Sermon transcript

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Topic: 1 Corinthians 4:1–2: "A steward of the LORD must be found faithful!"

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Of course, we are glad that God had a man whom he sent and who brought the message that truly sets us apart from everyone else. It is not merely a denomination. It is truly the divinely aligned Church in the end times.

It is not your will or mine, but truly scriptural guidance and instruction, revelation and direction in these last days. After all, alongside all the small groups that exist, I believe there are currently 310 organizations and denominations united within the World Council of Churches, and they all believe they are doing and believing the right thing.

Without being presumptuous, we may testify before God that we have found grace in his sight. And because this is so, he has made his ways known to us. Just as Moses had prayed, ***'Lord, if I have indeed found grace in thy sight, then let me know thy ways.'*** [Ex 33:13]

And God made his ways known to him, and his deeds to the people of Israel. In the same way, at the beginning of the New Testament, the Lord had Paul, to whom the Word and the mysteries of the Kingdom of God were revealed and made known in a special way. And whoever heard what God had to say through a called mouth, he heeded the 'Thus saith the Lord'.

They were men sent by God, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, who have left us the Word. And if we now agree with the words inspired by God and left to us, then it can only have been the same Holy Spirit who rested upon those who received the Word and brought it forth. And therein lies the great grace that God has bestowed upon us, to be brought into harmony with him according to his Word. For only those who agree with the Word can agree with God. And the Word leaves no room for private interpretations.

The Word itself is confirmed by its fulfillment. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. [Jn 1:14]

Christ, our Lord and Savior, did not need to be interpreted. He was the fulfillment of what the prophets had foretold, and of what had been announced throughout the Old Testament.

John the Baptist was likewise the fulfillment of Isaiah 40, verse 3.

[3] ***A voice cries in the wilderness, prepare a way of the Lord, make straight a path for our God.***

And so, we already know exactly who Jesus Christ truly is. "***Make a way for the Lord, and to our God."***

So he was God the Lord, revealed in human form, Emmanuel, God with us. He could say: "***Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.***" [Jn 14:9]

In the same way, we may testify that Brother Branham's ministry is biblically grounded. Even if this were not the case, there was sufficient supernatural confirmation. Yet, we are glad that it is so. And precisely because his ministry was based on the Bible, spirits separate. Some accept it, are grateful, and are blessed as a result, whilst others fly into a rage, getting extremely upset when one speaks of the promise that God would send a prophet like Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. [Mal 4:5]

Now, if the day of the Lord is the great and dreadful day, the day of wrath, of judgment, of fire, and so on, as we can indeed read in many scriptures, then this man of God had to appear at the end of the day of salvation, is that right or not? If he had to come before the great and dreadful day of the Lord dawns, then his ministry must still fall within the time of grace. So scripture has once again been fulfilled before our very eyes. And yet, people find it difficult. I believe Brother Werner Siecke has already tried to say this: when this name is mentioned, there is unanimity that he was humble and had many good qualities. But when it goes a step further, that he was the promised prophet, well, then it is all over.

I have seen it often enough, that internationally renowned figures, evangelists and so on, have spoken very highly and favorably of this simple man of God. But the moment it comes down to the biblical foundation, that his ministry is biblically grounded, that is precisely where spirits separate. And I am grateful to God that his ministry has a biblical foundation. If it did not, what would I have to proclaim to you here? I ask you quite honestly and quite sincerely.

Everything God does, he does in accordance with his Word. And now that we have reached the final phase of the time of grace, which is after all a prophetic period, Bible prophecy must necessarily be fulfilled in our days. Bible prophecy must now be fulfilled among the people of Israel, the Church, and the nations as a whole, at the end of the time of grace.

From a purely external perspective, as far as political developments are concerned, one can indeed expect anything that might happen in the Persian Gulf on any given day. But there is one thing I would like to say for the reassurance of us all. If this arch-enemy of Israel, Saddam Hussein, threatens with this war, involving the use of chemical weapons, it will not happen. That will only happen at the battle of Armageddon, where then the tongues of the people will rot, and their eyes as well,

whilst they are still standing on their feet, as it is written in the prophet Zechariah. [Zec 14:12] That isn't happening yet, do not worry.

But Daniel did write: ***"And until the end, there shall be war and desolations."*** [Dan 9:26]

That is how he put it. And then comes this very short passage from 1 Thessalonians 5, verses 1 to 3, where it will be said, "***Now is peace and safety.***" [1 Th 5:3]

And that is precisely the moment when destruction will befall all of humanity. But as I said, one thing applies to us now during the time of grace, the other to those who have not believed God.

I have neglected to extend a warm welcome to everyone, especially to this end-of-year meeting. I must say, my heart is moved every time I am allowed to come here. I enjoy coming to Zurich. And here, in this city, in this house, we have heard the Word of the Lord for many years. The cassettes containing the sermons have been sent out, and many have been blessed throughout the German-speaking world and beyond. And we believe that God will indeed do even more, because he has promised it.

We were also grateful for the last water baptism, where over 20 were baptized. We are grateful to God for the salvation of every soul, grateful for every brother and every sister, grateful for all who allow themselves to be called out, saved and set free, and thus become the Lord's possession, and can be incorporated into the body of the Lord.

I would just like to read 2 or 3 scriptures from 1 Corinthians, chapter 4. 1 Corinthians, chapter 4, just the first 2 verses.

[1] ***Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.***

[2] ***Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.***

If there is one thing in my heart that is particularly important, it is the fact of carrying out the Lord's service with sincerity and in all faithfulness, as if he were visibly present and were listening to what is being said. One must be able to stand one's ground before God and men with what is said, especially in the proclamation of the Gospel. We must reach the point where we do not merely think we are certain, but have certainty based on the Word of God, that the direction is right, because it is the divine direction that has been set out for us in the Word.

Now, when Paul says here, '***Let a man so account of us...***', but not everyone regards us as such. Many believe we are moving in a Branham direction, and have adopted certain things he taught. They are not convinced, as Paul says here, "***Let everyone so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.***" [1 Co 4:1]

But may it at least be so among the believers, that we simply understand together that it was not a man who came on the scene to establish a church and introduce certain teachings, but truly a man sent by God with the Word, with a revelation, with what God has promised for this time.

And I shall never forget that 3rd of December, 1962, when this man of God said to me, 'Wait with the giving out of the food until you receive the rest that goes with it.' You know, one does not like to speak of experiences, for the impression could very quickly arise that one is putting oneself a little in the limelight. But had I not received this direct calling, I would not have been able to stand firm through all the trials that have already come upon me. There are experiences with God that one can draw upon, which simply stand as firm as a rock, which cannot waver.

And so, I'm grateful to God, also for the privilege of not only having seen and heard this man of God in meetings, but of actually having traveled in the same car with him, eaten at the same table, and enjoyed fellowship with him. For me, a real privilege, and one of many confirmations.

And back then, in 1958, I was probably the youngest when the great conference took place in Dallas, Texas, under the patronage of Gordon Lindsay, with hundreds of evangelists in attendance. And lo and behold, they have all gone their separate ways.

Why did I greet Brother Branham once again that Wednesday evening in Dallas, Texas, before he took the platform, and simply say to him, 'I recognize that you are not just a man of God, but a prophet of God'? What was it? I had the opportunity to hear and see all the other evangelists, all day long, in the morning and in the afternoon; I heard many of them. But in the evening, Brother Branham was the main speaker, and I had a good opportunity to make a comparison. For that too, I am deeply grateful to God, that he supernaturally opened my heart, my understanding, and my eyes, to recognize that this ministry he has given is not merely a special ministry, but is connected with a direct, prophetic, and divine commission. No human being told me this; it was given to me through the Spirit of God and revealed by the Lord. And from that time on, I received Brother Branham's sermons, grew alongside the ministry, and walked with it.

Since September 1958, I have received the sermons he delivered in the United States, and have listened to them, not just once, but twice, and then translated them. Brother Schmidt is here today; he knows that we began translating these sermons in our small prayer circle at the end of 1959 and the beginning of the 1960s, and that is how the work began.

And the Word revealed by God is now being carried into the whole world, in various ways, in different languages, whether on cassettes or through booklets. And we are grateful to the Lord that we are allowed to have a direct part in the work of God, in what is now in his program according to his Word. And that is what it is all about,

no more and no less: what is now in God's program and what belongs to it; that is what it is all about.

The scripture from the Gospel of Matthew, which is sometimes mentioned, is also very important in this context, that the food, the Word, the hidden manna, the things that were not seen, that were unknown and yet were revealed from Genesis to Revelation 22, may be faithfully passed on.

Matthew 24, from 45, here it says:

[45] ***Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?***

[46] ***Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.***

[47] ***Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.***

How often have we said this? There have been various eras and periods throughout the Church's nearly 2,000-year history of salvation.

There were times… there was the Reformation, there were the subsequent revivals, time and again new truths from the Divine Book were placed upon the lampstand. We live in a time where not just partial truths or a few truths, but the full truth has been placed upon the lampstand anew through revelation. And as we have read, '***over all his goods***', everything that in any way belongs to the plan of salvation of our God must now be proclaimed. And if the promises for the end times are not included, then something is missing, and then people should not speak of the full Gospel.

Only where the full Gospel is, where nothing is missing, where everything is united, the evangelistic part, the doctrinal part, the prophetic part, where one truly believes as Scripture has said, and accepts the full Word, the full Gospel, affirms it inwardly, and takes it in, and can then of course also place it in its divine context, for that is simply how it must be.

Anyone, for example, who cannot place Brother Branham's ministry within its biblical context, will not find their bearings. They may even take offense at this or that he said. But the moment we have received the grace to be placed in the proper biblical context ourselves, to find our place before God in his Church, so that the holy, divine order emerges, and the body of the Lord as a whole grows together, namely, that which belongs together is joined together by God, that is now also growing together.

We are no longer guests and strangers before God, but citizens of God and members of his household. [Eph 2:19] As born-again people, and I assume that each of us has truly experienced God, that we were not merely hearers of the Word, but have received from God what fell into our hearts through the preaching. When salvation

is preached, it must be believed and experienced. Everything that is preached must be believed and experienced.

So Paul writes here: ***"Let everyone regard us as servants of Christ…"*** [1 Cor 4:1] Not servants of a church, not sent out to represent a denomination, but God has set into the church apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists for the edifying of the body of the Lord, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry [Eph 4:11-12], and we are privileged to share in such a ministry ***"and as stewards of the mysteries of God."***

There has truly never been a time when the mysteries of God have been revealed with such variety and clarity as in these days. And we are deeply grateful to God for this. For in this too we recognize that he loves us and has set us apart, just as he did his disciples in Matthew 13, saying: ***"To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but not to those on the outside."*** [Mat 13:11]

God has a church. And to this church he reveals himself. To her he reveals his Word and his mysteries. And what was revealed by God to Paul and the other apostles, and even down to our own day, is likewise revealed to us by God through the same Holy Spirit. And so, we have not been taught by men, but are taught by God, and led into all the truth of the Word through the Spirit of truth.

Let me read from Colossians 1. Colossians chapter 1. The following is written here from verse 21. Colossians chapter 1, from verse 21:

[21] ***And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled***

[22] ***in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight***

[23] ***if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister.***

The gospel, the message of salvation, as the Word itself applies, is the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, for he has brought us salvation. There is only one true gospel, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, where he, the one who was crucified, who died for us and rose victorious on the third day, who ascended into heaven and is to come again, where he is not the center of the proclamation, this can quickly lead to a completely different gospel being preached, as Paul makes clear in the very first verses of chapter 11 of 2 Corinthians. So, the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's message of salvation, and Jesus Christ is the divine savior; only those who have him have salvation, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

On Friday evening, we were upstairs, and in the adjoining hall, the Muslims were

gathered. Anyone who was there will have noticed the long table of books, and there were a few slogans there, one of which read: There is only one God, his name is Allah. I don't know who noticed it. It is true that there is only one God. But what good does it do people to say there is only one God if they do not know and do not recognize that this one God revealed himself to humanity in human form and that he suffered in our stead and thus reconciled us to himself in his flesh, overcoming death, and bestowing upon us eternal salvation and eternal life by grace.

It is my hope that this divine message will also be brought to the people of Islam, and then I long for a legitimation and confirmation such as the world has never seen before. I do not know what you expect. I expect great things from God. If the gospel of the kingdom, the true message of salvation, is to be preached once more to all nations for a witness [Mat 24:14], then, what Paul said must be added: ***"For the gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the demonstration of the Holy Spirit."*** [1 The 1:5]

I truly and sincerely expect that God will strike the hour when he stands by his Word and his people, thereby revealing for himself who is who and on whose side one stands.

Let me read from Philippians 1. Philippians chapter 1. Perhaps from verse 3. A most glorious scripture, already quoted several times. Philippians chapter 1, verse 3:

[3] ***I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,***

[4] ***always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,***

[5] ***for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.***

This Word applies to the assembly in Zurich. We are not a local church here. We come together here once a month from our various places to hear the Word of the Lord. But you play a major part in spreading the Word that goes out into the whole world.

I myself need nothing; I have everything one needs in this world to live, and the Holy Scriptures do say: "***if we have food and clothing, let us be content with that.***" [1 Tim 6:8]

But the Lord's work has indeed been accomplished in a most wonderful way. And I'll say this rather slowly now so as not to be misunderstood. When I think of Europe, it is indeed the German-speaking world that bears the whole work of God. Of course, our beloved brother and sister Kupfer from Strasbourg and the Juleson family are also part of this. But generally speaking, it is Switzerland, Austria, and Germany that bear the entire worldwide work. And I can only say again and again: may God bless. And may the resources that are already available, and those yet to come, be used so that this final, indeed, everlasting gospel may truly be carried out once more to the whole world through the mass media in every possible way.

I myself would also like to commend myself to your intercession quite officially and publicly. Remember me also in your prayers, that God's will may be done in my personal life, and that God's will may be done in the ministry, that God's will may be done in the church, that God's will may truly be done as in heaven, so also on earth. [Luk 11:2]

I would like to read once more from Colossians, specifically from verse 3. Colossians 1, verse 3:

[3] ***We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,***

[4] ***since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,***

[5] ***for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of truth of the gospel;***

[6] ***Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:***

[7] ***As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;***

[8] ***Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.***

A truly wonderful word. A person whom God has destined for salvation needs no time to consider whether he should be converted, whether he should follow the Lord or not. A person whom God has destined for salvation does not need to hear hundreds of sermons to become a believer. The Word of the Lord speaks to them, and the divine call goes out to them, and behold, it is done. One hears the Word, and one becomes a believer. One takes it in and experiences it.

Here, something very special has been told to us, namely, in verse 6, of the gospel, concerning the message of salvation, ***"which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day ye heard of it."***

Right from that day. From the day we heard the gospel, from that day, that was it for us. And here it is confirmed to us: "***since the day ye heard of it***". And listen to the rest of the verse: ***"and knew the grace of God in truth."***

How many preach and speak of the grace of God, but they have not experienced it. At the beginning, we referred to the Word of Exodus 33, where this prophet of God simply says to the Lord: ***"If I have indeed found grace in thy sight, then let me know thy ways, so that I may know that I have found grace in thy sight."*** [Exo 33:13]

"The law and the prophets were until John; since that time, the kingdom of God is preached." [Luk 16:16]

And the knowledge of sin comes through the law, grace and truth through Jesus Christ, our Lord. [Rom 3:20, Joh 1:17] Whoever truly experiences the grace of God, not merely speaks of it or sings about it, but truly experiences it, may then bear witness, as it is written: "***from his fullness, we have all received grace for grace.***" [Joh 1:16] It is indeed a great privilege to have been pardoned by God, a great privilege to hear the Word of truth, to receive it, and also to believe it. Likewise, the love wrought by the Spirit is emphasized here. May it also come to pass in this regard for all of us, that it is the true love of God wrought by the Holy Spirit, as it is written: "***the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.***" [Rom 5:5] That it might truly be said of all of us, as we heard yesterday in Brother Branham's film, He did say it, two or three times:

I am only a man, just your brother, I can do nothing, I am waiting for the Lord... or the angel of the Lord, or the presence of the Lord, or the Spirit of God, whatever it may be.

We cannot help ourselves, but God wants to and will help us all. He has already helped us on the day of salvation, so it is written. And on this day of salvation, we have received grace to believe as the scripture has said. And that is the proof that we are walking and standing right, because we examine ourselves by the Word, not by what anyone says, but by the Word. And we read yesterday, or perhaps the day before in one of the meetings, we read this wonderful passage from Romans chapter 11. And here it says, I would like to find this word where it reads: "***what is God's answer?***" Yes, here: Romans chapter 11. Romans chapter 11. From, yes, for the sake of context, we must read from verse 2.

[2] ***God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying,***

[3] ***Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.***

And now comes this verse:

[4] ***But what saith the answer of God unto him?***

You are welcome to underline this part in red. I will read it again:

[4] ***But what saith the answer of God unto him?***

We are after all interested in no other answer than God's answer. What use are lots of answers to me? They don't answer the questions I have before God. I need God's answer. We all need God's answer. A wonderful phrase. ***"But what saith the answer of God unto him?"***

And then we read on:

[4] …***I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.***

We too might ask ourselves, is that all that belongs to the people of God? Was Golgotha worth it for the sake of a few? Certainly, if we are among them, praise be to God, then by all means. But God's answer is: it is not you alone, or I alone who remain. God still has thousands whom we do not yet know, whom we have not yet met. But when the Carmel hour comes, when the day of God's decision comes, when God will render justice and reveal his power, then they will all come out of their hiding places, out of all the spiritual prisons, out of the cages in which they have been held, they will come out to hear the true Word of God.

The message of the hour must simply lead to the question: ***"How long will you limp on both sides? If the Lord is God, then follow him. If it is another, then run after him."*** [1 Kings 18:21]

God will, as he has promised, do a short and mighty work on earth, a strange work, in which we shall share. It is written in Romans chapter 9. Romans chapter 9, verse 28:

[28] ***For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.***

And according to the prophet Isaiah, it will indeed be a most peculiar thing, a matter strange to us, and as yet unknown. I shall read to you from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 28. Isaiah chapter 28, from verse 20:

[20] ***For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.***

[21] ***For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.***

[22] ***Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong: for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.***

But before this devastating judgment comes, let the mockers take heed. Did not Peter write: ***"…in the last days, scoffers will appear, walking after their own lusts…"*** [2 Pe 3:3]

The word "lust" is written there. You know, when someone is addicted, they have to have that thing. If someone has ever smoked, and was addicted to nicotine, then they have to smoke. So people will become addicted to mocking. But they will be surprised.

Their bonds will be tightened. And God will do his work, his strange act. [Is 28:21]

He himself will bring it to pass and will finish what he has begun unto the glorious day of his return.

We are grateful to God that we are allowed to live at the end of the time of grace. We do not know whether we have years or months left. But one thing we do know is that we must make the most of the time, for it is precious and costly time.

May the Lord God bless us and be with us. Amen.