

General Service in Malang, December 15, 2013 (Sunday Morning)

Peace and grace in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:4-8 is entitled "Greeting the Seven Churches".

Revelation 1:4-5

1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

John the apostle greets the seven churches of the Gentiles. He greets by taking into account:

1. He who is and who was and who is to come, refers to Father God.
2. The seven Spirits who are before the throne of God, refer to Holy Spirit God.
3. Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth, refers to the Son of God.

Thus, greeting from John the apostle also comes from God the Trinity, that is Father God, the Son of God, and Holy Spirit God, Lord Jesus Christ as the Heavenly bridegroom.

There are two witnesses of the greeting from John the apostle, that is witness from the world (John the apostle) and witness from Heaven (Lord Jesus Christ). Therefore, greeting the seven churches is firm, sincere, and valid greeting. The lesson for us is greeting in a ministry is not an ordinary matter, but it has spiritual meaning.

There are three meanings of greeting in a ministry as follows.

1. The opening of a teaching.
It means that greeting decides the content of the teaching that is preached.

There are two things that must be watched in giving a greeting as follows.

- Do not be changeable in giving a greeting. Do not follow the others in giving a greeting, because the content of the teaching will also change.
- Do not greet the others who bring another teaching.

2 John 1:10-11

1:10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him;

1:11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

It means do not have fellowship with the others who bring another teaching, because we will get a share in their evil deeds. Unconsciously, one will do evil deeds too.

2. Salvation prayer from a pastor or servant of God so the congregation will experience grace and peace from Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:4

1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

This morning, we are learning about grace.

John 3:16

3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Grace is God's gift to men who are actually unworthy to receive it.

The manifestation of grace is the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Actually we must be crucified and die, but Jesus has been crucified and died on the cross.

The usefulness of grace is as follows.

- To save sinful man.

Titus 2:11

2:11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

The daily practices of receiving the grace of God that saves us are as follows.

- Believing and having faith to Jesus as the only Savior.
- Repenting, stopping sinning to return to God, having died to sin.
The way is we must confess our sin to God and the other solemnly. If we are forgiven, we must not do sin anymore.
- Water and Holy Spirit baptism.
The result is receiving new life or Heavenly life.

Titus 2:12

2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

We become the children of God who are saved. The signs are as follows.

- Living in righteousness, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.
- Living wisely, meaning being obedient to the Word of God. Being wise also means knowing the limit in words and deeds. All our words and deeds must be according to the Word of God.
- Living without partiality, meaning not in anyone's side, but only in God's side and the true teaching Word.
- Ministering God and being faithful and fervent in spirit in doing it. We must struggle for ministry more than any other matters in this world, and God will not fool us.

1 Timothy 4:8-10

4:8 For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

4:9 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance.

4:10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

God also struggles for caring our life. He struggles on the cross to give certainty guarantee for our life now in this world, for our future, up to eternal life forever.

- To perfect us, until we are blameless and not doing sins anymore.

1 Peter 5:10-11

5:10 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.

5:11 To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Perfection is reached through suffering a while with Jesus. The meanings of suffering a while are as follows.

- Suffering without sins because of the will of God.

1 Peter 2:19

2:19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

The example is suffering because of ministering God, suffering because of the true teaching Word, fasting prayer, all night-long prayer, being slandered, *et cetera*.

- Suffering in labor.

John 16:21

16:21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

- Flesh suffering to experience renewal until Christ is formed in us.

Galatians 4:19

4:19 My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

The result of suffering a while is we become as newborn baby.

Matthew 21:15-16

21:15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! they were indignant

21:16 and said to Him, Do You hear what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, Yes. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?

1 Peter 2:2

2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

A newborn baby only desires the pure milk of the word, that is the pure and true shepherding Word, and the Word anointed by Holy Spirit. A newborn baby will also be obedient to the shepherding Word. The Word that is practiced will lead us to enter the sheepfold. Strange voice will draw us to leave the sheepfold. In Tabernacle, the sheepfold refers to the Holy Place. There are three types of equipment within it that refer to perseverance in three main services as follows.

- Golden Candlestick refers to perseverance in General Service.
- Table of Showbread refers to perseverance in Bible Study Service with Holy Communion.
- Golden Altar of Incense refers to perseverance in Prayer Service.

If we persevere in three main services, it is the grace of God. Our life is as the tree planted by the rivers of water.

Psalms 92:12-15

92:12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

92:13 Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God.

92:14 They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing,

92:15 To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

A cedar tree refers to being strong and of good courage, that is having strong faith in the true teaching Word, in the true ministry. We cannot be shaken by anything else.

A palm tree refers to sweetness and happiness from Heaven. We will bear sweet fruit until our old age, until our offspring.

If there is strength and sweetness, we can bear witness that there is no unrighteousness in God.

Out of the mouth of nursing infants or shepherded life, God has perfected praise and worship [Matthew 21:16]. But from life who is not shepherded, out of his mouth there is only scolding.

A nursing infant is only able to cry, meaning praising and worshiping God, believing and putting hope to the mercy of God.

Song of Solomon 8:5-6

8:5 Who is this coming up from the wilderness, Leaning upon her beloved? I awakened you under the apple tree. There your mother brought you forth; There she who bore you brought you forth.

8:6 Set me as a seal upon your heart, As a seal upon your arm; For love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; Its flames are flames of fire, A most vehement flame.

Thus God will stretch out His hands to embrace and seal our life. The results are as follows.

- We are never forgotten and let alone. God always cares, pays attention, understands, and struggles for our life.
- The merciful hands of God are able to care our life, although we are powerless.
- The merciful hands of God are able to help us to solve all our problems in His time.
- The merciful hands of God are able to wash us from the dirt of sins, until we are perfect and blameless. We are worthy to welcome Jesus' second coming on the glorious clouds. We belong to God forever and are being sealed by God's name [Revelation 22:3-4] so none can take us.

God blesses us.