

# Being shepherded is beautiful

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There are several things that I would like to testify:

1. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 I checked ASTO (Anti-Streptolysin Titer O) - a test to measure the antibody titer as a sign whether one has been infected by *Streptococcus beta hemolyticus* - for my son because in 2009 **his ASTO was more than 200-** for a child, it should be minus -, which made my son had to have an injection therapy once a month for 5 years.

It made my son suffered from rheumatic fever, out of breath, and could not walk. I saw a lot of children in the Hermina hospital who had to be hospitalized because they could not walk when they came home from school. When my son's ASTO was tested, we were afraid that the result would have still been positive.

We struggled - as Ezra, my son, learnt to fast for this problem -, because we were afraid and anxious of the result.

A lot of friends who had the same problem found the second positive result, so that they had to continue the injection for the next five years.

On Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> the result came out. We opened the result in our car after the service, and **the result was negative!** Praise the Lord.

We were very grateful. **It was all because of God's grace and His miracle, as well as the prayer of our pastor and his wife, and all of the congregation.**

However, **Satan did not stay still.** In March 2015, I visited the doctor and **he suggested us to do another treatment for 5 years** in the concern of the heart and rheumatic fever; as stated by the pediatricians congress from all over the world. I asked, 'Why? We have already had a negative result. By several reasons, the doctor said that it was suggested to do so.

Ezra's father could not accept this and said that we did not need to follow what the doctor said.

*My son and I stayed still, confused and I could only say 'Ezra, we could not be separated from God, and we have to put our hope and depend on the living God. Your father said not to do, but the doctor suggested us to do. We can only stay still.'*

Actually, we have already felt that this is God's miracle, because the result had been positive, and then it changed to negative, and Ezra could breathe normally, even when he played football.

In that condition, **we learnt to obey and depend only on God.** We believed that there was a power of Jesus' stripes in the baptism.

2. The second thing is about **baptism.**

When I saw several children from the Sunday School were baptized, I was happy as a Sunday School teacher to see those children who were little kids got older and entered their new life.

At that moment, I also cried because **Ezra had not decided yet to be baptized.** Indeed, to be baptized, it could not be pushed or stopped.

It became my struggle, other than:

- The struggle of my family which was not united,
- The struggle of what Ezra had experienced,
- The struggle of how Ezra could be in the true shepherding,
- The struggle so that Ezra's heart could be moved by God's word to be baptized.

It became Ezra's struggle too, not only mine.

I could not think and when God's word strengthened me, I often said: "*God, I do not know what will happen next. I surrender everything to you, oh God.*", but often Ezra and I also said: "*When will it reach the end, when will I be like others, when will we be able to go to the services as a whole family?*"

When Ezra decided to be baptized, I was happy and anxious at the same time and said: "*Ok, pray and go to the services earnestly, and pray to ask for your father's permission.*"

Honestly, **both of us were afraid** that Ezra's father would have not let him to be baptized since his father goes to other

church.

However, through this baptism I could see **the power of the word**.

- Ezra's struggle to get the permission from his father through Blackberry Messenger, because we were afraid to tell it directly.

We were afraid and we were waiting for his father's reply. At the end, **he said OK** and we were relieved.

- The second thing, we hoped that Ezra's father would come to the baptism.

On Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, I was strengthened by the song of the youth choir: "*When you are alone, facing a problem, it seems that there is no solution.... only God can understand. Surrender every burden to Your creator*".

Listening to this song, we were holding our tears, and I knew what Ezra felt. The process from asking for his father's permission and hoping that his father would come to pray, were not easy for him.

The word that we received on Sunday was very beautiful and it strengthened and showed us that God loved us as the word said '**God cannot hold Himself when He sees our tears**, so there is hope and assurance that He will help us.'

In the end, God helped us and **Ezra's father came** to Malang on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, although he was invited to a wedding of the child of his cousin at the same day.

- The third process happened on Sunday, a day after the baptism, as I and Ezra had feared, that Ezra's father would ask him to go to the Sunday School Service in his church, because his father is the teacher of Sunday School there.

I was confused while Ezra did not dare to say anything, and we were afraid to say no.

For years, every Sunday I always grieved when I let Ezra go to a Sunday School Service with his father in another church. Every Sunday, we always prayed "*God, protect Ezra from false teachings that are not according to your Word.*"

That Sunday, I was really sad, and it lasted for several days. I had a headache for several days and I drank up to 5 doses of medicine to relieve my headache. I could not endure it.

Finally, we came to see the pastor and his wife as our shepherd. We did not know what we should say or do. However, the living God's word had come to us, before we came to see the pastor.

God's word before and after the baptism, as well as during the priests upgrading services corrected me and prepared Ezra. I got God's word: *Priest takes God's disgrace, should be willing to suffer through His disgrace*. Ezra and I looked at each other, as if we were prepared to face these things.

I came and talked to the pastor and he affirmed about the truth and **the matter of not listening to other teachings anymore**, because women are allowed to teach in Ezra's father's church. The pastor told me to hold the Word of God, as what I had listened to.

On our way home, we cried on the car, I could not think how Ezra should say this to his father. What if he became angry and refused it? Every time there was a meeting of Sunday School teachers, Ezra was not allowed to go home with his uncle or his grandmother, so he had to wait until the meeting finished.

As a mother, I could understand what Ezra felt. On Wednesday, we listened to the word in the Prayer Service, and I was really corrected. I could not be a hyssop dipped in blood yet- I was not willing to suffer - let alone be hyssop and be dipped in a sour wine mingled with gall, so we had not yet listened to Jesus 'saying "*It is done!*"

I **lost heart**, so I stopped praying for my husband to God. I lost my heart and I could only endure.

I was a weak and useless hyssop, but God's word pierced through my heart. It was difficult to pass through these last days.

I told Ezra: '*Give thanks to God for what you have to undergo because not everyone has the same experience. After asking for the permission to be baptized, the process keeps going. There should be tears, sadness, and sprinkles of blood to step forward in the baptism, minister to God, and be in the true shepherding.*' I was sure that God has a beautiful plan. Ezra might seem like an adult - he is tall and big -, but actually he was 13 years old, but he

had to shed so many tears and be stressed.

According to my feeling, I wanted to shout and rebel, but **God's word strengthened me.**

On Thursday, Ezra asked his father's permission to minister to God and did not go to his father's church. Even though he asked it by phone, I knew that it was hard for him, I was sure that he was afraid. I knew that his father had read the message but he did not reply, and we thought: '*Oh no, it is the end.* We were ready to be scolded or even worse, be kicked out from the house.

Ezra resent the message after he finished school, and his father replied at 7 pm. **It was a miracle! God's miracle is true!** I thank the pastor and his wife, as well as the Sunday School teachers! It feels like we were Daniel. I don't know what God did to his father so that he replied: '**it is up to Ezra.**'

I could not believe it and I read it again and again and I hugged Ezra. Thank God.

Thursday evening, Friday, and Saturday were **very beautiful**, I could not describe it with words. Saturday evening, the flesh started to speak: What if his father forgot about his promise and asked Ezra to go to his church? What if his reply was only for letting him to minister, but not for not going to his father's church.

I told Ezra; '*You have to be strict.* Sunday morning until 8 am, we were worried, afraid, and anxious. We were waiting while praying: '*God, show us your perfect miracle.*'

Praise the Lord, **everything went according to the plan**, namely his father went alone and did not say anything about Ezra. We were relieved, praise the Lord!

I thank Jesus, pastor and his wife, for their prayer which depth cannot be measured, and we also give thanks to the support and prayers that the Sunday School teachers have given to Ezra so that he can undergo this hard process.

I can see the examples that the other Sunday School teachers in WR Supratman 4 gave me through this problem.

I can see how the teachers support and lead the students to be reborn. I see and experience it.

Once more I would like to say, **it is really beautiful to be shepherded and attached to the true vine**, God's word is like His hands that lead us. Our struggle is not finished, but the most important is that God's word will keep working on us and we will always be the hyssop and we believe that one day **we will listen to His voice saying: "It is done!"**, and we all will be united in the same shepherding.

We want to use the chance to minister to God earnestly.

I am always reminded by my colleague in Sunday school - Ningsih - about God's Word in the Old and New Service: **this year is the year of the blood sprinkles, but also the year of glory and miracles.**

This month, God has given Ezra and me freedom. Ezra has been reborn, he does not go to other church anymore, and we are led to become the hyssop that God uses. This is the biggest gift for me, the freedom from my long struggle.

Glory be to God.