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Bible Study: Phil. 2:1–8: "Be likeminded, being of one accord, of one mind!"

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Thanks be to the Lord for every opportunity we have to gather before his presence and hear his precious Word. Not our opinions about his Word, but his original Word as it originally came forth from his mouth and was then passed on by his prophets and apostles by divine commission and to acquaint us with his eternal plan of salvation as a living testimony of what the living God intends and through the proclamation thereof to work faith in those who hear the Word so that they have part in the fulfillment of what God has purposed.

We are not merely listeners and spectators of what is proclaimed and takes place in the kingdom of God; we are partakers of what God has purposed and by grace shall witness the fulfillment of that very plan of salvation. We who are believers wish to use this time to ensure that God's message is carried forward and that many more may become acquainted with the true Gospel.

It may also be worth noting here that we believe from the bottom of our hearts that God over the centuries behind us, especially since the Reformation, since the time of Jan Hus, Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Erasmus, and who they all were, God has granted revival after revival. It went ever deeper, ever closer to the early Christian message, until the turn of the century when the Pentecostal movement broke through. Now we have the charismatic movement in all its various forms, but out of all this the church of the living God will crystallize. And it will not merely be a church of miracles and signs; it will be a Word bride. She will be brought into full harmony with the Word. And that will make all the difference.

Anyone who read the press a few days ago will have noted how in Frankfurt Cathedral this Canadian clergyman prayed for the sick, and I believe there were 24 who were healed. Some may then ask themselves: Why is it happening there? God must do it. With God there is no respect of persons, whether a Muslim, a Catholic, or a Protestant. Whoever believes what God has said and promised in his Word and trusts that he will do it may receive it and can then thank him for it.

We simply have to understand that God transcends our understanding and the boundaries we set. The Spirit works where he wills; you hear his rushing, but you do not know where he comes from or where he's going. [Joh 3:8]

As just has been said, it is important that we do not allow ourselves to be swayed by events, but that we find our way back to the original Word, for "***heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God remains forever.***" [Mat 24:35, 1Pe 1:25]

And in this too must Scripture be fulfilled, as we read in Matthew 7, verse 21. That "***many will come on that day and say, have we not performed signs and wonders? Have we not cast out demons and prophesied and so on?***"

And the Lord will say to them, "***depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you.***" [Mat 7:22-23]

The way with God is a way of obedience; it is a narrow way, and one must first have passed through the straight gate to reach the goal. Whoever does not enter the straight gate, so it's written there, will remain on the broad way that leads to destruction. [Mat 7:13]

We thank God for the balanced proclamation, for the comprehensive overview, which we do not deserve but have been granted by grace, and also for the privilege of being able, especially in our time, to place all events, be they religious, political, economic, in Europe or elsewhere, in their biblical context with God's help.

Allow me just one further remark on this point. It has already been mentioned that precisely now in the end times, this empire, the Roman Empire that once existed, must exist once more. And if we look back at the recent history just behind us, after the Second World War, the British Empire, which ruled over half the world, collapsed. And now Great Britain has become little Britain. I only hope that no British citizen is here, but none of us can help what happens.

And what is happening now? Now the Russian empire is breaking up and why? So that the Roman Empire can emerge in its entirety. Beloved, things are so clear before us, and we do not need a Daniel to come and interpret them for us. All we need is the Holy Spirit who illuminates and reveals in detail what the prophets and apostles have said and written in the name of the Lord.

For it is written that "***they will all make their power available until the words of God are fulfilled.***" [Rev 17:17]

Thus it is written in the Bible in Revelation 17, and this is what we now see being fulfilled before our very eyes.

I have just received a letter from Professor Dr. Long from Exeter in England, a man who has studied Brother Branham's sermons in great depth. And in this letter he refers to the statement that Brother Branham made, and he writes here in point 2: "In 1962, shortly after the Berlin Wall was erected, Brother Branham said the following in the message 'The End Time Seed Sign' on the 19th of March in Tifton, Georgia, USA:

There was a Roman revival, and you know what happened.

If they give back the eastern part of Berlin, that will restore the Roman Empire exactly to the borders it had in the time of Jesus."

We have, of course, already mentioned this here, but there are also other people, men who have taught at various universities, like this man who simply look into these things. It is not just the rank and file. Time and again people ask, even recently: Well, who comes to see you? Do people come from all walks of life? Yes, from all walks of life. But let me say it, it is written in the Gospel, "***the Gospel was preached to the poor.***" [Mat 11:5]

And the lowest, most inconspicuous and poorest class on earth is the one most richly blessed by God, because that is precisely the class that does not have much and therefore wishes to be blessed by God.

I've received an invitation for the first time to attend a conference in Düsseldorf where Professor Schiller and others will be speaking on some important topics, 800 invited guests; let's see if I'll go. In any case, much is happening on earth, and people want to make sense of it, but they cannot do so without God, and they cannot do so without God's Word.

I believe that we have the privilege of living in these days, and not only that, but we have the privilege of comparing everything that is happening now with the Bible and asking God that we may recognize it and not only recognize it, but deduce from it how late it is on the world clock and how close the return of Jesus Christ our Lord is at hand.

We heard a number of things in the opening word; every sentence, every thought that was expressed is indeed precious. It made me think of Isaiah 60, where upon the establishment of the millennial kingdom of peace something great will take place, including the kings of the earth. In Isaiah chapter 60, verse 11, with reference to the city of Jerusalem, it says:

[11] ***Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.***

We've seen it in recent days. You know, I don't watch television because I don't have the time. I'll go so far as to say here that I don't even know how to properly insert a video cassette into the machine, but I did end up watching when Unity Day was celebrated on the 3rd of October; I ended up watching until after midnight, and the Scripture we have just read gave me this thought: What will it be like when the King of kings establishes his throne? What will it be like when the nations are gathered before him? What will it be like when the bride comes down with him to reign and rule with him?

What a majestic moment, what a glorious day that will be when the King of kings establishes his throne, just as the Gospel of Matthew tells us, that "***He will sit on the throne of his glory and all nations will then be gathered before him.***"

I shall read it to you from Matthew 25, verse 31.

[31] ***When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:***

[32] ***And before him shall be gathered all nations...***

What a moment, what a triumph, what a victory that will be, God united with humanity. What happened on Golgotha will then have been realized here on this earth.

Let us return to our study of the Word. We begin with Titus chapter 1, and will then return to Ephesians and other passages. In Titus 1, verses 1 to 4 it says:

[1] ***Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;***

[2] ***In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;***

[3] ***But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.***

We have read in the opening word what Paul set forth there. It is a course of events determined by God according to which everything takes place. In Ephesians 1, verse 10, it is written as follows.

Ephesians 1, verse 10:

[10] ***That in the dispensation of the fulness of times ordained by him...***

This is important that we observe this divine process from beginning to end and that we may also see this continuation and completion and by grace witness it. We mentioned the word "predestined" yesterday. Not that God acted arbitrarily, far be it from him. "***God truly wanted all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,***" [1Ti 2:4] as Paul writes in his letter to Timothy.

Yet God knew that not all would believe, and so through his foreknowledge he was able to make this choice. Here we read: "***according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledging of the truth.***" [Tit 1:1]

Then there is also the concept that the "***unfailing God promised before the world began***" with reference to the "***hope of eternal life.***" [Tit 1:2]

We mentioned this yesterday too. God made promises and then he brought them to pass. He fulfilled what he had previously promised through the preaching, as we read in verse 3. God's counsel is made known, and Paul says here "***at the appointed time***", verse 3:

[3] ***But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.***

I had a long phone call three or four days ago. Someone spoke to me who had also heard several sermons here in years gone by, and he said, "Brother Frank, I know that you preach God's Word with truthfulness, but it bothers me that in your circular letters you always write by God's commission." I said, "Beloved brother, if that were not the case, then I would have no right whatsoever to stand before the people of God." There are enough people being held back. Here, indeed, the true Word of God is to be passed on by divine commission. If that were not the case, then I would indeed have to vacate this place and make way for the one sent by God to preach the Word. But you see, he then asked me further—he has slipped into this world and so on—and then he asked me how things should proceed. All I could say was: "Come back to the Lord."

Only if we take this path, returning to the Lord, as the prodigal son did back then, there is no celebration at all beforehand; only when the prodigal son returned was there a great feast. [Luk 15:22] When someone who has gone astray, who has been lost, returns to the Lord, there is joy in heaven [Luk 15:7, 10] and a celebration on earth, for people are returning to the flock of Jesus Christ.

It is written here: "***by the commission of God our Saviour through preaching.***" [Tit 1:3]

I would now like to read from 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13.

1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13:

[3] ***For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.***

That is always the be-all and end-all, that God's Word is received in the awareness, in the faith that it is God's Word, and then there are no longer any limits to the power of God. For "***all things were made through the Word, and without it nothing was made that has come into being.***" [Joh 1:3]

And God sends his Word to heal us. [Psa 107:20]

When we receive this Word of God, we are dealing with the Word of omnipotence, the Word behind which the Almighty himself stands to put into practice what he has said in his Word.

We have the best example in creation: "***God spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.***" [Psa 33:9]

We must apply this in its entirety to the Word of God and accept it from God in faith that Scripture cannot be broken, [Joh 10:35] but that God must stand by what

he has said in order to bring it to fulfillment.

I believe Brother Russ said it, or mentioned it in prayer, that we must be freed from our doubts, from unbelief, from timidity, in order to trust God wholly, yes, completely, that he's able to do far more than we could ask or imagine. [Eph 3:20]

After all, we can only ask for the things that are promised to us in his Word. God is ready to surprise us; he wants to give us even more than we ask for. He wants to bestow his abundance upon us. He wants us not to be offended by his Word, but to experience for ourselves the confirmation of his Word as true. This is how he is honored. Because let's be honest, when we pray and our prayers go unanswered, the enemy uses this time to stir up doubts within us. These can take many different forms: doubts as to whether you are still right with God, whether the Lord is still with you, whether you are still in grace and so on. And then it starts.

But, when we press on in faith, to the faith as the Scripture has said, and take God at His word, then rivers of living water begin to flow. [Joh 7:38]

Then a spring of God opens up, a source of power from the Almighty God to the blessing of us all.

We have emphasized often enough that we are living in a special time in which God our Lord is calling people out from every tongue, people and nation, from every religion, from every denomination to build His church, to bring together what belongs together, so that it may also grow together.

We have heard a similar quote repeated over the last few days and weeks: "What belongs together grows together." This can also be applied to the spiritual realm.

Different things cannot be crossed. They must be of the same kind, sharing the same nature, things that belong together, grow together.

And here we are talking about the divine lineage, about those born of God, about those who bear the divine nature, the nature of Jesus Christ, so that they may be joined together as the body of the Lord and grow together.

And if you, if we are part of this body of Jesus Christ, then we will feel this sense of belonging together.

Then one will no longer need to say to the other: "Listen, we do belong together."

Then we will feel it, just as the members of a body joined together feel that they are part of the same body. And if one were to try to separate them, it would cause great pain; it simply cannot be done.

Yet we have so many divisions on earth. There have been divisions in every revival and they persist to this day. But what cannot be separated are the members of the body of Jesus Christ, for they form an inseparable divine unity in the Holy Spirit and they are not up for debate.

One must first understand this and then ask oneself how one feels about it.

If separation does not bother a person, does not cause them any pain, then that person has not really been connected at all, has not really been united at all; then they have merely watched from the outside and talked about it, but were not themselves part of the matter.

If we look into the Holy Scriptures, Acts chapter 4, here too we shall read a few passages. Acts chapter 4, verse 32:

[32] ***And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.***

That is how it was in early Christianity, that was God's will. Even before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit they were gathered together in unity and they remained just as united after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; all those who had become believers.

This must be emphasized. Not those who merely claim to have become believers, not those who say "I have received the Holy Spirit", but those who have truly and genuinely come to a living faith in the living God through Jesus Christ our Lord and who have truly been incorporated into the body of Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

They form this inseparable divine unity: "***the multitude of them that believed***." [Act 4:32]

Let us be believers in the biblical sense, gathered in one accord under the sound of God's Word, so that we may truly be baptized by one spirit into one body, that God may use this body and manifest the gifts and fruits of the spirit and thus make us a blessing to others.

In Ephesians chapter 4 we read a few verses. Ephesians chapter 4, here I believe we must read from verse 1 to 7.

For just as Paul has set it out, so I can only set it out, and why should I do so in my own words? Let us hear it here from a commissioned mouth as was said at the beginning, Ephesians chapter 4, verses 1 to 7.

[1] ***I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,***

[2] ***With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;***

That is part of it: "***forbearing one another in love***".

When is this required? When difficulties arise, we must and may bear with one another in love and trust in God that He will make the unclear clear, answer the questions and resolve what needs to be resolved.

It is further written:

[3] ***Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.***

These are exhortations to believers, to those who have truly become believers according to the Bible, who do not build their own church, do not promote their own work, but are being built up together for an habitation of God here on earth, as it is written: "***I will dwell among them, and be their God, and they shall be my people.***" [2Co 6:16]

And Jesus said: "***I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***" [Mat 16:18]

It is not we who build; He builds. We are the living stones that are being fitted into this divine structure and Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, He is the foundation on which everything has been laid and built, as was revealed beforehand to His servants the apostles and prophets.

Following the exhortation it is further stated here: "***to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace***" [Eph 4:3].

The divine bond of peace is the bond of perfection. [Col 3:14]

Whoever severs this divine bond of perfection through discord is in danger of being cut off from the body of Jesus Christ and then all pious sayings are of no use whatsoever.

Here deeds will speak louder than words. It then goes on to say in verse 4:

[4] ***There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;***

[5] ***One Lord, one faith, one baptism,***

[6] ***One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.***

What a wonderful scripture. "***One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.***"

Who are all these?

He is the Father of all those who are called children, who have come forth from Him, who have been begotten by Him through the Word and the Spirit and have been born again unto a living hope, who rightly say "***Abba Father***" and can pray in the same way. [Gal 4:6]

Then God has truly become our Father and we will love Him as our Father and all those who have likewise been born of Him. [1Jo 5:1]

There is a passage, I believe it is in 1 John, in chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5, verse 1.

[1] ***Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loves His father also loves His children.***

If you say that God is your Father, then you love all the sons and daughters of God who are also children of God. And if not, then your own life bears witness against you and condemns and convicts you that you are not dealing with the truth but are trying to deceive yourself and others.

I'm simply reading God's Word: "*… **is born of God: and every one that loves His father also loves His children.***" [1Jo 5:1]

God does not have just one child, perhaps you. God has many sons and daughters.

And let it be said once more: if we are born of God and He has become our heavenly Father, then we pray as we were taught to pray: "***hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done.***" [Mat 6:9-10]

I said this here one Wednesday when we recently had some very lovely meetings with the brethren in Poland. The congregation prayed the Lord's Prayer on their knees at the beginning and end of the service and then we were asked whether we do the same thing in our church. I replied more or less that we do not make a ritual out of it but that what is expressed in the Lord's Prayer is expressed anew time and again in our prayers and that we do indeed ask God from the bottom of our hearts that His kingdom may come, His will be done and His name be honored and glorified.

So the unity of the spirit of those who are born of God, who bear the nature of Jesus Christ within them and are baptized into the body of the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

I shall read from 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verses 12 and 13. 1 Corinthians 12, verses 12 and 13.

[12] ***For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.***

The multitude of believers who have truly come to believe in Christ, who have been born again through the Word and the Spirit of God, they are baptized into this body of Christ.

I will read it to you in the next verse.

[13] ***For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.***

I will tell you where these various things come from which seek in some way to undermine this divine unity. Not from the brothers and sisters who as sheep of His flock have a need to hear the Word, but from those who wish to be regarded as leaders yet cannot submit; and it is they who cause the body of the Lord to be torn apart.

May God grant grace that the sheep may recognize their good shepherd and be able to discern in which direction they are actually being led.

Where Christ is the ultimate goal, where He can be the beginning and the end, there will be no room left for self-interest. There we shall not build, but let the Lord build. Not our will, not our agenda, but one desire will inspire us, namely that God may have His right fulfilled with us by His grace, and the sooner the better.

So, having been baptized into one body, for we are after all of the same blood, we are God's offspring.

Therefore what belongs together grows together. And we belong as members to the body of Jesus Christ, and woe to him who seeks to separate what has grown together.

Not what has been glued together, but what has grown together. Here one may rightly say, without distorting the meaning of the Word: "***What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***" [Mat 19:6, Mar 10:9]

For God unites in the Holy Spirit and seals with that same Holy Spirit all whom He has been able to unite unto Himself.

Blessed and praised be His holy name.

Those who are of one mind should have the mind of Jesus Christ, not one with a brother or evangelist or a denomination, but united with Jesus Christ as the head of the church who has authority over the whole body.

From Philippians chapter 2 I would like to read a few verses beginning with verse 1. Philippians 2, verse 1.

[1] ***If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,***

[2] ***Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.***

You see, you cannot walk together in different directions. The direction, the goal, must be the same. But not just the same; it must be the right one. We must know that the direction we have taken is the right one and that we have a goal in mind, namely the goal that God has set for us.

[2] ***Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.***

Let's be completely honest: what is the ultimate goal that God has set for us? Surely it is the union of the bride and the bridegroom at the return of Jesus Christ.

If we are among those who harbor this hope and believe that at the return of Jesus Christ we shall be numbered among the flock who will be deemed worthy to escape

all that is to come upon the earth and thus be raptured before the great catastrophes and to be with the Lord, to celebrate the marriage supper with Him there.

If we bear and hold this common supreme goal which God has set for mankind, then we should take the words of the divine admonition to heart, cast off all stubbornness that may still cling to us and submit ourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that we may be built up unto the body of the Lord and hold fast to the unity in the spirit in the same mind, namely the mind of Christ.

Verse 3 states:

[3] ***Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.***

There are people who have an ambition behind which their own vanity is hidden. Out of their own vanity, out of some ambition, they wish to do something and do not realize that they stand in the way of themselves, God and others and thus hinder God to have His right fulfilled.

In the kingdom of God personal ambition has no room, however pious it may be, and the most pious can be the worst, accompanied by fanaticism and, as I said earlier, will divide rather than unite.

I shall read it again verse 3:

[3] ***And do nothing out of bossiness*** (in brackets: selfishness) ***or vain ambition, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.***

There we have it. The moment someone looks down on another with contempt, that person begins to stray from the right path.

Only where the brother is respected from the heart, held in higher esteem than one holds oneself, only there is true humility and lowliness.

Where this cannot happen there is pride and so one's own path, however pious it may be, is taken and will not serve as a blessing to the whole people of God.

"***Nothing out of vain ambition***" [Phi 2:3].

He preaches, I want to preach too; he does it, I want to do it too; nothing out of one's own ambition, but wait until God commissions, until He appoints, until He sends, and then there's room for all in divine harmony.

For there's room for all, not just for one, but for all. Yet united in one spirit, in one body, under one head, Jesus Christ.

Verse 4 says:

[4] ***Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.***

It could not have been written or phrased more succinctly than we find here. No vain ambition, no bossiness, no regard for one's own advantage, then all goes well.

Then we submit ourselves, yes, we submit to God and resist the enemy who would make us self-exalted. And thus humble ourselves, so that the Lord may have his way with us and achieve his purpose through us.

Earlier we were told of being of one mind. And in verse 5 we are told what that mindset is:

[5] ***Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.***

That is the point. We sang of it earlier in that long hymn, I believe it had seven stanzas, that he laid aside his glory, was mocked and so on. But then, as Scripture says, was exalted far above the heavens and received a name that is above every other name.

It is written here in verse 8 of Philippians 2:

[8] ***... he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

[9] ***Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:***

Let us consider this briefly, and I'm glad that it is written thus, not merely "***obedient unto death"***, but then comes the addition, and it is part of it: "***unto the death on the cross***." [Php 2:8]

There are people who say, "Lord, I want to follow you, I want to serve you," but they are not prepared to be crucified with Christ. They want to carry on living themselves, they want to die and they want to live. They want God to have his way, but they do not want to give up their rights entirely.

Here these two things are brought before our eyes, which also concern our spiritual death, so that we may live with Christ. Verse 8: "***he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,***" and then comes the emphasis, "***even the death on the cross.***"

Thus we understand when Paul writes: "***I have been crucified with Christ: it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.***" [Gal 2:20]

Not merely until death—that could be a mere semblance of death. Unto the death on the cross. That is the death we must die if we truly wish to move forward with Christ in a new life. Have we understood that? Unto the death on the cross.

And what was it? That was the end of our Savior's earthly journey to pave the way and open up a new beginning, a new living path, the path of life. So it is with us too, we must walk this path into death.

So that having died with Christ on the cross, we may truly be crucified with him. And this may be made manifest in our lives: "***it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.***" [Gal 2:20]

And this requires complete obedience, not merely saying, "Yes, yes, Lord," but doing what he has commanded and required.

I would like to read on briefly from Ephesians chapter 4. Ephesians chapter 4, verse 12. We often read verse 11, but let us read from Ephesians 4 verses 12 to 14.

[12] ***For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ...***

As we have read or about to read, we have been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. [1Co 12:13]

In this body there are callings, there are gifts, there are ministries, there are offices, as is testified to us in many Scriptures. And everything that God places in the church serves to build up the whole church of Jesus Christ and is blessed by God, and all share in it.

In verse 13 we read:

[13] ***Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.***

Here, even here on earth before the rapture, a lofty goal has been set for us. We are not meant to remain at the bare minimum. It would be wonderful if we had the fullness and God could reveal himself in his power.

Verse 14 states:

[14] ***That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.***

There are two different winds. One is the wind, the breath of God, the Spirit of God, which came down with a mighty rushing at Pentecost. We can read about this in Acts chapter 2.

"***When the day of Pentecost was fully come,... there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind.***" [Act 2:1-2]

This is a completely different wind from the one we've just read about here, which blows to and fro as various teachings.

When the wind of the Holy Spirit descends, there is a multitude founded on the Word, and it is equipped with power from on high to be firmly established in all Bible doctrines and all that pertains to them.

These winds of various doctrines brought about by the deceitful schemes of unsuspecting people are winds made by men.

And many have made a great fuss about many false doctrines. And the more false a doctrine is, the greater the fuss can be made about it.

But thanks be to God who has also given us the clear discernment in this matter. And we do not discern according to a rule of thumb, but we discern on the basis of the Word of God as to whether things are from God. For every person can err, because every person on their own is by nature a liar, so says God's Word. [Rom 3:4]

Only God's Word is true, and God is true.

And only when we proclaim God's Word with truthfulness and receive it with truthfulness, will God be able to reveal himself truly in us. And we shall "***know him, the true one, and be in the true one, who is the true God and eternal life***", as it is written in 1 John chapter 5, verse 20

Another passage from Peter. God has indeed used the various apostles to bestow upon us through their letters instruction, guidance, and all that we need by his grace. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 2.

[2] ***Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.***

This concerns the blood-bought flock, the Lord's redeemed, who in the sanctification of the Spirit—and we have emphasized this here. We can begin with Leviticus chapter 17 to understand what demands God places upon us regarding sanctification. Everything is truly written there concerning the sanctification wrought by the Spirit, which is linked to obedience to God and his Word, which we must experience.

Here it is written: "***Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.***" [1Pe 1:2]

Sanctification is not something we achieve ourselves leading to self-righteousness and self-satisfaction, but is wrought by the Spirit. It is measured by obedience to the Word of God. And let no one who is disobedient to the Word of God claim that they have experienced the sanctification wrought by the Spirit. Sanctification, like redemption and everything God gives us, always runs parallel to the Word and is in complete harmony with the Holy Scripture.

We read on:

[3] ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,***

[4] ***To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.***

This is the goal God has set for us. "***If we are children, then we are also heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.***" [Rom 8:17]

And we are children of the divine promise, receiving the Word of promise and the Spirit of promise, so that we may be baptized into this body of the Lord, forming the divine unity, holding fast through the bond of peace to the fact that we belong together.

You know, even in earthly families, people can be very different. But there is one thing the children of the same father cannot deny: that they are all children and have one father. So it is with us before God. Sometimes small differences within us and between us may become apparent. Does that negate your sonship, your childhood with God? No, and again no.

If we have truly been born of God, then let us love him our Father, and love all those born of him from the heart as well. And hold fast to unity in the spirit through the bond of peace at all costs.

And you will see that this is necessary so that the Lord may truly reveal himself.

Only unity makes us strong. This has been proven throughout human history: where there are various factions and directions and no unity, there is no need to arm oneself for spiritual battle at all—the battle would be lost. No, only where Jesus Christ as the Lord can become the head and take charge, and we submit to him in complete obedience to his Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Only there can God bring to pass what he has set out to do.

And I wish to belong to this church called out by God in the last days, which is being refined and purified and is the Lord's special possession, standing at his disposal, so that he may carry out his final work here on earth.

The multitude of believers in the early church was of one heart and one soul. [Act 4:32]

They prayed together, they shared the Lord's Supper together, they had fellowship with the Lord and with one another. And they shared everything with one another.

And we say this again and again: as it was in the beginning, so it will be in the end. No one will have too much and no one will have too little. [2Co 8:15]

There will be enough for us all, both in earthly and spiritual terms. And the Lord will be with us in a wonderful way, watching over his Word to fulfill it. [Jer 1:12]

Yesterday we read, "***today it has become clear that you are my people.***"

Before, the promise existed, and then the promise became divine reality. Beloved, we have experienced the same thing and will continue to experience it until the fulfillment of the final promises, that they may all come true and that we may witness it. And then give thanks to God for it, because they find confirmation in us. And it is revealed to us that we are sons and daughters of God. [2Co 6:18]

If anyone cannot quite follow this thought, then let us ask in conclusion why it is written in Romans chapter 8 that "***the whole creation is waiting for the***

manifestation of the children of God." [Rom 8:19]

And creation groans under this burden and longs to witness the moment when the children of God are manifested and "***come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ***." [Eph 4:13]

So that God's power and glory may once again be made visible above and among his people. These are not empty words. These are not thoughts put forward by a human being. We have read enough Scriptures, and they are all the Word of God and binding for us.

Woe to the person who thinks to themselves, "Well, it won't be that bad." It will only be realized how bad it can be if one does not obey when it is too late.

Whoever belongs to the people of God today does not seek an excuse. They seek their way to God and ask him for forgiveness and grace, so that they may stand their ground before the Lord. And then also witness what he has promised.

Let us summarize. God has had a church on earth from the beginning of the New Testament until now as we approach the end. This church was always in the minority, but it walked its path with the Lord through ups and downs, through much contempt and humiliation, through persecution and all that went with it.

Now at the end, there is to be a complete restoration, and everything is to be brought back to the state in which the church was at the beginning. [Mat 17:11, Act 3:21]

Only in this way can the church experience its fulfillment in the end, when it has been restored to its very beginning.

And whoever fails to recognize this will probably, unless God grants him grace, only realize it when it is too late. For everything we wish to and are able to receive from God must first have been set before us through the proclamation of the Word. Then we believe the promises of the Word and experience what has been promised in them.

Only those who believe will truly be able to receive and experience. Without faith it is impossible to please God. [Heb 11:6]

And here, a general faith is not enough, for even Satan possesses such faith according to what is written in James.

"***You believe that there is only one God; you do well; but so does the devil, and he trembles.***" [Jas 2:19]

Faith in God alone is not enough. Believe what God has promised in his Word, including what he has promised for this time. Because everyone believes what happened before. But what God has promised for this time, that is what matters, that we believe it now, so that we may agree with God now, take his side, and be brought into conformity with the Word. The Lord is powerfully at work even today, at this very hour. Decisions have been made that are of great value for eternity. God has

spoken to us all through his Word and brings it to life through his Spirit, revealing it to us so that we may understand it rightly.

To him, our God, be praise and honor, glory and worship, now and forever. Amen.

We bow our heads, bowing before the Lord who said:

"***I dwell with those who are of a contrite spirit and a broken heart.***" [Isa 57:15]

Today we will not call upon and ask those who wish to dedicate their lives to God to raise their hands. Let that be included as well. Today the Word is addressed to us as believers.

After all, what Paul or Peter set out was not written for unbelievers. It was and is addressed to believers.

Today the Lord has spoken to us, to you and me through his Word.

Who would like to be baptized into the body of the Lord, to experience the sanctification of the spirit in obedience to the Word, and to be sealed with the Holy Spirit after we have received the Word of truth?

Who would like to reach the goal set before us right up to the transformation and the rapture?

Who would like to be obedient unto death, even death on the cross?

To be crucified with Christ and through the power of his resurrection to have been raised to a new life so that we may truly walk with him, the risen one, in unity and harmony. To grow together with one another and with him according to the Scripture in Ephesians, that the "***body may grow together***" [Eph 4:16]

As we have already said, what belongs together, grows together. For it does indeed belong together, it is one vine but many branches.

Who among us has the genuine desire, not merely to hear the Word, not merely to hear the end-time message, and by this we mean in particular the words written in the Holy Scriptures, in the prophecies which refer to the last days now before the return of Christ to this time. Not only that we hear and believe these things, but that we now recognize the necessity of banishing every "wind of false doctrine" from our sails and unite before the face of God as those who have become believers, being joined together as one heart and one soul under one head, namely Jesus Christ.

I believe that if I were to ask now and ask you to raise your hands, every hand would go up. Since that is the case, I would like to ask that we now sing the chorus "*Just As I Am*" once more and raise our hands together.

But please, take one thought to heart. We are not meant to remain as we are. We come to the Lord as we are, are then transformed by him and leave this place as different people because God has spoken to us and worked in us through his spirit.

Let us now sing together and raise our hands to him, trusting in God's presence and believing that he confirms his Word to us as true.