

**Ewald Frank**

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***1 Thessalonians 5:1-28:***

***The day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night &  
Ministries in the local Church***

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Praise the Lord for the privilege of being here again to worship.

We have already heard a wonderful word. The beauty is that it is all true and that the Lord is still the same today. And when the moment comes, the moment of his return, when the trump of God sounds and the voice of the Archangel is heard, then the dead in Christ will rise. [1 Thessalonians 4:16]

Not just one like Lazarus here, but all of them, all those who have gone home, believing that they would be part of the first resurrection. This belief was necessary beforehand in order to be confirmed afterwards. It simply happens according to our belief.

I have greetings to pass on today.

Last Sunday in Zurich I sent greetings especially from you, Brother Russ, because you asked me to do so. And of course from everyone else too. And then a number of brothers came and mentioned you specifically, and asked me to greet you and the whole congregation. We are deeply united in the love of God and for that we are happy and grateful.

When we look outward we see that God's Word is also confirmed there. The Lord has said there shall be "**... seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter,**" and so it is. [Genesis 8:22]

Everything is ordered by God and we are glad that we can see the divine order at every turn. What has fallen out of order must be brought back into order, and it will be.

And as we read, the whole creation longs for the restoration of all things. [Romans 8:19] Creation groans for the original divine order to be restored, and it will happen as surely as God has said.

There are people who cannot understand disorder, especially, I mentioned this somewhere today, when you meet Jews especially on airplanes. There is hardly any other people who react as bitterly towards God as the Jews, hardly any other people, unless they are outspoken atheists or

communists. But anyone who wants to talk to a Jew about God today, especially as a German, has to put up with some tough questions. The first question, "Where was God when all our brothers and sisters, children and mothers and fathers, were put into the gas chambers? Where was God? Where was God when that happened? Where was God?"

That is the question.

And one is then astonished to see that they have no possibility of believing in a personal God.

"There is a higher power. But God? Who is God? A personal God?"

They do not know.

We know. And we also know why all these things have happened.

God has foretold them [Deuteronomy 4:27, Jer 9:12-15].

***If you do not walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commandments, but walk in the ways of the heathen, then I will scatter you among all the nations, and only a small remnant will remain.***

God has said it.

And it is probably in Hosea where he said, ***"I have chosen you from among all peoples as my inheritance. Therefore, I will punish you for all your sins."*** [Am 3:2]

All the others had no law. Therefore, they had no transgressions. God could not hold them accountable.

But his people had the law, the rules, the statutes – and they transgressed them. And every law demands punishment when it is transgressed.

And so, from God's point of view, everything is just and right.

Only man is blind and cannot see it.

With God everything is always right. And if it were right with us, there would be nothing to complain about.

Complaining, you know, I'm smiling a little now, but it is really and literally written, ***"Let him who complains complain about his own sins."*** [Lamentations 3:39] Not about circumstances, not about others, but actually about one's own sins.

And very few do that. They lash out and look for fault in others. And when they don't find it, they become even more angry and even more unpalatable.

But we are also grateful to God for giving us the grace not to look for fault in others, but to judge ourselves, according to the Scripture, **"He who judges himself will not be judged, but he who judges another will be judged by the same standard by which he judged others."** [Matthew 7:2]

Yes, what then?

So we have a choice. Those who judge themselves are free forever and will not be judged.

Those who judge others will receive the judgment they have pronounced upon them.

What do we want? Where do we want to stand on that day?

I think it is better to stand on the right side, namely on the side of God, to judge ourselves and let ourselves be judged by the one who searches our hearts and reins, who sees everything, who knows everything, who understands everything, and since God became man, he understands us all the better.

Before, in the spiritual body, this was not possible, but after our Lord came into a physical body and was found in fashion as a man, he felt as we feel, he wept as we have just read, as we would weep.

He felt as a human being.

God cannot cry. God is spirit. God can wipe away our tears, and he will do so, for thus it is written [Revelation 21:4].

**"God will wipe away all our tears."**

Well, brother Russ said we would have a Bible study. Then we should continue with 1st Thessalonians 5. In the epistle to the Thessalonians chapter 5 it says:

**1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.**

**2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.**

**3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.**

Let us pause here for a moment.

We have spoken much about the day of the Lord, written much about it, a topic that is well known among us.

And in the last brochure I also briefly touched on the developments in Eastern and Western Europe. Based on what I gather from the word and Brother Branham's sermons, you all know what he says about Russia as a tool in the hand of God.

But what must come first?

And we see how everything there is in a state of upheaval, which would have seemed impossible just three years ago. The time is simply right for it.

I heard his speech yesterday and he said, "The time when the party rules the people is over. The time has come when the people rule the party."

A revolution is underway throughout the country. And I see in this, whether it is in the Soviet Union or in China, everywhere countries are in upheaval, preparations for the final round of the proclamation of the gospel, which can no longer be stopped.

Many things still seem completely confused to us today. We may scratch our heads and wonder how it all fits together.

But we can be sure of one thing, in the midst of all this confusion, God is making a way for his people.

I'm thinking of the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, who married a devout Catholic as the first Indian president ever to do so. And that this man decided to send his son and daughter, who were still very young, what were they? 13, 15, to Moscow to be educated in the ultra Roman Catholic school run by the Spanish state.

Everything is mixed up.

What does the prophet Daniel write? **"Through marriage..."** [Daniel 2:43] Have you all read it?

You can see how things criss-cross between peoples, connections here, connections there. Spain gets permission to have a huge school there. And

the man takes an arch-Catholic as his wife, a member of Hinduism, one of the largest religions in the world, certainly second in size, perhaps even first. I don't know exactly. After all there are about 750 million of them and that is a large mass.

And yet you see how all the connections are being made. Religions and their barriers are being broken down, overcome.

One speaks of faith and so does the other but both believe something completely different. Everyone speaks of believers when they speak of their own.

When Khomeini speaks, he speaks to believers. When the Pope speaks, he speaks to believers. Everyone speaks to believers. Everything is blurred. No one knows how things will turn out.

We, as children of God, observe things, see how Scripture is being fulfilled and also see that God is preparing a platform for the final round, giving us an opportunity and preparing things that are to happen.

But let us come to our topic, to our text:

***"You have no need that I write unto you..."*** and that is something we must emphasize. [1Th 5:1]

All those in our generation who have separated themselves and write about the day of the Lord, about the coming of the Lord, about everything, they are already outside the will of God because of this statement.

No one has written anything about this.

And if you read in the seals, Father Branham says **"The Lord has spoken about the first six seals."**

He then drew comparisons from Matthew and said **"When it comes to the seventh seal he has remained silent. That is the great mystery and it concerns the return of Jesus Christ which even the Son did not know."**

Did you notice that? Have you all read it?

Today they all write it. Today they all know it.

And our Savior in human form, as the Son of Man says himself, ***"the Son of Man does not know, only the Father."*** [Matthew 24:36]

Today they claim that it was the 28th of February.

Well, I just wonder why they still read the seven seals. When the Lord has come and everything is over, the throne of grace is empty and there is nothing left. We can go home.

No, let us leave God's Word as it is and thank Him that it is written. And let us thank Him that we have a connection to the Word of God.

I don't know if I mentioned it in the last sermon, but in a sermon entitled "Broken Cisterns" Brother Branham says **"Only the truly born again, those born again by the Spirit, will have access to the Word of God."**

The Word came from the Spirit and will only connect with the Spirit, with the Spirit of God. And when we have the Spirit of God, we recognize that His words are Spirit and life and that they are revealed to us.

Now you know that we are approaching the elections. We are here in our country. This also needs to be said. We bear joint responsibility. We pray for the government. This time, for the first time, I laid my hand on the Bible and said, "Lord, I am a citizen of a country. I share responsibility. Help and bless. Let everything go well once again."

And we are grateful to God, for better or for worse, for how things have turned out. Whether we are satisfied overall remains to be seen, but we accept it from the hand of the Lord as it is. And God certainly makes no mistakes, not even in this. It is still written, ***"The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord as rivers of water."*** [Proverbs 21:1] ***"He removes kings and sets up kings."*** [Daniel 2:21]

So may His will be done in everything.

Some things that we do not like may still be in God's will, whether we understand it or not.

There is a Pharaoh who did not know Joseph, and the Lord hardened his heart, so that the name of the Lord might be magnified, and God might show His power. [Ex 1:8] [Ex 9:16]

Ultimately, no one is God's secret counselor, and no one can tell him what to do.

We have also spoken enough about the thought of peace and safety.

Let us continue with verse 4.

***But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.***

This is very important. We have emphasized this verse often enough.

It is written, **"At evening time there shall be light"** [Zechariah 14:7]

Then it is written, **"At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh."** [Matthew 25:6]

The evening light came in the evening at the right time to light our way until midnight, so that we do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.

The light should not come at noon. It should come in the evening, evening light, so that we can see where we are going. This too is grace and faithfulness.

In verse 5 it says:

***Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.***

***Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.***

How wonderful it is to live in expectation of the Lord's return, and yet, as we said last Wednesday evening, to remain sober, to remain clear-headed, to plan as if we had our whole life ahead of us, and yet to live up to this exhortation, ***"Be sober, be watchful."***

This is very important for our times.

It goes on in verse 7:

***7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.***

***8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.***

This is also part of it, a certain equipment.

I said it once, somehow, not here, I said it in a private conversation, that our Mr. Rao, whom we would have wished everything, he laid down every weapon and never struck a single blow.

And for the viewer that is a little sad, because there would have been a whole number of weapons, his own weapons, with which to strike others.

But here we are told that we should ***"put on the breastplate of faith, and that we should have love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation."***

Weapons are not there to be laid down, but to be used in battle. The best and latest weapons are useless if you don't use them.

It is terrible, excuse the remark, when someone talks about peace and then supplies weapons to a war zone.

But that is not our concern. God lets everything happen, and people make decisions that they may later regret. That's what he said today, that it was a misjudgment on his part.

It stood out to me that Basra, which is now being fought over, the name means in English "paradise", literally translated Basra. And if you look at the location exactly there where the Garden of Eden was, exactly, the rivers, everything, you can look it up, Basra means "paradise" in English. And that is exactly the area where the Garden of Eden was. You can read about it in the Book of Moses with the rivers, and you will see that this is so.

But there's fighting there. There's fighting.

God will establish a paradise after this Satan's Eden has been destroyed. A day of vengeance is coming, and we are coming to that very soon. For it is written in verse 9:

***For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.***

These are wonderful words. We know that the day will come that will burn like an oven. [Malachi 4:1] The wrath of God will come upon mankind, and the mercy seat will turn into the judgment seat.

You can read about it in the seventh seal in Revelation 8 verse 1, where seven angels were given seven bowls of incense. Coals were taken from the altar and thrown onto the earth, and that was practically the introduction of the judgments that will come upon this earth. [Rev 8:5]

But there are a large number of scriptures that speak about the judgment, about the wrath of God.

Judgment will be at the end. That is the final judgment before the White Throne.

But the reckoning with the nations, with the unbelieving people, the wrath of God, where the bowls of wrath are poured out, according to Revelation 16, that is something completely different.

That is the day of the Lord, and that comes after the rapture.

We can read it in several passages.

I will repeat verse 9 again:

***For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Let us read Revelation chapter 16. Revelation chapter 16. Just very briefly. You can read the rest at home.

Revelation 16, verse 1.

***And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.***

So you can read Revelation chapter 8. As I just said, we're in the seventh seal. In Revelation chapter 8, verse 1. The opening of the seventh seal, verse 2 says:

***2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.***

***3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.***

***4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.***

***5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.***

***6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.***

Even blowing the trumpets can only happen after the opening of the seventh seal.

Here we distinguish, and I want to say this very clearly, between opening and fulfillment, which means realization.

There is a difference between the process described in a seal, and the time when this process becomes reality, and between the opening of the seals.

Is that clear, brothers and sisters? We are here today as a class. I have no teaching abilities, but the Spirit of God teaches even to this day.

One example: Brother Branham says, **"The first four seals run parallel to the seven church ages."**

Is that correct? That is what he says. The first four seals run parallel to the seven stages of the church ages.

The fifth seal concerns the Jews who have already gone home, who were murdered, and also those who are still converting, and who will still be murdered.

Is that clear too?

Now look.

In March 1963, the Lord opened the seals, but the first seal, the first horse rider who began his triumphal march, this deceiver who had a bow but no arrows, he began his march in early Christianity. [Revelation 6:2]

And so it continued through the seven church ages. And in the last, the first three colors are mixed together. And that gives the last color, a mixture. And the whole thing is death, and hell followed him. [Revelation 6:8]

So we see quite clearly that the opening of a seal is not synonymous with its fulfillment. Fulfillment may lie 1,000 years in the past, 20 years in the future, or 1,000 years in the future.

I'm just putting this out here to let us know that the opening of the seals was not or cannot be synonymous with their fulfillment.

Rather, as we have already said, the four seals merely provide a retrospective view of the nature, work, and actions of the Antichrist and everything he planned and carried out.

In the fourth, this seductive age in which nothing is clearly black, nothing is clearly white, and nothing is clearly red, everything is mixed together, no one knows what is what anymore.

And that is the time in which we now live. A mixture of the first three in the last, namely in the fourth.

But the fourth is only the last for the church, not overall.

For the fifth, as already mentioned, you can read it for yourselves. In Revelation chapter 6 verses 9 to 11 there is the fifth seal and that concerns the Jews 100%.

This is a wonderful thing, that here it speaks of ***"the souls under the altar who were murdered for the sake of the Word of God and the testimony."***

It does not say "Jesus" here, it does not say "for the testimony of Jesus", only ***"for the Word and for the testimony which they had."***

Later, when the others come, things will be different. They will already have recognized Jesus.

But we cannot go into that now.

My point was simply that we must distinguish, just as with prophecy, brothers and sisters, just as with prophecy, God can give a promise. He can give a prophecy – and in between, as with Isaiah, 810 years can pass before what God has spoken through his mouth is fulfilled. Or as with Malachi, it was about 400 years before what was said through his mouth came to pass.

Coming back here to the pouring out of the vials of wrath.

Let us also read from Romans chapter 1 so that we can see the context from Paul's proclamation here.

Romans chapter 1.

Here it says in verse 18:

***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.***

Or "in untruth", depending on the translation. And that is exactly the case. The truth does not come to light. It is suppressed through unrighteousness, through false interpretations.

And a wrath of God comes upon all those people who have prevented the truth or the coming to light of the truth.

For God is concerned with truth.

Through truth comes clarity.

And Satan wants to confuse everything, wants to obscure everything and ensures that the truth is suppressed in unrighteousness by the people and

withheld from the people. And upon all these the wrath of God will then come.

But before this wrath breaks forth, as we read in 1 Thessalonians 5, we who believe will be taken away.

Why?

Because we have not suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. But because God has given us grace to love the truth, to recognize the truth. And the truth has set us free. And for that we are also thankful.

There is a word in 2 Thessalonians, probably in the second chapter, where it says:

***Because they did not receive the love of the truth, God sent them strong delusions.*** [2Th 2:10]

When truth comes our way, please accept it.

Truth does not need to be tested first. Divine truth is God's Word. And God's Word is purified sevenfold. God's Word is always true.

In Romans 2 there is another mention of the wrath that will come upon mankind, namely in verses 7 and 8, actually already in verse 5.

***But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;***

***Who will render to every man according to his deeds.***

So there is a day of wrath.

In verse 8 it says:

***But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.***

It is the stubbornness, the obstinacy of people that prevents them from submitting, from repenting. They are banging their heads against a brick wall. What they see or believe is right. Even if someone rose from the dead, they would still not believe.

In 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 10, we read a few Wednesdays ago, it says here, 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 10:

***And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.***

We must take all this into ourselves once and for all. Salvation comes before the wrath to come.

It cannot be otherwise.

God cannot judge us twice. He cannot lay the punishment that would have befallen us on the Lamb of God and punish us again. That is not possible.

Our punishment was laid on him so that we might have peace and by his stripes we are healed. [Isaiah 53:5]

In Revelation chapter 6 there are more interesting words in verses 16 and 17. Revelation chapter 6 verses 16 and 17. Here it says:

***And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:***

***For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?***

And do we realize that this is the sixth seal?

Have you understood?

Revelation chapter 6 from verse 12 deals with the sixth seal. And the sixth seal can only come after the church has been raptured.

That is also very clear. The sequence is just wonderful.

The fifth seal lies in between because it concerns those who have already been murdered and those who will be added to them. But even chronologically everything is very well and perfectly ordered.

In Revelation chapter 14 there are again some words that deal with this subject. Revelation 14 verses 10 and 19. Here it is written:

***The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.***

And who are these people? You can see exactly what context this is in. In verse 6 we read:

***And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,***

So this is about the everlasting gospel. The same gospel that Peter and Paul preached.

When brother Branham was taken behind the veil of time and was told, **"You will be judged before those to whom you preached."**

He asked, **"Must Paul also stand before the judgment seat?"**

And it said, **"Yes, he too will be judged."**

This is about the everlasting gospel that will be preached to all peoples, tongues and nations. So that is the last round, the last pull.

And again I remember how brother Branham speaks of the third pull.

Excuse me, we don't deal with these things very often because we are waiting for them to take shape, to unfold and then we will have enough time to thank God without first imagining how everything will happen in detail.

But then brother Branham says in the same paragraph, **"The last pull will be for the totally lost and it will be for the bride."**

And then it seems at the moment as if we are sitting between two chairs.

But that is not the case.

It will simply be the last message, the last decision. And whoever makes his decision then has made it forever. Those who do not believe will not believe forever and will be lost. And those who believe and accept will be saved forever and belong to the bride. They will be called out.

No one will have the time to think about it and say, "I'm going home to think about it."

Under the proclamation of the Word things will happen. Divine decisions will be made, final decisions.

We will talk about that when the time comes for it.

Then the second angel who followed the first one, he said, ***"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."*** [Revelation 14:8]

Then came the third, ***"If any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation."*** [Revelation 14:9-10]

How many today belong to churches that are all entering into this Babylonian system and singing, *"Great God we praise you, Lord we praise your strength,"* and care nothing at all about what the great God has said?

Nothing at all.

And the Lord really said back then, ***"They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*** [Matthew 15:8]

Let us emphasize this once again: Whoever does not agree with the Word of God, whoever does not have an inner agreement with every Word of God, is not right, cannot be right.

Mood is not created by pulling levers and creating an atmosphere.

The right tune is there where it is right.

And that is where divine revelation springs forth.

And here Brother Branham spoke of the wine and the oil.

You all know the revelation and the seals and what is written in them.

***"Do not harm the wine and the oil."*** [Revelation 6:6]

What was the wine?

It was the divine overwhelming, the mood that comes forth through the revelation of the Spirit, a divine mood, a divine praise that is brought forth in the believer through divine revelation of the Word.

Do you all know it?

You have all read the seals and you perhaps know better than I who translated them, proofread them and read them again and again.

But we are grateful to God for all these thoughts and we only wish that it could indeed become apparent to us that the divine revelation of the Spirit in which God's Word was made so clear to us was indeed truly transfigured and shown in all its contexts.

What a mood would result in all of us. What thanks, what praise, what worship would rise up to the throne of God.

Once again a word from Revelation 15. Here it should be verse 1 and verse 7:

***1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.***

Here we see again these seven angels with the seven last plagues through which the wrath of God would be finished here on earth.

In verse 7 it says:

**7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.**

**8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.**

And then the seven vials are shown here in their individual effects. And then things come to a conclusion.

And the whole thing then runs up to Armageddon which we can read about very clearly from verse 12 onwards and actually already from verse 10.

But that was not really our topic. We only wanted to describe it very briefly with the day of the Lord or with the wrath.

All these things are not intended for the Bride church. Before anything like this happens we will be taken from this earth as it is written here.

**9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.**

Did we not hear it in the opening word?

**"Whoever believes in me will live even if he dies."** [John 11:25]

Why?

Because we have received eternal life. They have only gone before us but they are alive.

And then whether we live or die we are the Lord's and will then be united with him. Therefore prepare yourselves.

Here it says:

**11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.**

Beloved, this is also very important.

When we notice that a brother or sister is going through a difficult time, going through trials, let us find the right words to say at the right time so that wounds may be healed, new bridges may be built, yes, so that God may use us to serve one another.

We can all judge one another but let us serve.

And when we admonish one another let us do so in love, in the tone in which we would like to be admonished by another.

And let us say to another only what we would like to hear from another with joy.

Is that right?

If we apply certain standards here, where does it say that in the Sermon on the Mount? [Matthew 7:12]

***"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."***

And then it comes back to us.

We must always know that it comes back to us.

***11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.***

Yes, how is that to happen? How can we edify one another?

I will now use just two very special examples from 1 Corinthians 14. There Paul says:

***"He who speaks in tongues edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church."*** [1Cor 14:4]

We are to edify one another.

How does that happen?

In the same Spirit, namely in the Holy Spirit, who guides our words and thoughts to say the right thing, what God wants, at the right time and in the right tone.

Then there will be edification.

Perhaps this part here. [1 Thessalonians 5:12-13]

Time is pressing on.

***12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;***

***13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.***

This is also very important. Please do not forget the context!

1 Thessalonians 4 from verse 13 speaks of the return of the Lord, of the resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, of the transformation of those who will be alive at that time, of the rapture to meet the Lord in the air, and then of the day of the Lord that is to come, of wrath and so on.

Here we are told how we are to behave at that time, and we are living in that time.

**12 *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord.***

I will say this openly here before the Lord and before all of you:

I have deep gratitude and high esteem for brother Russ, and for my brothers, for brother Schmidt, for brother Gajdač, for all the brothers who preached the word of the Lord here in this place.

Brothers who have worked all their lives, who have not needed anyone's money, who have not been a burden to anyone, who have not needed support, and who have exercised their office and served as leaders.

But now I come to a point that seems very important to me, because it is written in the Word of God, so it must be important.

Is that true or not? If it were not in the Word of God, it would not be important.

**12 *Who labour among you and are over you in the Lord.***

Who among us has ever needed an elder in all these years?

Who?

Who has ever needed one?

All the hands remain in their pockets.

Who has made use of it?

Who has made use of it?

How often have we seen things, heard things?

How often has our soul suffered?

How often could we have said the right word, if we had been certain that it would have been heard and accepted as the Word of God?

I will tell you how it is:

For example, when two people disagree and there is a man of God who does not take sides, he can judge rightly before God and before men and there would be help and all strife, all disagreements would be removed and God would be able to continue with us.

It says here:

**13 *And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.***

God bless you my brothers.

We would like to ask the Lord to grant us the grace to hold you in special love and esteem. Accept it when people shake your hands particularly firmly, they mean it from the heart.

It is not always necessary to mention the brothers by name in prayer when we are present, that can be done better in the closet.

Is that right, Brother Russ?

It always feels a little strange to us but you can do it if you feel so led. Although it is better if we know that you stand fully behind us, that you remember us and our ministry in your prayers in the closet. But feel free to do as you are led by the Spirit of God.

It goes on to say:

**14 *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.***

**15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man.***

How can we see to this?

If we know nothing about it or if we only find about it when the damage is done and cannot be fixed.

I will tell you how we can pay attention to this: If all of us who hear God's Word take it seriously, submit ourselves to it and say:

"Lord, I have this and that in mind, but I'm not entirely sure whether it is right. I will talk to the brothers and find out for myself whether what I'm planning to do is right before the Lord."

We could save ourselves and others a great deal of trouble if we kept the Bible order and knew that God has also set brothers in place who have the church at heart.

**15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man.***

Elsewhere it says, **"Do not repay evil with evil,"** and so forth. [1Pt 3:9]

How often does that happen?

And then we wonder why the Spirit of God does not break through?

Why the anointing cannot come upon us?

What did Brother Branham say?

***If we have the nature of the Lamb, then the dove comes down and stays. But if we have the nature of the wolf, then it does not come and it does not stay.***

So divine nature is necessary for this.

**15 *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.***

**16 *Rejoice evermore.***

**17 *Pray without ceasing.***

**18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.***

**19 *Quench not the Spirit.***

**20 *Despise not prophesyings.***

**21 *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.***

**22 *Abstain from all appearance of evil.***

**23 *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

**24 *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.***

Hallelujah.

Praise be to the living God.

***"He himself, the God of peace,"*** not you, not me, ***"He himself, the God of peace, will sanctify you wholly."***

A church that is under the blood of the Lamb, that has experienced reconciliation and forgiveness, a church that has been introduced to the Word of truth, and is therefore sanctified in truth by the Spirit. Because those who have become believers bow to the word and submit to it God can accomplish sanctification.

He then goes on to say:

25 ***Brethren, pray for us.***

26 ***Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.***

27 ***I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.***

28 ***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.***

Now the letter has also come to us for reading, and I wish that it would also come for rereading. For rereading by me, by you, by all of us. For repeated rereading in prayer combined with a request.

Lord, let every word written here come through through me.

I want to face every word, bow to every word.

I want to accept every word as true.

And you will see that God will be able to bless us even more as ministering brethren.

What did we look at last Wednesday?

***"How can you despise your brother?"*** [Rm 14:10]

Contempt is one of the worst things.

Our Lord was despised, as it is written, and shunned by men. [Isaiah 53:3]  
A man of sorrows. People avoided him.

I believe we have also experienced a little contempt. But it is part of what we have to go through and endure.

But one thing is certain: If we as those who hear God's Word lose our respect for him ...

As brother Branham said. I will repeat and quote brother Branham from memory as best I can. He said:

***"When a church loses its respect for its pastor, in other words for its shepherd, such a church is gone."***

Everyone says what they want and what they like.

This reminds me of a word that God said in the Old Testament.

Do you believe that it's true?

All right.

Then I will read it to you.

It should be in Leviticus.

Several things are described from verse 17 onwards.

It should be chapter 21.

Leviticus chapter 21.

Here we are told what to do with those who distribute the bread or the food of God.

Leviticus 21 from verse 6:

***They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy.***

And then it says:

***They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.***

***Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.***

These are also the words of God.

***"You shall hold him holy for he offers the food of your God."***

And the food of our God is the Word of God and God's Word is holy and through this Word we are sanctified.

I do not believe that we preach God's Word without having been sanctified by this Word.

That is impossible. The Word of God is always right.

So let us honor our brothers as we have heard.

Let us pray for them.

Let us value and respect them.

And God will bless us from the riches of his grace.

Amen.