

Christmas Service in Malang, December 25, 2011 (Sunday Evening)

Matthew 26:36-46 is about **GETHSEMANE**.

Matthew 26:36, 40-41

26:36. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, *“Sit here while I go and pray over there.”*

26:40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, *“What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?”*

26:41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Gethsemane is a place of pressing.

At Gethsemane, Jesus experienced flesh pressing or flesh suffering without any sins.

In the last days, the church of God or the body of Christ will also experience flesh suffering without any sins, that is in the form of suffering to be able to minister God, suffering because of defending truth, facing difficulties in the world, slander, injustice, etc.

All these things cannot be tackled by anything from this world (richness, smartness, having high position, etc.), but Gethsemane can only be tackled by **WATCHING and PRAYING**.

In this Christmas night, how do we watch and pray?

Luke 2:8-11

2:8. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

2:9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

2:10 Then the angel said to them, *“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”*

2:11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

We watch and pray as shepherds who were keeping watch at Christmas night.

What should be watched?

Shepherd (pastor) watches and prays to get the Shepherding Word, that is the food for the sheep, and raise intercession prayer for the salvation of the sheep.

Shepherding Word equals to the revelation of the secret of the Word which is trusted by God to a pastor to be preached faithfully, continually, and repetitively, to become the spiritual food for the congregation, such that the congregation may grow to spiritual maturity.

The character of sheep is ruminating. The right sheep will be happy when the Word is repeated.

Luke 2:15, 20

2:15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, *“Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”*

2:20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Shepherding Word is the Word which can be heard and seen.

It means that the Word can become real, not only a theory.

The shepherds saw the baby of Jesus as the Savior.

How is the attitude of the congregation?

The congregation watches and prays to be able to hear and see the Shepherding Word (eat the Shepherding Word), as experienced by the pastor.

The process is as follows:

1. Listening the shepherding Word solemnly in the anointing of Holy Spirit, until we can understand it (enjoying the shepherding Word).

2. Believing the shepherding Word such that it becomes faith in heart.
3. Practicing/ doing the Word in our daily life.

Thus, we will see Jesus in two appearances as follows:

a. The baby of Jesus as the Savior.

It means that **shepherding Word brings sinful life to the salvation.**

Jesus is the only man who has no sins, who can save sinful men.

The process of receiving salvation is as follows:

- Believing Jesus.
- Repenting.
- Being newly born from water and the spirit (water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism), such that we receive new life/ heavenly life, that is life in righteousness.
Righteousness equals to salvation. Being not right means not saved.

b. **Revelation 1:10, 12-13, 16**

1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

1:13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.

1:16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.

Jesus in glory as the High Priest, King of kings, and perfect heavenly Bridegroom.

Besides seeing Jesus, we can also see ourselves (the congregation), that is the seven lampstands. It denotes the perfect church/ congregation as Jesus is perfect.

The perfect congregation equals to the woman with the light of sun, moon, and stars. It equals to becoming the light of the world.

Revelation 12:1

12:1. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

There are two great miracles as follows:

- Christmas is God was born as man in the appearance of Jesus.
This miracle happened in Bethlehem.
- The second Christmas is we, the sinful lives, will be renewed as glorious/ perfect as God, that is becoming the perfect body of Christ (the heavenly bride).
This miracle is happening inside the shepherding.

Thus, **shepherding pen** is **our place to experience the greatest miracle. It equals to the place to erase all impossibilities.**

The activities in the shepherding are as follows:

1. **Activities in light.**

Romans 13:11-14

13:11. And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

13:13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

The practices are as follows:

- Casting off the works of darkness/ sins, that is:

- a. Casting off eating-drinking sins, that is smoking, getting drunk, gambling, consuming drugs, etc.
- b. Casting off unclean sins, that is marrying and being given in marriage sin, sexuality sins with all its variety, including sexuality deviations (homosexuality and lesbian), wrong marriage (mix marriage, marrying-divorcing), infidelity, etc.
- c. Casting off envy and dispute.
Envy means not appreciating God's blessing, God's usage, and God's mercy on us.
(We must give thanks no matter how much we receive from God, since all of us receive equally).

All disputes must be solved through reconciliation.

If there is dispute about the teaching, the way out is going back to the Bible.

○ Put on the Lord Jesus Christ as the armor of light.

The practice is perseverance in the shepherding pen, that is perseverance in three main services (three equipments in the Holy Place of Tabernacle).

- a. Golden Candlestick = perseverance in General Service = fellowship with God the Holy Spirit (Christ) in His gifts.
We receive the gifts of Holy Spirit such that our lamp keeps burning.
If we keep persevering, once it will become **a garland of twelve stars on the head**(the perfect gift).
- b. Table of Showbread = perseverance in Bible Study with Holy Communion = fellowship with the Son of God (Jesus) in the Word and His sacrifice.
We experience redemption and purification continually, up to the perfect redemption, which equals to **the moon under the feet**.
- c. Golden Altar of Incense = perseverance in Prayer Service = fellowship with God the Father (Lord) in His love.
If we persevere, once it will become **the sun which clothes the bride**.

Through the perseverance in three main services, all the darkness is thrown away, while the light shines more.

The proof of light is HONESTY, being clear in every matter.

Let *yes* be *yes* and *no* be *no*. Do not let *but*!

Proverbs 15:8

15:8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But the prayer of the upright is His delight.

The prayer of the upright is His delight. God will answer it, and it means all problems are solved.

We persevere in three main services until we become the light of the world, and become as perfect as Jesus.

2. The church of God must bear the seed of true teaching Word.

Revelation 12:2

12:2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

John 15:3

15:3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

The true teaching Word is the Word spoken by Jesus Himself, that is one verse is explained by another verse in the Bible.

The Word spoken by Jesus (one verse is explained by another verse) **has the power to purify us**.

The requirement is bearing **ONLY ONE seed of true teaching Word**.

If there are two kinds of seed, the fetus will miscarry.

Therefore, the way out is going back to the Bible.

Leviticus 19:19

19:19. You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

The process of bearing the true teaching Word is as follows:

- Listening the Word.
- Understanding the Word.
- Believing/ having faith on the Word.
- Practicing the Word.

The true teaching Word will purify us.

Acts 20:28, 32-35

20:28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

20:32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

20:33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

20:34 Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

20:35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The main task of a pastor and the elders is to take heed such that there is only ONE SEED of true teaching Word. It equals to protect such that the fetus will not miscarry.

The shepherding Word (true teaching Word) is the Word of grace. It cannot be learned anywhere except under the feet of Jesus.

The shepherding Word purifies us, starting from inside our heart, that is purification from all unclean desire (which leads to eating-drinking sins and marrying-being given in marriage sins) and evil desire (bond of money, which makes people become stingy and greedy).

Being stingy means cannot give.

Being greedy means taking the others' right by stealing, doing corruption, etc.

The result of purification is being more blessed to give than to receive.

We start from giving for God's work, giving to the others who need, until we submit our whole life to God (as wife submits her whole life to husband).

The last submission is on the marriage supper of the Lamb, when we submit our whole life as God's bride. We will experience eternal heavenly joy.

3. Crying and groaning = worshiping God.

Revelation 12:2-4

12:2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

12:3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

12:4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

The situation of the church of God in the last days (whoever, wherever) is as follows:

- As a woman who is being with child and in pain to give birth = in weakness and has no power.
- Facing a great fiery red dragon = facing Satan with its evil and uncleanness, and Satan wants to complicate and destroy us.
- Ready to give birth = in the peak of suffering.
God let us experience heavier suffering, up to the peak of suffering and we cannot bear it anymore. That time is a little while, the last moment that is very decisive.

There are two possibilities as follows:

- Grumbling and rejecting Jesus = miscarriage = losing everything, including losing salvation.
- **Keep crying and groaning to God = keep worshiping God.**
When nobody can help us, that is our time to cry and groan to God. It equals to **only believe and fully surrender ourselves to God.**

Thus, there will be the childbirth; there will be miracle or God's help physically. It means as follows:

- a. There is care and life in the middle of our powerlessness.
- b. All problems will be solved, even the impossible one.
- c. There is joy and happiness.

Childbirth also denotes spiritual miracle, that is renewal of life.

- a. Being patient.
- b. Being strong and of good courage.
- c. Until we become as the baby of Jesus who has no sins and cannot do sins anymore.

Sin is the source of fear and worry.

If sin is reconciled, there will be no fear or worry.

God blesses us.