question-> Jesus asked if Simon loved him with the love for fellows/ the love of Filio. Simon was grieved because he remembered that he had denied Jesus as his fellow/best friend and it means that Simon did not have the love of Agape/ the love of God and the love of Filio/ the love for fellows. Although he had served God and was able to walk on the wavy sea (experienced miracles), he was empty from the love of God/ the love of Agape and the love for fellows / the love of Filio. Therefore, in the shepherding service system -> "Feed My sheep". Jesus as the Great Shepherd gave His life on the cross = gave His love/ the love of Agape and the love for fellows / the love of Filio to his sheep so that in the shepherding service system, we grow in the love of God, both the love for God and fellows = the two tablets of stone. It is only in the shepherding service system, not in other places.

God checked Simon Peter. Thus, we have to be cautious in our ministry so that we are not like Simon Peter who served God without the love of God and the love for fellows. Hence, Jesus as the Great Shepherd gave his life for his sheep (in John 10). I hope we can understand it.

The previous part explains about the first love -> we have to turn at the first love. Then, we have to be shepherded so that we grow in the love of God and the love for fellows. The growing of love happens continually so that the love covers sins until there is no sin and we are perfect.

In 1 Peter 4 -> Peter wrote it after his dialog with Jesus about the shepherding service system and he experienced the growing of the love of God and for fellows. He wrote about how love covers a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4: 8

8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Peter had experienced the growing of love in the shepherding service system so that he did not doubt to write about love. So did David who wrote in the Old Testament. It has been for a long time from the era of David and Peter, yet the love of God is still the same.

Psalms 23: 1

1 <> *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

If we are shepherded, the love of God will cover sins until we are perfect.

There are two definitions of 'shall not want', those are:

- o spiritually -> there is no blemish because all things are perfect.
- o earthly -> the blessing of God is more real in our life if we are holier (a lot of our sins are covered) so that we shall not want.

If your sins expand and are not covered, Satan will stir up troubles in your life.

In Tabernacle, the Holy Place is covered by four coverings and the fourth covering is what we are studying that is the badger skins (the epistle of Jude). The Holy Place is covered -> in 1 Peter 4 -> love covers a multitude of sins until we are perfect -> I shall not want. If we are perfect/ covered, the condemnation of God/ hail and fire will not fall for us. The temptations from this world and the condemnation of God cannot pass the covering -> God blesses and protects us.

This is the result for shepherded people -> their multitude of sins are covered and they shall not want = God blesses and protects us more real -> it is the key of our life. Maybe you are the young people who are fresh graduate or master degree or doctor degree, yet you find difficulties in looking for a job. What can we do? The answer is a secret that we are under the covering. Although we have or do not have education license, we are the same before God as long as we are under the covering.

The nature is getting worse and the only place for our shelter is in the shepherding service system/ the land of Goshen. I hope we can understand it.

In conclusion, the processes to keep ourselves in the love of God are:

- o the foundation of love is the first love. We have to keep the first love by believing in Jesus, repenting, getting into water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism like wind and fire -> servants of God who are similar to wind and fire.
- o we are growing in the love of God/ being patient in the loving God for our life. We are really safe because the condemnation of God for this world and hell cannot touch us. Growing in the love of God covers our sins and we are holier day by day so that God blesses and protects us. I hope we can understand it.

2. being patient in temptation/ tearing of veil -> **James 1: 12** *Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.*

Being approved = being patient in enduring temptation until we receive the crown of life. Maybe there are storms in our life, but if we are in the shepherding service system, we will be safe. Do not be disappointed and hopeless in enduring temptation! Instead, we have to love God by being patient until we win and receive the crown of life.

3) 1 John 4: 17, 18

17 *Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*

18 *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*

WE HAVE THE PERFECT LOVE/ THE LOVE OF JESUS AS THE BRIDEGROOM OF HEAVEN WHO WILL RETURN.

So, the processes to keep ourselves in the love of God are keeping ourselves in the first love, growing in the love of God and the peak of love that is the perfect love/ the love of Jesus as the Bridegroom of heaven. I hope we can understand it.

What are the practices of the perfect love/ the love of Jesus as the Bridegroom of heaven who will return?

- **1 John 4: 18** *There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.*

The first practice of having the perfect love is we are not in fear/ worry.

There is no fear in love means:

- a. we have the perfect love
- b. we are able to give all of our life to God = the surrender of a wife to her husband = surrender body to its head= placing Jesus as The Head in our life.

The earth will shake so that a lot of people, including the children of God who do not grow in love and give up

wholeheartedly to God, will die because of fear and worry.

Luke 21: 25- 28

25 "And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;

26 "men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.

27 "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 "Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

When the shake happens, what should we do? We have to look up and lift up our heads = give up all of our life to God. The world is shaken nowadays and a lot of people are in fear. Staying in fear and worry are not good because it means that we do not place Jesus as the Head. Instead, we give priority and rely on another power. Now, let us live in the perfect love that is we do not have fear, yet we only have the surrender of all of our life to God. The shake is the proof that God wants us to learn practicing the perfect/ bridegroom love. We only hope like a wife to her husband and only loves her husband/ place her husband as the head/ place Jesus as the Head.

- **1 John 4: 17** *Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.*

If there is no fear, we will have boldness to face two things as follows:

- a. The Day of Judgment. Jesus will return as the King of all kings, as the Bridegroom of heaven and the Fair Judge. What is the practice of having boldness in the Day of Judgment? The practice is we have to make reconciliation of our sins because we are walking to the judgment throne.

Matthew 5: 23-25

23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

25 "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

If we serve God while keep on sinning, we have to leave it first and make reconciliation, but do not leave the ministry forever. We have to serve again right after we make reconciliation. If we do not want to make reconciliation or we keep on sinning because of prestige or other things, we will be handed over to the judge and thrown into prison/ hell forever and it means we do not get any forgiveness.

Your adversary = God is the adversary of sinners. On the way --> I call it as the end of way now because the Day of Judgment draws near. Thus, before the Day of Judgment we have to do these following things:

- we make reconciliation with God --> we confess our sins to God seriously and after we are forgiven, do not repeat the sins
- we make reconciliation with our fellows --> we confess and forgive (including forget other people's sins) each other so that we are peaceful.

Making reconciliation = finishing our sins so that we are peaceful. This is the meaning of having boldness in the Day of Judgment and we will not be thrown into prison.

In short, the perfect love is:

- there is no fear
- we have boldness in the Day of Judgment by making reconciliation with God and our fellows. We also may not keep our own and other people's sins by saying: 'I will not make reconciliation with him/ her forever' We have to be cautious because on the day of Judgment, the sins will be opened and we have to be responsible of it. So, the best solution is we make reconciliation, starts from our marriage --> between a husband and wife, children and parents and vice versa and siblings do not judge each other, but we have to make reconciliation. I hope we can understand it.

- b. **1 John 3: 21, 22**

21 *Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.*

22 *And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*

Having confidence toward God is praying and worshipping God. These are our duties nowadays to reach the perfection. Besides our activities, we have to remember that:

- we have to serve God -> this is the first love -> our ministry is like fire and wind = we are faithful and fervent in our ministry
- we have to be shepherded
- we have to get closer to God/ worship God like tearing veil/ getting into the Holy Place.

Jesus is in the Most Holy Place/ the throne of kingdom of heaven, how can we get closer to Him? We can get closer to Him only by worshipping God until we tear the veil and meet Jesus/ the High Priest/ Great shepherd.

Hebrews 4: 14-16

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Coming boldly to God = getting closer to God = the throne of grace. So, coming boldly to the throne of grace = worship. Hence, we have to worship God a lot/ get closer to God/ come boldly to the throne of grace to help us in time of need (vs. 16). Do not decide the time based on our perception, but we have to give all to God/ we wait for God's time.

In the wedding feast in Cana, they ran out of wine and Mary, the mother of Jesus said to Him "They have no wine." Jesus said to her "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." Now, it means -> we beg to God but the help does not come. Why does God's help not come? Because:

1. We are trained to have God's character that is patient because God wants us to have His character that is gold. If we are patient, we will have characters of gentle and lowly in heart -> 'learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart,' If God does not help us, we have to learn to be patient, gentle and lowly in heart. In contrast, if we murmur, we will be in more burdens.
2. God concerns with ourselves, who have a lot of weakness: our characters and sayings are not good. God wants to change our bad characters because God is able to solve our problems in a wink of eyes if we have good characters. If God changes our bad characters into good ones, God will solve our problems and it means we get double helps from God spiritually and earthly. On the other hand, if God always helps us in earthly problems, our bad characters will stay in our life and we become proud of it.

My brethren, if God has not helped us yet, it does not mean that He does not give us His mercy, but He still concerns with our life and He wants us to be patient/ have Jesus' characters and we become good person and it is God's time.

Being patient makes everything good. Do not be angry and blame other people if you are confronting temptations. Therefore, we have to worship God a lot nowadays as our professing that we only depend on the mercy of God which is able to help us and also bring us to perfection so that we are deserved to welcome Jesus' second coming.

1 Peter 5: 10, 11

10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

We continually get closer to God by:

- serving God like wind and fire -> the first love
- being patient in the shepherding service system
- the perfect love -> we can get closer to God/ we worship God a lot and depend on the grace of God so He is the High Priest and Great Shepherd will help us in time of need. He also will perfect, establish, strengthen and settle us in the end of the world

God is going to perfect us with His grace like two hands of the High Priest which are stretched to perfect us as Him and make us deserve to welcome Jesus' second coming and we will be with Him forever. Do not be hopeless and disappointed, yet we have to depend on the grace of God nowadays.

God blesses us!