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Romans 12:1-8: "True believers are the most natural people on earth!"

When Brother Russ read the Word, more thoughts came to me.

There are no wise men, there is no one who could say, "I already knew that."

Nobody knew anything, nobody suspected anything.

God has surprised us over the years again and again, and has introduced us to His Word.

Everything is grace.

He has called one person from here, another from there, and has revealed Himself to us, and we are grateful for that.

Everything that servants of God ever had, they did not bring with them, they received from the Lord, and only then were they able to pass it on.

That's why Paul wrote to the Corinthians, ***"For I have received of the Lord."*** [1 Corinthians 11:23]

This is so important, so important: ***"What I have received from the Lord."***

Not my opinion or view, but what I have received from the Lord.

It occurred to me in connection with the spiritual food, which is God's Word, and in connection with this our Lord says, ***"My food is to do the will of Him who sent me."*** [John 4:34]

The connection between hearing the Word, receiving the Word, the transition to action, everything that was written about our Lord was fulfilled through Him, became reality.

And that's why it says in the two scriptures, in the one [Matthew 4:4]:

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

And then the other scripture, in the Gospel of John [chapter 4, verse 32, 34]:

"I have food that ye know not of. My food is to do the will of Him who sent me."

So, hearing God's Word as a promise, believing, and then allowing God the opportunity to put the Word of promise into action. And this happens by

doing the will of God. Not just praying **"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"** [Matthew 6:10], but actually being inserted into the will of God.

I don't think there has ever been such a desire in all of us, as there is now, to actually do the will of God. And I say it freely and openly: It takes every word, every word, to do, to do.

Someone said to me at some point, a person who doesn't go to church at all, no matter where, and even despises church services, but then still says: "I'm just waiting for the Lord to come".

You could save yourself that sentence.

How can we say with a clear conscience, "We are waiting for the coming of the Lord", despising the people of God, letting church be church, not caring about anything God has said – and this also includes our share in the kingdom of God with what he has entrusted to us.

And the Lord says in his Word **"All the people have robbed me and they ask me "Wherein have we robbed thee?"** [Malachi 3:8]

You can read it. Then the Scripture says in Hebrews:

"Do not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

And then this total contradiction to the Word of God.

And then say "I'm only waiting for the coming of the Lord".

I give you the guarantee, not like that. Anyone who waits like that is waiting 100% in vain.

Don't think that God is being mocked.

Don't think that God looks on as his Word is trampled underfoot and then says "You've done well, now enter into the joy of your Lord. I feel good about it".

Not our God. Our God has left a word that we have to respect in every point.

And I was in tears today. I was a little embarrassed myself when I dictated the letters. But a letter arrived from Australia with three checks. And I know the people, I've preached there, I've visited the family. And it is important to them that God's work is carried out and done all over the world – and they sent their tithe.

And there was a check for 15 Deutschmarks. And the children, the two small children, I can't remember exactly how old they are, had saved it up from their pocket money. In any case, one of the children can write. One of them will be about 11 or 12 years old. And then he just writes so beautifully: "Here is a tithe from us children, from the money our parents gave us."

And believe me, that brought tears to my eyes.

There is a check for 15 Deutschmarks from children who may not even have experienced a conversion, but have heard about it from their parents.

And then there are adults who set themselves above every Word of God, exalted, and don't realize that it is the same Antichrist spirit who exalts himself above everything that is called God or that is worshipped. [2 Thesalonians 2:4]

Believe me, this spirit is not only present in Rome, it is everywhere, everywhere, where people do not keep the word of the Lord.

I would like to bring this to all of your hearts, and you know very well that we never talk about the financial part here, but it's just part of it, it's part of it. If that is not right, if we can't be faithful in the least, how are we going to be faithful in the greatest?

Let us do everything what God asks of us.

I remember a man who said, "Yes, brother Frank, but what if it were really true that I would be unemployed and I wouldn't be able to work?"

I said, "My brother, keep quiet, you are speaking in unbelief. You still have work and you can thank God and go forward in faith."

There are people who somehow have a pessimistic attitude towards life and what goes with it.

We want to go forward with our God, do what we can, come what may, not only in good days, but also in bad days. We want to thank the Lord and follow Him faithfully, not only in the ups, but also in the downs.

By the way, we have heard good news of the meetings, especially the sister from Düsseldorf, the colored sister from Haiti, who called me yesterday and said, "Brother Frank, I am overjoyed. I meant to seek, but God sought me. God found me..." – and she gave such a testimony, that was just tremendous.

And then she said, "I didn't realize, there were so many sermons by Brother Branham."

And she said in her beautiful German, "I just eat and eat."

You have to become like children, and then it's right.

But she says, "While I was eating, I came across a passage in the Seals book. I can't swallow it."

And then she says, "Can you help me, Brother Frank?"

I say, "Yes, with God's help."

She says, "Here it says, that there is no eternal hell."

I said, "You don't have to swallow that."

And then I explained it to her very kindly.

Oh, she says, "My God, how grateful I am!"

Sometimes just a few words, just a few words, and everything is sorted out, everything is settled. I tell you, God lets the truly sincere succeed. Even if something comes up that they can't swallow, they know where the answer might be.

And that is always with God. And sometimes He also has people through whom He can speak. God doesn't just always speak Himself, sometimes He has people through whom He speaks.

And that's the good thing.

Then Brother Kupfer called me.

Calls and messages came from everywhere that everyone had been blessed.

There was a sister, I think, who told me that she had been healed.

Then I heard from Sister Jasinski that God has done great things here too.

We are truly happy about everything God does.

It should not only be written above us here ***"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day and for ever..."*** [Hebrews 13:8] – it should happen here among us that He proves Himself to be the same.

And the more we can look away from ourselves and trust in the Lord, the more He will be able to do.

Didn't you also rejoice with the Belgian brothers and sisters?

One brother baptized 21, the other baptized 8 or 10. And just a short time ago, everything was still going haywire. And there too, God is just organizing things very nicely, as it should be.

I believe that everything will somehow run itself to death, but the cause of God will simply have to endure to the end.

Not for our sake. No, not for our sake. Who are we?

But for the sake of the Word, for the sake of the grace in which we had placed our hope, the Lord will bring everything out gloriously.

Today I read a letter from Oman, down at the Persian Gulf, and when you hear how people suddenly, someone has left a brochure in English with my name and address in some totally Muslim country, then someone finds it and reads "Christianity, Yesterday and Today" in English in Oman and then writes.

It's just marvelous to see how God works.

Did I tell you that? About eight years ago I was on a flight, whether it was from Frankfurt to Zurich or Stuttgart-Zurich, I can't remember exactly. In any case, there was some lady next to me and in the 35 minutes I only said something very briefly about the Lord.

And recently she called me and said, "I can still remember you. Do you also remember, there and there? And you gave me a testimony of the grace of God. I am in need, could you send me brochures?" I think we talked for over an hour.

God calls, God saves, God has ways and means.

That we would only have the love that was revealed on Calvary for sinners through redemption, through total surrender. If we had this love of God, then we would truly be helped, all of us.

And that is necessary, believe me, brothers and sisters. The same divine love that was revealed to us in our Savior must be revealed through us to all those who are still to be saved.

By the way, I had been reading a treatise these days that someone wants to send to priests in particular and I thought it was written so tactfully, without any points to the right or left, just out of a need to help, not to criticize.

And so, may God help us all, all of us, when we speak to other people, not to criticize, but to gratefully pass on what God has given us by grace.

Only in this way we can be a blessing to others.

Only in this way will the work of God in this divine love come to perfection.

And when we read here in the opening word that we are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice to God [Romans 12:1] – then you all know that a sacrifice always hurts. And we have to comply with this, because it will not work without it.

Here, in Romans 12, we read:

"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God..."

On what is everything based? On grace, on mercy, on what God has bestowed on us, not on what we can bring Him.

We bring Him an improper life. And if it happens that He can make something of us, then He has first broken the old vessel and put it on the potter's wheel and molded a new one.

When we break a vessel, it never becomes soft again, we can never mold it again, we may glue it, and then it still remains old and broken.

But it's different with the Lord.

He can take the same mess and mold it into a new vessel for His glory without leaving any shards, without leaving any broken pieces behind.

This is the love and power of our God.

"That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." [Rm 12:1]

God needs us as we are, our mouths, our hands, as we are, our feet. God wants us to be completely at His disposal and to be fiery in spirit, ready to serve the Lord.

It just has to become that way, if it is not yet the case.

And obviously, as honest as we always are, we realize that things are not quite as they should be.

But we are just as careful not to bring strange fire upon the altar of God or to set things in motion ourselves and kindle a bit of a flash in the pan.

We don't need a flash in the pan.

We need the fire of God, the fire of the Spirit.

We need the oil of the Spirit to keep our lamps burning so that the smoking flax is not quenched and the bruised reed does not break [Isaiah 42:3], but that the Lord may raise up and help.

Verse 2: [Rm 12]

"And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove that ye may gain a sure judgment."

Before we go on, ***"that ye may gain a sure judgment,"*** nothing uncertain, not guessing and feeling, but ***"that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."***

This is the only way to get an actual judgment of God's will.

What good would it do us even to preach about it and not know what the will of God is?

I recently heard the testimony of a pastor who says he has become a believer and he talks about the will of God very certain for about 90 minutes, maybe only 70, but whatever the case, at the end of the whole sermon not a single sentence had been said about the will of God.

You can be or say anything about the will of God, theologian, philosopher, without knowing it.

Who was it?

I believe it was Brother Russ who read the word ***"I have come to do thy will. In the volume of the book it is written of me."*** [Hebrews 10:7]

This is how it began: ***"I have come to do thy will."***

We have emphasized here that the beginning of the New Testament was indeed under the realization of God's will.

It was the will of God that people should be saved.

It was the will of God that the way should be prepared for the Lord.

It was the will of God that redemption and salvation should be granted.

God's will has been revealed in everything.

Now it is our turn. Now God wants to talk to us.

And just be honest: Doesn't God want us to know His perfect will through all His words? That's why He speaks to us so that we come to know His will.

And it says:

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

The old mind goes in the old direction. A new mind, a new heart, a new spirit must come into us. And then the cause, the reason for this is:

"That ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

What is good will also quickly be acceptable and what is acceptable will also quickly be perfect. It all goes in the same direction.

"The good", it is written [James 1:17]: "Every good gift and every perfect gift come from the Father of Lights."

And when God gives something, it is good. Our Lord Himself says [Matthew 7:11]:

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will the Father in Heaven give good things to those who believe in Him."

So we can expect God to give us the gift of recognizing His will and then the good, acceptable and perfect.

Also, verse 3 should not be difficult for anyone to understand and place correctly:

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think."

Someone recently said, "Brother Frank, I am really afraid of spiritual people." And at that moment I was startled and thought, "What direction is this going now?"

But there really are people who are so spiritual but so unpalatable that there is no getting along with them. We can really do without such spirituality.

Shall I tell you who the really spiritual people are?

The most natural believers are the most spiritual.

All those who become even a little theatrical, you know what I mean, a little art here and there, and pretend to be spiritual – either that is an evil, pious spirit or there is something wrong with the person.

Every man, the most spiritual man on earth, will be the most natural.

I'll give you two examples:

One is that of Paul, when the brushwood was gathered together to find a remedy of the cold and light a fire. [Acts 28:3-5]

It was not he who said, "Brothers, get to work..." – but he put his hands under the brushwood in order to get the fire burning, quite soberly, quite clearly.

He did not stand by and said, "Ah, brother so-and-so, you could now?" No, he used the things as he had received them from God.

And then a snake bites in his hand and all the people are afraid and the unbelievers say, "This man has done something wrong."

But Paul, being such a natural man, such a natural man, had heard what the Lord said, **"I give you power over all the power of Satan. You will tread on serpents and scorpions and nothing will harm you."** [Luke 10:19] He simply threw the thing off his finger and the matter was settled. And when the people saw that nothing had happened to him, they came to hear the word of the Lord.

Men of God, children of God, are the most natural and sensible people that exist on earth.

If anybody starts acting weird, you would have to say like Moody, "Lord, either you give me power to cast out devils or I'll use my own power and drive people out."

Yes, that's how it was. That's how it was.

He saw what kind of trouble arises when people no longer remain natural. That is the most important thing.

And does not the Lord call us who live in the last days to do just that, **"Be sober, be vigilant, be in prayer."**? [1Th 5:6]

Everything has its place, everything has its time.

Another example.

I could actually give many examples of Paul when the ship was about to sink.

Then it was Paul who trusted the Lord and then the Lord could reveal himself to him and he said, **"The angel whom I serve stood with me tonight and told me that the cargo would sink but none of the people would be harmed."** [Acts 27:22-25]

Quite natural.

Experiencing something supernatural while remaining completely natural is a gift from Almighty God.

And if we all had this grace from the Lord, then we would be helped.

Look, even Brother Branham, I am not always allowed to tell you everything, but Brother Branham, for example, who loved to go hunting, we don't understand that.

And I have actually, when I sometimes come across passages where he didn't express himself as clearly as we do, then it has already come over my lips that I almost despaired when translating.

I don't know whether I said it or thought it. Doesn't matter. In any case, it actually came over my lips: "Man of God, if you had gone hunting half as much and read the Bible twice as much, that would have been better."

But he was a very natural man with a very natural need and desire. And this may shock you now, but when I walked into his room, which he especially treasured and loved above all else, I counted the guns.

What was it? 47?

Brother Russ, you were there too, by the way.

How many? 39? I mean 49. Well, whatever.

You were also in the room and you would actually say, "Such a great man of God, a prophet of the Most High, a man who had his heart in heaven but both feet here on earth."

Now comes the hammer.

On the 28th of February, 1963, when the seven angels appeared in the constellation of the cloud, Brother Branham was up on the mountain and he told his friends, so-and-so and others, "You go there and you go there and in the evening we'll meet again there and there."

And of course he went up there.

And what can I tell you?

When he came down from the mountain, after he had seen the seven angels and said, "**The one when I counted from the left to right,**" because they were standing opposite him in the mirror image, he said, "**The one on the extreme right, the last one, the seventh, meant more to me than the first six.**"

He told it all like that.

And the first question he asked these brothers was, **"Have you each shot your javelina hog?"**

You and I, dear auntie and uncle, if we had come down from the mountain, veiled in the supernatural cloud, oh, what would we have done?

My pity, the world would not have been able to bear it.

Oh, we would have started telling stories.

Yes?

A man of God, with his heart in heaven, his feet on earth, experiencing the most powerful things, and keeping a cold head and a warm heart – and that is exactly what we all need.

If things that God allows to happen to a person go to their head, then that is a poor person, then it is proof that the heart is not yet ready to receive such things.

If the heart is really ready for the divine, for the supernatural, for the spiritual, then it will not go to our head, but fall into our heart – but we will remain sober and clear about everything.

I also like this in Paul's letters, which some people don't like so much, that the man from whom handkerchiefs or aprons were taken to put on the sick and the devils went out and the sick got well [Acts 19:12], he says, **"Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick."** [2 Timothy 4:20]

And then he writes to Timothy, **"Drink a little wine for thy stomach's sake, so that you feel better."** [1 Timothy 5:23]

And then the spiritually minded: "Oh, my pity, imagine, my goodness, Paul, he must have lost the power of God. There must be something wrong. God was so mighty with him, and now he's telling the man with a stomach trouble to drink some wine."

Oh, the spiritually minded have always had a hard time with all these simple things because they hover in higher spheres.

I wish God would bring them all down to earth.

To the Corinthians, Paul writes, **"The Lord, who leads us in victory and triumph in every place..."** [2 Corinthians 2:14], the same writes... What was his name?

"That coppersmith there, who caused us so much trouble..." and the like. [2 Timothy 4:14]

And we had to go on. Once it was like this, and once it was like that. But the man of God always kept both feet on the ground.

May God take all the pious nutcases, may He take all those who want to be spiritual and make us completely reasonable that our speaking, our praying, our everything, that we give ourselves reasonably, namely as we are.

Those who do not present themselves as they are, are playing theatre. And I don't believe that the Church of God is a theatre performance. I believe that the Church of God is the body of the Lord. But the body of the Lord still has both feet on earth. It has a divine function here in an earthly position.

And we must distinguish between these two areas and actually remain normal and sober until the Lord really comes.

As you know, I am particularly approached with this question about the coming of the Lord.

And I always like the people who think I know when the Lord is coming the best. And one dear grandma said, "Brother Frank, I have a sneaking suspicion that you at least have a good idea, if you don't already know."

I said, "Dear sister, don't be angry with me. But I can only guess, I really can't know."

But there are people who just can't stay sober.

How nice it is that we bought the land here in 1973 to build the hall and since then we have been holding meetings since Easter 1974.

How wonderful that in 1976, when everyone was saying that everything would be over, in 1977 we bought the property and were able to accommodate people who were all happy to come and be catered for.

One brother, who was probably here for the first or second time, he said, "Brother Frank, I know all the religious clubs including the ones that do conferences and so on." But then he said, "There is nothing like this here in the whole country."

He said, "I have to tell you once, we feel at home here."

And I said, "That's how it should be, that people feel comfortable in the presence of God – and we all have to contribute to that."

Which one of you wants to be and remain a sober child of God?

To the end! To the end. Really. Renounce everything artificial, everything made. Not only quit, but simply put the matter aside.

And everyone gives themselves as they are and nobody misunderstands anything anymore.

If you misunderstand something, then you know exactly that it was just a misunderstanding. Right? Because that's not what was meant at all. So, and if it was a misunderstanding, then it is a misunderstanding.

So let's leave it where it belongs and not take it with us at all.

There are people who carry unnecessary things around with them, complain and burden others and clarify their whole lives and say, "Oh, something is unclear."

And I tell you, the more you want to clarify, the more unclear everything becomes. And as they say in the vernacular, then everything becomes clear as mud. And that doesn't have to be the case.

Imagine if we were all as we should be before the Lord and also to each other as we are, each to each other.

What would that be like?

That would give us heavenly harmony here on earth. That would give us heaven on earth. And then God would feel good and bless us.

Now back to this Word we have read: **"... but to think soberly."**

And I believe, as I just said, that is not difficult for us.

Then it says:

"... according to the measure of faith."

That's in one context:

"... according to the measure of faith."

For the most part, I can tell you who totally overestimates themselves.

Those who have an absolute lack of faith overestimate themselves beyond measure.

But those who have faith do not overestimate themselves. They are valued by God. He is appointed so that all the world would be blessed. You know what I mean.

It actually says here:

"Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

The greater the measure of our faith, the more we will realize that even faith was a gift from God, and we didn't bring this faith with us to pull up trees with it. No, it was all a gift from God who works all things in all.

It goes on to say:

"... according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

God apportions a measure of faith according to need, according to tasks. He gives the necessary faith for the carrying out of what is listed later. It says here:

(4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

(5) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

So, many members, one body, joined together by the Lord. And then it says in verse 6:

"... having then gifts according to the grace..."

Either the gifts are described as spiritual gifts and the relationship to the Spirit is then established.

So it is not our gifts that we possess, but gifts of the Spirit, which the Spirit wants to operate according to the will of God, according to the Word of God – or they are described as gifts of grace, which are given to us by grace. And where is the boasting then?

"If anyone wants to glory, let him glory in the Lord," [1 Corinthians 1:31] and let him boast that he is faithful and merciful.

We form one body, members of one another, but in such a way that we possess gifts of grace.

Do you know, and I will say this freely and openly today, why we hesitate to pray for the baptism in the Spirit?

Do you know that? Do you know it?

Only out of fear that people will let themselves go, that they will lose sight of the big picture, and that they will think, "Now we have to do this and this and that, and we have to demonstrate this and that, so that others can see that something has happened."

When we get to the point where we no longer have an idea of our own, where we no longer think, "If the brother lays his hands on us now, strongly, then it will happen, but if he only lays one hand on me, then I have my doubts."

You wouldn't believe how many people there are, who have so many ideas of their own, and then they come and go, and nothing happens.

If you give me the certainty, that no one starts to go crazy, and no one misbehaves, and no one lets themselves go in any way, and actually remains normal, then I tell you, that I have faith, that Jesus Christ is still the same today, and that it is He who truly baptizes with Spirit and Fire.

But He doesn't make us crazy or confused, He makes us normal and sober. We need this certainty, but it's really, I don't want to say this as unbelief, but the past has really taught it.

And I mean, somebody said it and pointed out that Brother Branham, for example, as you noticed in the film, he says, **"Now I'm taking every spirit that's here under my control for the glory of God in Jesus' name."**

There are indeed many spirits buzzing around. If they had gone straight to hell, we would all be better off. But they are in the air, and from there they exert their influence and everything that goes with it, and for the most part on believers.

So what do we need?

We need sobriety.

Away with all our own ideas, as we have just read, in order to recognize the will of God, as we read, **"... what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."** [Romans 12:2]

What is good is acceptable.

What is acceptable is perfect, because it comes from God.

But we are still here on earth.

And just as we remained normal during the greatest revelation of the Lord, it should be possible for all of us to remain truly sober during the greatest experience with God.

And I repeat myself: What did Brother Branham ask his friends? "Have you shot your javelin hog?" And he wasn't talking about the tremendous thing he saw and heard there.

People, who experience something with God, remain sober, remain clear, but I will also tell you how it can still be.

It may be that the enemy wants to lay claim to a person's soul here and there. And when the Spirit of God comes, of course a battle arises, most certainly. And then the victory for God must be the result. And only then will the Spirit of God have full power over the person.

So we need grace from God, overview, sobriety, knowledge, discernment, everything, whether we serve or are served.

We all need that.

But are we inwardly ready to make ourselves completely available to God, even when the greatest things happen, that we remain sober and clear.

I believe God will put this in our hearts.

It goes on to say here:

(6) having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.

So also we have not brought grace with us, faith, mercy, the Spirit.

Paul writes to the Galatians and asks, ***"Have you received the Spirit by works or by faith?"*** [Galatians 3:2]

So Paul asks.

So, what have we received? From whom did we receive it? By the grace of our God.

I tell you, I am overwhelmed myself because over the course of these years I have really witnessed a number of meetings in which God's Word, which you didn't even see before, was illuminated.

Connections that you didn't know were suddenly there as if it was some invisible hand that had somehow brought together everything that was previously scattered into a beautiful picture.

Who was it? Was it me? Did I know it?

Brother Russ sometimes says, "At least you can preach."

He is such a humble man.

And I say, "If I could do it, I would." You know what I mean.

No. I am glad that he respects his brother more perhaps than himself. I do too. But no one can do anything unless it is given to him by God. There is

no man on earth who could take anything for himself. If he had something, I guarantee you, it was given to him by God.

Is it true or not?

Every person who had something divine in their heart, in their life, received it from God. Be it a ministry, a word, a task, whatever. If it was from God, he received it from God.

Is it true or not?

And it remains so until the end, so that no man can boast before God.

It continues here.

(6) ... whether the gift of prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.

This gift has also been placed on the foundation of faith.

The gifts also have to be placed on the foundation of faith. Especially the gift operators, whether ministry or gifts, one and the same Lord, who works all in all. [1 Corinthians 12:6]

But only then, when faith is there, can the thing move, can God work, can God give something.

Faith must be in the heart, in the soul, before a ministry of an operation of a gift can take place.

And then it happens in ***"accordance with the faith, according to the grace given to us."***

Grace again.

We sing it, grace – and nothing more, nothing less. It was grace. Grace that we are saved. Grace that we can believe, as the scriptures say. Grace that God has helped us to categorize things.

You really need to hear a testimony from time to time from people who are newly added.

That's really good.

The sister from Saarbrücken came to see me in the office. And then you realize anew what grace is. You realize it anew.

A person who grows old and grey and seeks God and seeks God all the time. Of course in the building where the tower points to heaven. But where the tower points to heaven, it is unfortunately the case that people are let down. But there are also sincere people.

We just have to distinguish between people and the system. And we are grateful to God for that.

We are not angry with anyone, no matter who they are. But we don't like the system that drags people down.

But you have to hear people like that, from time to time, who suddenly say, "Brother Frank, it's all still like a dream to me." And then you hear the words, "What a grace, what a grace."

Right?

Here it continues in this text.

(6) ... In accordance with the measure of faith, or ministry, let us wait on our ministering.

This is also part of it. The gift of ministry is connected with service.

The Lord says, ***"Whoever wants to be great among you, be servant of all."***
[Matthew 20:27]

But no one wants to, but we must serve, whether we want to or not, because the ministry has been given to us.

Brother Russ read from 2 Corinthians 5 over the weekend, ***"We have been given the ministry of reconciliation."***

It goes on to say:

(7) ... he that teacheth, on teaching,

(8) or he that exhorteth on exhortation.

God gives grace for everything. There is not one commission, not one ministry that God has given that he will not give grace to fulfill and bless all who hear.

Here too we have some catching up to do.

I sometimes notice with brothers and sisters from abroad how much value they place on any advice they are given. It's amazing, you don't seek it, you don't even want it. And yet there are people who simply have faith.

And I mean here with us too.

When I preach in other churches and don't just give an altar call and pray in general for sinners and the sick, but when someone in the congregation is sick, I refuse to pray for that person.

Then I simply say, this is what the elders of the church are for. [James 5:14]

And I say to all the brothers, no matter who they are, the trust of a local church must be to the brethren whom God has placed in the local church.

You must have more confidence in the elders of the church than in me. I come and go. Here are the brothers that God has placed.

But be honest, if something were to be decided somewhere and the elders were called upon to have a say or to hear both sides, who would even do that?

Who has any respect for ministries that God has appointed?

And the scripture says, *"the elders are worthy of double honour."* [1 Timothy 5:17]

How far have we strayed from the real pattern of the Bible?

If we want to end up being a model church, then we need to get back to the biblical pattern.

Is that the case or not?

And that includes honouring our local brethren, cherishing them, having confidence in them, and ridding ourselves of every thought that the enemy... And I say the enemy is coming, the enemy is coming with cunning and guile, he doesn't always come loudly, he sometimes comes quietly, yes, for the most part, and sometimes he even whispers quite strange things in your ear.

And what does brother Branham say? **"If he whispers in your ear and says something against someone, don't listen to it."**

As brother Branham says, **"Stand in front of your shepherd, so that nothing hits him."**

People that God is now gathering together are not a herd of muttons, they are sheep, sheep of his pasture, sheep that snuggle together and that have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd and who also appreciate the shepherds that God has placed.

I have already noticed, Peter writes, *"... not being lords over the flock."* [1 Peter 5:3]

That also exists. There are people who beat, I have watched it, I really watched, as the brother, small but mighty, hit the table so hard that I

cringed. And there was some discussion between the brothers and all of a sudden his hand hit the table and then he said, "now I am talking." And he did talk.

But we are not like that here.

We believe that the Lord must work all in all.

If we force it, whether by fear-mongering or anything else, it is not real.

But if God brings it about through the proclamation of the word, then it is real and then it remains.

So, not as rulers by force, but as those who serve.

And we want to be found as those who actually serve the people of God.

Then it says:

(9) Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

(10) Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

How it was always like that in revival times, what warmth, what intimacy.

We here, as old people, we still feel the same way today.

But thirty years ago, when there was still revival after the Second World War and people cried out to God in their needs, spiritually and physically.

You know what it was like, when one brother gave the other a kiss that was soothing. You realized it came from the depths of the heart.

Today, I hope that our brothers, our beloved Italian brothers, won't take offense now.

But it has sometimes become a custom, a custom. You kiss from the left, you kiss from the right.

I tell you the truth.

When I realized that they were just doing and not kissing me at all, I just look past them, give them a little squeeze and then move on.

That's how far it has come.

They look straight ahead and just do and then it all goes on as before and nobody has kissed anyone.

No, we don't need that.

What we need are real things, good things, not from the right and from the left, but really nice as it should be.

And then we'll all be a bit happier again, won't we, brother Momo?

We will be healthy and thank the Lord and move forward in faith.

I long for the real thing, you too, really, for the real thing that God alone can give, for intimate love, without guile, without cunning and deceit, no two faces, but really only one.

And I don't know, I just remembered it now, but to this day, among the few people, I still haven't found out who brought this out back then.

When the trouble arose with my crash there in India, you know, the 16 people who were supposed to have died there, me among them.

To this day, and then the people are all so fast, and not 12 hours passed, maybe not two, I don't know who it was and how fast the people were.

But be that as it may, I don't know, but nobody has got in touch with me yet to this day. And that seems strange to me.

I would have wished, I would have thought, everyone knows that I have died, I have already become a grave inside myself.

I wouldn't have told anyone.

I really would have expected that people who bring out something from here, still hot, and then come here and sing, "Great God, we praise you, Lord, we praise your strength."

Don't praise. First come and say, "I did it." And then you have still time to praise God. Right or not?

The Church of the Living God is there to create trust.

If there is no trust, where will it end?

And as I said, I am somehow saddened inside, not that I am curious. Everyone who knows me, knows that I don't have that quality. But I am saddened in my heart, saddened that people, and back then, I don't know if there were 30 people here, compared to today, and to this day, nobody has got in touch.

I am still waiting.

I guarantee it. You will have to come one day. There is no other way. You can't dance at two weddings. You can't.

You have to take your stand and say, "This is where I belong. Through thick and thin, I'll be here with you, with God and with each other."

Do you understand?

I really don't know.

Brother Russ spoke earlier about exhortation, and that's actually his ministry. And now, I've almost reached into someone else's office today and given a few exhortations here.

But if you only knew how they come from the bottom of my heart. I'm not standing here shouting back and forth. But it is so important to me that we stand by God and each other. That we have trust in God and each other. That we really live out divine love.

Where should we live it out? With words? Anyone can do that. Anyone can do it.

Here, with each other, to each other, among each other, here we want to show or prove that we love the Lord and that we love each other.

With God's help, let's dare to simply say, "Lord, here we are, take us, bless us, use us, make us a blessing, do with us what pleases you."

And you will see, the moment the air is clear and the hearts are also clear and the Spirit of God can work and every person has put away their things that are artificial or want to be something and so on, we actually come into the presence of God and say, "Lord..."

Pardon me, I have to read that one verse and then we will close anyway. The clock is blinded there, I never see what time it is, even though the clock is hanging there, but it's completely blinded by the glare of light, I can't see a hand. But time goes on anyway, it doesn't stand still.

There is a wonderful word in Acts 15, I've underlined it, it should be verse 8.

(8) And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

(9) And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

That's actually what I wanted to read this evening.

(9) And put no difference between us and them.

Now I ask you: When we experience the power of the Holy Spirit, will God make a difference between us and them?

No. He will make no difference. He is the same, he remains the same, and what he does today will be the same as what he did yesterday.

(9) And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

If we have faith now in the presence of God, then our hearts will now be purified, and then the Spirit of God can now fall.

At that time it happened, under one and the same sermon, that people became believers, were convicted by the Spirit, recognized their sin, asked for forgiveness, were purified and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Despite everything, I have faith that God is more powerful than all circumstances.

I don't know who it was here, but one of the brothers prayed, "Lord, even if I don't have the power to still the storm, I know the One who has the power to still it."

I think that was a powerful thing.

We can fill our mouths sometimes, but then we realize that there is more wind and the storms remain.

But to be as humble as Brother Branham said, **"If I don't have the faith that God will fulfill what He has promised, then I don't want to stand in the way of those who have the faith through which God can fulfill His Word."**

So we too want to move forward in faith with God's help.

If we have enough faith to get a matter under control, we thank God.

If we don't have enough faith, we still don't despair, we turn to the Lord and say, "Come to my aid. I can't do it on my own." And then He comes, intervenes, calms the storm and the waves subside and everything becomes good again.

May these words fall into our hearts.

May we allow the Spirit of God to work so that they bear fruit for eternity.

Amen.