

Public Service at Surabaya - Sunday, January 21, 2007

Colossians 4:17

4:17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

It is about struggle to fulfill and finish the ministry.

1 Corinthians 9:25

9:25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.

A perishable crown is obtained from competition in the world, such as football competition, but an imperishable crown is from service and ministry, which is also a competition. To receive a perishable crown, everyone who competes has to finish the competition; otherwise, he fails. Similarly, we compete through ministry – no matter what our office is as long as in accordance with the will of God – until reach the finish line to receive an imperishable crown.

There are some requirements to compete and obtain eternal crown:

1. Hebrews 12:1

12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Laying aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares.

Weight = something which is behind = sin which has been done, said, and thought. We must lay aside every weight by confessing them to God and the others. After being forgiven, never we do it anymore. In such a manner, the competition will become light, since there is no more weight.

Every weight has been laid aside, but the sin still ensnares us. Satan always sets a snare where we are used to walk. For example:

- A husband always goes to work alone by a motorcycle or a car. He is used to go straight to reach the office and that is where Satan sets a snare through a female colleague. Then, both go to work together. If it continues every day, they gradually become ensnared.
- A director becomes ensnared with his secretary where he meets everyday.
- Pastors become ensnared in ministry by pride of being successful (success in their eyes) and disappointment with unsuccessfulness.

We must be careful with Satan in his deceit ensnaring us where we usually walk. It is all to die our ministry down, bind and drag us into perdition.

These are some examples of snare:

○ 1 Timothy 6:9-10

6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The lust/love of money, i.e., hunting for money.

We need money and earning a living is not wrong, but lest we hunt for money. Esau loved to hunt and finally lost his birthright (a right to enter the kingdom of heaven); he perished.

Hunting for money means as follows:

- earning money by disregarding whether it is sinful or not / pursuing dishonest profit
Such a man becomes ensnared with the lust of money and will be dragged into perdition. If the Christian always try to gain profit/earn money – no matter whether it is sinful or not -, they become ensnared and will not set free until they perish.
- earning money until forsaking the service and ministry
It is not wrong to earn money or pursue education; even I always pray that you become successful. However, if we earn money or pursue education until forsake the service and ministry, it means that we hunt for money and become ensnared with the bond of money.
- becoming stingy and greedy like Judas stole God's possession (tithe and special offering)

God sets the ordinance of tithe and special offering with these purposes:

- in order that we are not bound with money

- in order that we belong to God

Tithe belongs to God, so if we return it to God, the whole life and our business belong to God as well.

- **Deuteronomy 12:29-31**

12:29 "When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,

12:30 "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'

12:31 "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

This is to show God's firmness: no enquiry after heresies may be raised and let all desires to learn them be put away. We must be firm and not hesitant that no sin could ensnare. Thus, another snare is false teachings/heresies which bring forth perdition.

2 Peter 2:1a

2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you,

Although a Christian has walked in righteousness, but is deceived by a false teaching, he will perish too. The late Rev. Pong Dongalemba always said: if a pastor commits adultery, he will go to hell alone; but if he teaches heresies, all of the Church will go to hell with him.

Thus, snares of sin are the lust of money and heresies.

King Solomon was an excellent man; none ever had wisdom like him as in Holy Bible. He was still young and inexperienced, but appointed ruler over Israel and faced international issue, that is, marriage. Solomon faced two harlots struggling for a son and he only used a sword; meaning that Solomon held to the teaching word which is like a sword sharper than any two-edged sword. Even though Solomon was still young and inexperienced, he could overcome problems of the Church, even international issue (problem in marriage), only by a sword (the true teaching word).

We have had the true teaching word so there is no need of asking about another teaching. Unfortunately, Solomon failed when he was old. Perhaps he thought himself steadfast in faith so he learned his wives' lords. As such, he finally laid down his sword and followed heresies. That is Solomon; who are you and I?

Today we must be delivered from heresies and hold fast the true teaching word (a sword) which we have experienced. We do not need to change it; otherwise, we will be like Solomon.

Students of Lempin-El, remember our motto: Better we be rejected with the true teaching word than be welcomed/accepted without the true teaching word.

If we want to be free from heresies, we may not ask anything about it; even learn them.

Here is to sum up the first requirement of ministering God which is like a competition to reach the finish and receive the crown:

- laying aside weights/sins that have been done by confessing and not repeating after being forgiven.
- Laying aside snares of sin:
 - the lust of money: by returning tithe and special offering
 - heresies: by holding to the only true teaching word (a sword)

After laying aside weights and snares of sin, the service and ministry will become easy and light, since it is sin that makes burdensome, not ministry. As parents will not allow their children take up fifteen-hundred-ounce weight, which is beyond their ability, likewise is God; He will not trust a ministry beyond what we are able, but why do we feel bored and heavy and want to forsake the ministry? It is due to weights and snares of sin. After they are laid aside, the ministry will become easy and light; we will love and not forsake the ministry.

Similarly, weight of sin makes a marriage burdensome; to meet each other will be burdensome if one of them (husband or wife) keeps sin. After weights of sin are laid aside, however, the marriage will become easy and light; we will not leave the marriage (since it is also the ministry).

2. Hebrews 12:2

12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Looking unto Jesus who is sitting on the right hand of God / Jesus as the High Priest.

The ministers of God are priests and the Head of priests is the High Priest. Thus, we have to look unto the High Priest in ministry. If we look unto others, we will fail in ministry just like Moses and Lot's wife. Moses was even unable to serve two people, an Egypt and an Israelite. He killed the Egyptian then he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he hid him in the sand (Please read Exodus). "Looking this way and that way" = relying on men. If we depend on men in ministry, there must be hypocrisies (something rotten) hiding in heart.

Then, how worse it would be if we "look behind". Lot's wife would compete but looked behind; she had not run yet, but had become a pillar of salt.

looking behind = looking the world and all facilities; becoming a pillar of salt = being unprofitable.

As written in Hebrews 12, these requirements must be fulfilled to engage in competition:

- laying aside weights and snares of sin
- looking unto Jesus who is sitting on the right hand of God

"Looking unto Jesus who is sitting on the right hand of God" means as follows:

○ **Hebrews 7:26**

7:26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;

"Looking unto Jesus" shows the sanctification of our attention. Before ministering God, our attention must be sanctified. Very often runners do some mistakes at the start because they pay no enough attention. Therefore, our attention must be sanctified to look unto Jesus as the High Priest sitting on the right hand of God before we compete.

Jesus as the High Priest sitting on the right hand of God is Jesus the High Priest who is holy, harmless, and undefiled. For us, it means that we must follow the High Priest to walk in holiness.

To what do we pay attention? Urim and the Thummim was put in the breastplate of judgment of Aaron's heart (Exodus 28), pointing to the sanctification of the word sharper than any two-edged sword.

Hebrews 4:12-13

4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Thus, if we want to follow the example of Jesus/the High Priest in holiness, we must pay attention to the Urim and the Thummim/the word of prophecy/the word which is sharper than any two-edged sword. Only by this word we will be sanctified and become as perfect as Jesus.

2 Peter 1:19

1:19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

the prophetic word = the word of prophecy = the word of sanctification = the teaching word

following the example of Jesus' holiness = looking unto the Urim and the Thummim = heeding and practicing the teaching word. By this way, the teaching word will shine in our hearts/sanctify our hearts.

Heart is the source of life like electrical current; where there is no current/sanctification, the heart gets dark.

Once again, looking unto Jesus = following the example of Jesus as the High Priest in holiness = heeding prophetic word, listening carefully, understanding, believing, being sure, and practicing the word. In such a manner, the teaching word will shine and sanctify our hearts; we come as a light primarily in marriage. Thus, ministers have to follow the example of Jesus as the High Priest in holiness by coming as a light in their families.

Matthew 5:15

5:15 "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house."

The teaching word sanctifies to present us as a light in our families.

- If a husband is sanctified and becomes a light, he will love his wife and not be bitter toward her.
- If a wife is sanctified and becomes a light, she will submit to her husband in everything.
- If children are sanctified and become a light, they will obey their parents.

The shining light is able to overcome two kinds of darkness which always try to destroy a marriage, they are:

- darkness of basket, which refers to economy and eating drinking
More and more marriages are broken because of eating-drinking sins (drunkenness and illegal drugs).
- darkness of bed, which refers to sexual sins, giving and marrying in marriage.
More and more unmarried people become corrupted with sexual sins.

Seeing that, we should return to the teaching word by following Jesus' holiness as the High Priest, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled. We just need to heed the word (Urim and Thummim) and let it sanctify to present us as a light. Darkness will not defeat us.

Darkness threatens young men, but cannot destroy them as long as they become a light. Darkness cannot endure, even will be swallowed up by the shining light.

We do not only come as light among our families, but also as stars in social life.

Daniel 12:3

12:3 Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.

Stars are those who are wise and those who become a blessing in turning many to righteousness.

becoming a blessing to others = glorifying the name of the Lord = the shining stars.

As written in Revelation, stars are put in the right hand of God and they will never fall down.

Thus, we come as lights and stars, even morning star (being as perfect as Jesus). The Bright and Morning Star is Jesus Himself. Son of the morning was Lucifer, but he fell down and Jesus replaces him.

Let us follow Jesus:

- in His holiness by heeding the word
- not looking this way and that way; lest we minister God just because men order us to go here and there.
Such gives no advantage; let the word shine in our hearts.

◦ **Hebrews 12:3**

12:3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Following the example of Jesus as the High Priest in endurance – so as not to be weary, disappointed, and discouraged in facing sufferings without sin.

If a minister is afraid to go to church because of the rain, no doubt this man does not look unto Jesus the High Priest, but men/the world like Lot's wife. Whereas it simply rains water and not brimstone. The rain actually refreshes us but it sometimes has arouse our fear to go to church. At last, we do not go to church either. The time is coming in which we have to face sprinkling of blood/suffering without sin, such as being reviled for doing nothing wrong.

Thus, to compete/minister God and obtain the crown, we must look unto Jesus' endurance in order not to become weary, disappointed, and discouraged. This is how to look to the Hands of the High Priest. It happened that Aaron had to bring blood and incense to enter into the Holiest Place. The sprinkled blood and burnt incense (the smoke of incense) resulted in the brightness of glory of God. Therefore, in order not to become weary and discouraged, we look Jesus' endurance/the Hands of the High Priest with sprinkled blood and incense; meaning that we have to worship God more and more to endure sufferings without sin. The more we worship God, the more we are strong and courageous. We cannot endure sprinklings of blood without worship. By worship, the brightness of glory of God will shine on us. When sufferings without sin hit us more distressingly, the greater brightness of glory shines on us.

This is what we have to do:

- a. Laying aside weights and snares of sin
 - b. Looking unto Jesus' holiness = looking to the word for sanctification (not looking this way and that way, not even looking behind)
 - c. Looking to the Hands of God which are full of blood = worshipping God
- Lest we be doubtful of sprinklings of blood / sufferings without sin and become weary and discouraged, but let us lift up worship! Without the smoke of incense (worship), one who undergoes the sprinkling of blood will be destroyed. The more blood and smoke of incense are lifted up, the greater the brightness of glory shines. In accordance with the word at New Year's Eve service, we will encounter God's judgment atmosphere, but God promises the brightness of glory through our sufferings and worship.

◦ **Psalms 107:43**

107:43 Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

Looking unto Jesus as the High Priest who is sitting on the right hand of God = looking to His Heart = understanding His lovingkindness (breastplate was put on the high priest's heart)

These things need heeding:

- Urim and Thummim
- His Hands (Jesus endured even unto His crucifixion)
- His Heart

After dying with four wounds, Jesus' side was pierced by a Roman soldier (gentile) unto His Heart. It was the deepest wound and it is the mercy and grace for Gentiles.

It is not wrong to study, work, and earn money. Above all, we must understand the lovingkindness of God as if looking unto His heart which was pierced for us/Gentiles. Lovingkindness cannot be separated from goodness and mercy. This is to testify what David confessed.

Psalms 23:6

23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever.

Understanding the lovingkindness of God is not a mere theory, but manifest through our being shepherded (Psalms 23 "The Lord is my shepherd"; HE is the High Priest and the Great Shepherd).

"And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever" = being in shepherding (Holy Place) = continuing steadfastly in the three main services (three objects of Holy Place).

Day each day we realize that the world is getting more unstable. The world is like desert in which it is hard to sow and harvest and beasts are found wandering. We can do nothing, but be shepherded and understand the goodness and mercy of God.

The goodness and mercy/lovingkindness of God is useful for the following things:

1. Hebrews 4:16

4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*
the throne of the High Priest = the throne of grace

The High Priest/the Great Shepherd with goodness and mercy provides help in time of need.

One day David was in trouble after Absalom – the son of David - rebelled against him and he had to leave his house. If he had not been David, he would have preferred to fight against Absalom. In fact, David did not fight against Absalom; if he had fought, he would have obviously prevailed. But again, David did not fight against Absalom since Absalom is his son. Moreover, he knew that he lived not by his house, but the goodness and mercy of God.

2 Samuel 15:25-26

15:25 *Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place.*

15:26 *But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."*

Absalom rebelled and David did not fight, even he was willing to leave his house. It showed that David totally trusted his life in the goodness and mercy of God. "If I may return, it is the goodness and mercy of God, but if I may not, it is still the goodness and mercy of God. For I live not by house, but the goodness and mercy of the Lord." This is the principle of David. It was not a matter of his house; instead, the house was merely given by the goodness and mercy of God.

Before ruling over Israel, David was simply a shepherd in the field, while his brothers were captains. Then Samuel saw and considered one of them, but not David, commendable to become the king. Because of the goodness and mercy of God, however, David was appointed to become king.

Thus, David was willing to leave his house because he did not hold his position, but due to his principle: although he no longer became a king and had to leave the house, it was not a trouble because he did not consider that the position was his life but he lived by the goodness and mercy of God.

Many times, we regard the goodness and mercy of God worthy as HE provides a job when we are jobless. Such thinking leads us to hold the job, not the mercy of God. Finally, we work hard and serve God no more. In such condition, we live by job. It is wrong.

In the end, David found grace to help him and he could return to his house. The grace was faithful still after he committed adultery with Bathsheba. David should have perished, but he testified that surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life. David was saved and everything got better. We will also find grace to restore the broken.

2. The goodness and mercy of God makes everything good in our lives.

If anyone of us is bitterly broken, we should compete to correct the service and ministry by these ways:

- laying aside weights and sins
- looking unto Jesus by following His holiness
- taking heed to the word of God for sanctification
- following His patience by worshiping much to be shone with the brightness of Lord's glory
- looking unto His Pierced Heart = understanding the goodness and mercy of God = being shepherded, so that the goodness and mercy helps us in time of need and makes everything good in our lives.

3. The goodness and mercy of God will become our imperishable crown.

Psalms 103:4

103:4 *Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,*

The lovingkindness, goodness, and tender mercies will become our imperishable crown that we may welcome Jesus' second coming and be with Him in New Jerusalem forever more (Psalms 23: David said, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the LORD Forever").

Let us correct and struggle for the service and ministry until we finish the race – whatever we must go through! David went through valleys (the valley of sin, the valley of death, and the valley of distress), but he was lifted up by goodness and mercy of God until he received the crown.

God bless you!