

## **SHAPED TO BECOME MATURE**

"to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."  
(Ephesians 4:12-13 NIV)

First of all we would like to wish you a HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023. We should be grateful that during 2022 because of His grace we were able to go through life's journey throughout that year under God's guidance and care. Even though the world is still facing various kinds of big challenges, we are always grateful because God has helped us enter this new year well (1 Thess. 5:18). If we read and understand the two verses of the Word above, then we know that all who have been justified by God, that is, all the saints need to be continuously equipped for service work, for the building of the body of Christ until we all have achieved the unity of faith and true knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God and attained full maturity. That means we must be prepared to be shaped to become spiritual mature while waiting for His coming. The question now is whether in welcoming His second coming this time we have become saints who serve God, participate in building the body of Christ and have reached full maturity? In the events that are taking place throughout the face of this earth, there are many things that are fulfilling the signs as written in 2 Timothy 3:1-9, namely through difficult times. Through this difficult time, we are all shaped to become mature and not the other way around. Just like the life of Joseph son of Jacob (Gen. 37-50), we can only win if we are ready to be shaped into mature believers. Periscope of the 2 Tim. 3:1-9 tells us about humans condition in the troubled times of the last days. And then in 2 Timothy 3:10-17, it is written that the faith of believers can grow in the midst of difficulties and in reading the Bible. The Lord Jesus approached Him on the cross, He was willing to ignore the humiliation He received from sinners and He also diligently carried the heavy cross to the top of Golgotha. Then on the cross before he died He said "It is finished" (John 19:30). The work of the cross to atone for the sins of the whole world (all mankind) has been completed. He has become the only way and truth and life for everyone who wants to accept Him as the only Savior. He who has finished doing His work has the power to free humans from the curse of death. What the Lord Jesus has done on the cross brings joy to those of us who believe in Him. And if we want to continue to work on the salvation that God has bestowed on us with our eyes fixed on Him and if we also want to continue to be equipped or processed, then we too will be able to reach full maturity and even reach a level of growth that is in accordance with the fullness of Christ. Also in His message to His disciples, the Lord Jesus said in Luke 12:40, "Be ready too, for the Son of Man is coming at a time when you do not expect him." In this case Jesus wants to remind us about His second coming which is not what we expect, that is, He will raise up first His church which is mature and lives in a perfectly solid faith, which is ready to welcome Him (1 Thess. 4:16-17). The first Christmas, namely the first coming of the Lord Jesus as the Savior of the world has passed about 2000 years ago and now we are waiting for the fulfillment of the "second Christmas", namely the second coming of the Lord Jesus as a righteous Judge. We can reach the finish line if we want to continue to be shaped into maturity and we will receive the crown of righteousness that has been provided by God, the righteous Judge, on the day of His coming (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Everyone will get what he deserves a, according to what he does in this life, good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). Let's be saints who are ready to be processed into adults. Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ may be with us all. Amen!

*Ps. Silwanus Obadja M.Th.*