

Ephesians VII

7/2010

Beginning with chapter four we can see the big picture. The principle to become a powerful church like Ephesian Church is written from verse 1 to 6. The practical training is written starting with verse 7. The image of church that's ruled by the Holy Spirit and that has gone through training is seen from verse 9 to the end. The Ephesian Church is trained to become a glorious church to take on the spiritual warfare not just to defend itself from attacks but to take offensive approach. Joshua led Israelites into Canaan not to defend but to conquer. We will become a conquering church.

In order to become a glorious church we must first be united. Not only it refers to the individual churches to be united in their own communities but it also refers to all the churches to be united. The reason churches are divided is because we have become a victim of Satan's strategy. In this end time it is already tough to fight together against Satan. Not too long ago the Lord told me that Satan is using 100% of his influence to destroy church. It is not 10% anymore. Satan is utilizing all his influences to annihilate church. His biggest strategy is division of church. Some churches are divided into two groups: pastor's group and elder's group. They fight each other and it hurts me to see that. It is sad but division is wide spread throughout churches. I shared a story with a humor before. When I went to a dry cleaner, some people were fighting there. This man walks in, sees the fight, and says, "Why do you fight? Do you think this is a church?" That really hurt my heart!

If you look at the Greek text, the major verse is three "being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." This goes with the last prayer of Jesus we see in John chapter 17 that they may be one so the world will know they are His disciples. Why do people in the world know we are disciples by being one? That's because the world's way of management is by division. The principle of world is that "if I do not kill others, they will kill me." This is natural in all the spectrums in the world: politics, economy, society, and culture. The world does not understand when "we lift others up and let others live and I die in their place." However, this is what a church is supposed to do. That's why we gotta become one and die for others. When the people of the world recognize such church, they will naturally have the same expectation on the church as a matter of course. They will admire the greatness of church. Unity of church is separation from world. However, churches are divided further by the influence of the world.

In this end time God does not group churches to denominations. The era of denomination is over. American churches are becoming one through spiritual network. There are many denominations like Baptist and so on but it is not the concern anymore. Let me give you some examples of spiritual networks. Philemon's IC Prophecy, New Life Church, IHOP Community, and Care Free Church which has 8,000 churches in America. They are all joined in their respective network. As I lead the Zoe Ministry Network I realize how difficult it is to be united. It is extremely difficult because our churches are so selfish.

We are in this generation in which we cannot handle the spiritual warfare alone and yet we participate only when it in our best interest. Such time is over. It is time to be united. One or two pastor's success in ministry will not bring about revival any more. The tough situation Korean Churches are in at the moment is not caused by mistakes of few pastors but rather it has spread wide to all the churches. God spoke to me "unite them" through Zoe Ministry, but I find the work of spirit of division very resistant.

The hope of Koreans lies on our churches. Unless we become one and develop leaders through glorious churches we have no hope. We must be united. In Ephesians we hear frequently "summing up of all things" and "fullness." In order to move in perfect order in the church as we see in Ephesians 1:23, we must be united as one by the command of God. We gotta become such a powerful church.

What is the characteristic of devil? It is a crack. Devil's characteristic is division. When the word of God proclaimed in the church, it must become one and move forward. This is the glorious church. Ephesians 4:3 "being diligent to preserve the unity" is in present continuous tense. God is

not just telling us to become one but He is saying “be diligent to preserve it.” God is emphasizing how important the unity is and preservation of it. This is not an option.

In Hebrews 4:11 the author says, “Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest.” Just like we strive to live out Christian faith without much efforts and laboring by the Spirit of God, we should naturally become one. In church, you are not supposed to suppress others to voice your agenda; however, you are supposed to give up yourself/agenda to raise up others. This should not be difficult but be easy. In Philippians Paul says, “Consider others better than you.” That’s humility. If your goal is not achieved in church, should you, with the loudest voice, have the way all the time in church? We should consider others better than us. This is the true community of faith.

Let’s look at verse 3 “in the bond of peace.” This aligns with 2:14 “For Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.” Just like the dividing wall is broken down by the cross “in the bond of peace” refers to the “word of cross.” The “word of cross” in chapter 2 alludes to peace which means shalom. Just like Jesus Christ had the perfect victory on the cross and unified (summed up) all things, churches should be one in shalom which is the perfect victory on the cross. It is the cross that bonds with peace. Whether poor or rich, learned or ignorant, no matter of their class they must go through the cross in order to become one.

We will address the church as the body of Christ later. Anyone serving God with his/her gifts faithfully and matures in the presence of God; he/she should be equally honored regardless of her gifts/service in the church. For example, whether one uses his gift of contribution of 10 million dollars or another with the gift of cleaning up the rest room, both should be honored equally in the church as long as they are faithful with their gifts. This is not a theory! I heard of one humble elder who had given an offering of 10 million dollars for building project and left the church so the pastor and congregation wouldn’t be burdened. After hearing of him I said, “Please come to my church. Even if you give 100 million dollars, there would not be any burden on anyone.” Whatever we do, the hindrances in church must be removed. Everything is digested in the cross.

I spoke of “word of cross” and let me illustrate this to help your understanding. It is like out of extreme poverty you come to the Lord because the pain is too great to bear and as you lift up your head and see the cross you realize Jesus is even poorer than you. Consequently, your poverty disappears on the spot. You come to the cross because your body is so weak but you see Jesus is even weaker than you. So, your weakness disappears on the spot. In the cross everything becomes one. That’s why Paul says in Galatians 6:14, “But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I don’t know what cross is biblically but the cross I met is all about breaking, shattering, and smashing. I thought I was rich and when I met the cross, it was nothing. I thought I was wise but when I met the cross, I was broken and I realized how foolish I was. I thought I was holy but after encountering the cross, my righteousness was shattered on the cross. Everything was broken down on the cross. “Word of Cross” is the bond of peace.

Everyone voices in a church because it has not gone through the cross. We don’t need to voice up. Church that goes through the cross stands before it with the work of repentance on daily basis. That’s why church should not be separated. It must become one. Koreans are excellent people and yet we should feel the pain of not becoming one. Church is responsible for that. May Zoe Ministry Network become one!

In order to become one, we must believe “there is one body” in verse 4. “One body” refers to the community of church. All the members in a church are one. “Summing up of all spiritual gifts” and “honor of saints” are all alluding to the “body.” Whether they are rich or poor, Paul is addressing the whole community as the body.

Let’s turn our attention to the Book of Acts. Hellenistic Jews file a complaint why church overlooks the Hellenistic widows with the daily serving of food. Everyone sold his/her property and gave to the apostles and that’s how the church was maintaining. Hellenistic widows were faithful to their mission of prayer and devoted themselves to the church. They were saying that they have

the rights for the church to feed them. Everyone in church should be received with honor when he/she faithfully completes the mission and offers up devotion. The poor and ignorant should be one as well in the church.

Segregation is isolating or separating into certain groups. For example, this particular Korean Church advocates that academic level of their members is so high that it is difficult to understand its sermons unless they are college graduates or beyond. They bluntly say this to the public, so I listened to their sermons which can be understood by our children in elementary school. They think a sermon is difficult to comprehend when a preacher talk about theologians and what they say. The truly difficult message is that it should be sweet to the mouth but bitter to the stomach. That's the true sermon God desires. It should be easy to understand but painful to live it out. The body is one. All the members of the body is one. Whether one contributes 10 million dollars or another cleanses the restroom, as long as they do it faithfully the church should honorably embrace them equally. No one should be recognized as righteous for things he has done himself.

Next, "one Spirit" should be treated under the ecclesiology. "One Spirit" means church must be seized by the Holy Spirit. It is pitiful to pastor without know who Holy Spirit is. However, church God hates the most is one that takes advantage of Holy Spirit. We shouldn't use Holy Spirit in our ministry, either. We should put the Holy Spirit in the front. If the Holy Spirit moves, we move. If He doesn't move, we don't move at all. If the Holy Spirit says to do it, we do it. If He doesn't, we don't.

Apostles we see in the Book of Acts put forth the Holy Spirit. They responded to the voice of the Holy Spirit in obedience. When the Holy Spirit says go, they go. When He says come, they come. You have listened to the messages of Lord's Prayer & Beatitude. There are so many people who take advantage of the Holy Spirit in their life because they have not taken care of their ego on the cross. We should completely die to our ego and live according to the Holy Spirit. When He says go, we go; otherwise, we stop. Why do we experience burn out? Of course, it could be attributed to hard work but it comes down to doing things according to our own will when God is not doing it. Yes, it is true our body is tired because of heavy load of ministry; however, there is hardly any time when my soul is not filled with the Holy Spirit. Those who have not been living like this won't be able to do this over night.

Holy Spirit is the only Spirit. Why are lives ruined? Why ministries are difficult? When we follow the One and only God, we are not going to be confused. All we have to do is just listen to His command and follow Him. When God does not seize you, the fact that He does not seize you is not the problem, but other spirits begin to work over you. There are so many other spirits like one that leads to dance and greed leads to so many others and so on. When you are exposed to so many spirits, they confound you to the point where you can't get anything done. Prayer is the same. When the Spirit of God seizes you, your body, spirit and soul become one so that you can pray for like 5 hours in a blink of an eye. However, when the spirit of distraction comes inside, all different thoughts arise in your mind like the plot of drama/sitcom. You can't succeed in life when these spirits distract you and drag you down. In short, we should be seized by the One and only God and live by the Holy Spirit. We gotta start this training. The reason we can't concentrate on the fellowship with God is because we are not seized by the Spirit of God. Another reason is because of our insensitivity toward the movement of the Holy Spirit and of our attempt to take advantage of Him.

Let's look at the calling "just as you were called in one hope of your calling;" This is in line with Colossians 3:15 "let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful." Peace is our calling. Suppose I appoint Pastor Hoon as a general and sends him to the battle field. The reason for that is to win the battle not lose. God also wants

you to win the battle and be victorious. When God calls you, He desires you send you out. *Pamper* in Greek refers to a calling with a purpose. In this text the purpose of calling is peace. In Ephesians 4:1 Paul speaks "I entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." We also see "calling" here in verse 1 along with Colossians 3:15. We are to live in a manner worthy of the calling. Let us take a look at the three types of calling we have. Believers must respond to them.

First calling is to encounter Jesus, repent, and become a child of God. Everyone who comes to the church community receive this calling. Second calling is to church. If you have received the calling of Jesus, you should also receive the calling of His body. The percentage of believers settling in one church is low due to lack of confirmation to the calling of church. How do we confirm the calling of church? There are two principles in Ephesian Church. First, whether you come into the church system or not is the verification. Second, if you agree to the church system, the next is whether you will devote to the vision of church or not. If you agree and accept two principles, then you as a believer have a calling to mission.

Let's look at "one Lord" in verse 5. Clearly the goal of church community is the glory of God. Whether you make money or study, this goal must be clear. Now let's look at "one faith." We are supposed to believe in faith and go forward and that's how we preserve our relationship with the Lord. Break down the reason and rationality and respond in faith to Him. That's the life of believers. Faith that builds the relationship with the Lord is the point of Apostle Paul. Ephesians 2:8-9 addresses the faith and please refer to that.

Next, "one baptism" is a confirmation as a member of our church community after one receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and repent. The confirmation ceremony is what we call baptism. One that confesses Jesus as Lord receives baptism. His confession of Jesus Christ as Lord instead of Roman Caesar means he is willing to die for it. In another word, willingness to become a member of the church community is being willing to die for Jesus. This is not merely a theory but such confession of faith and work of faith are being revealed in church. The way for church is to restore the authority of the word.

Close to our church we have this church; church nonbelievers love. It is called sports church. Why do they turn a church into a church the worldly people love? We should build a church God loves. Why do we build a church that appeals to worldly people? Isn't that true? That's because they don't believe in the true authority of word. I strongly oppose a seeker service. To nonbelievers there is no such thing as worship. How can you ask those that do not have the Spirit of God to worship? Of course they try to evangelize and show performance but at the end they lead to the corruption of Korean churches and the world. That does not benefit church but brings corruption. Without the true authority of the word no church can reveal the glory. This is not a matter of method. We are witnessing the confession of faith and consequently the lifestyle of it among our church members.

Great works are done in God's church because He reigns and touches it. Paul speaks of Him in verse 6, "One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." God is One and He is over all things. I think it is better to translate "over" with "outside."

Next, God is through all and in all. What does this mean? It means God is everywhere in all creation in universe. Can you sail against wind and resist God who fills all in all? No, none of us can. We should be filled with God all the time.

God fills the universe. He is everywhere except in the heart of corrupted man. If God is not in the heart of man, there is no indwelling Spirit of God; consequently, no immanent Spirit of God. As much as the presence of indwelling Spirit of God we have the immanent Spirit of God upon us

and church. When He seizes you 100%, wherever you go you have His presence 100%. God summed up all things.

Finally, the core of unity is found in verse 2 “the humility.” Humility and servility are different. Humility in church is not lowering yourself as to beg because you are in need, but rather you give up and yield to someone else although you are very capable and resourceful. Humility is like giving your water to the thirsty. Paul says in Philippians 2:5 to have this humble attitude in you which was in Jesus Christ. In the Greek grammar, author puts in front what he would like to emphasize. That’s why Paul put humility there. God made everyone bend their knees before Jesus Christ because Jesus had obeyed to the point of death on the cross. Humility is the secret to victory and to excellence by the Spirit of God. Life does not come from the top of the mountain but from the valley. When we humble ourselves, the life comes to us.

Humility in Greek is *praus* which means longsuffering/perseverance. Our life is all about waiting on God. Longsuffering/perseverance is not just waiting for the bus to come but it is waiting for God to do His work. Longsuffering/perseverance is a time to become beautiful. Paul speaks in 2 Corinthians 12:12, “The signs of true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.” The first sign of apostle is not sign, wonder, or miracle but all perseverance. Pastoral ministry is also persevering for the souls and God. The soteriology in Book of John is receiving Jesus Christ who comes to us continuously. It is receiving Him who comes to us endlessly, forging a continual relationship with Him, and encountering Him in present tense. This is the state of salvation. Ignoring Jesus Christ who comes to us endlessly is in the state of judgment. That’s the soteriology in John. I have been saved but it is not completed. That’s the reason why I should continue to receive God. Let’s learn to persevere and always wait upon God.

Let’s look at tolerance. Tolerance and forgiveness are different. Tolerance means you accommodate. What is church? I should be critical of myself but be tolerant of other people in terms of applying the standard. In another word, when you don’t pray, you can’t point out others’ lack of prayer. God may discipline us once out of like 30 times when we do something wrong. However, we tend to point out a single mistake/fault when we ourselves make 100 mistakes. That is not accommodating. Pastors should always be accommodating instead of rebuking the church members. Leave them alone. Let God deal with them. In most cases people don’t change just because you speak to them. Just pray and persevere, then God takes care of all things. If you can’t bear them, God usually let them go. Please tolerate them always. Please don’t try to make your own move. Move by the prayer!

When a man speaks to another man, he gets hurt. It is the same in husband and wife. Of course there are times we address certain things and talk about them; however, if you would like to speak to your husband or wife over certain issue, do it after you pray. The approach is pray and wait until God makes His move. That’s when you talk. When a church member leaves, I do two things. First, I repent “I didn’t love him enough.” Second, I reflect on what I did such as “I gave what God wanted for him little bit too early or little too late.” I failed to give good things God had wanted to give to that church member in perfect timing. That’s what I repent of and examine.

May you restore the authority of word according to the principle of Bible! We must restore the revelation and wisdom. We want to be seized by the Spirit of God so we can restore the authority of God. We can truly love our church members and repent of failure to embrace them. It is unthinkable to be fearful of church members and their rebellion. When a word comes out of the mouth of a pastor, there should be nothing but obedience. He speaks the will of God not his will or heart. Church members respond and move because a pastor has the authority. I am talking about the essential authority of God’s word. Let’s us restore the essence of word in Ephesians so we can enter into the church system and change.