Sermon transcript

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Blessed and praised be the name of the Lord.

We are not merely repeating what others have said. We can bear witness from our own experience that the Lord has revealed himself to us personally. that he has truly spoken to us through his Word and through his Spirit. that we as sheep of his flock have heard his voice. And that we too have been allowed to have our experiences with him.

What a blessing, what a privilege to live in a world that truly lies in wickedness, as the Holy Scripture says [1 Joh 5:19], amidst deep religious and political deception.

Brother Hubert told me just now, I hadn't even noticed it on the news, that the Pope has appointed a Palestinian as head of the church in Jerusalem.

We hear and see and as we've said often enough, and we do not wish to do so here today, for we do not want to delve into the book of Revelation, after all today's Easter, but thank God, who has opened our hearts and anointed our eyes with eyesalve. And that was only possible because we have listened to him during these days.

I said this yesterday in Villach where the president of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and others were present at the gathering.

I simply had to say it, it is not the atmosphere, nor what we create and can influence through music and various other means, but what God does according to his Word, that is what matters today. Otherwise we preach and live our lives without God. And that precisely must not happen.

Up to the present day it may be true that others have more to show that might catch the eye, but just wait until the time comes when it pleases God to vindicate his Word in those who have received it and carry it within themselves as a divine promise and divine substance.

How often have we said it? God is the God of his Word, not of people's interpretations of the Word.

And so even now, in the completion, we shall experience what our brothers and sisters experienced at the beginning of the New Testament era.

Everything took place in accordance with Scripture. Christ, our Lord and Savior, was born in Bethlehem, as it is written in Micah chapter 5 verse 1. He carried out his ministry as reported in Isaiah 35. "***The blind shall see, the lame shall walk, the tongue of the mute shall shout for joy***" [Isa 35:5-6] and so it came to pass. What is written in Isaiah 53 was also fulfilled. The man of sorrows, whom we esteemed as nothing, rejected, misunderstood, despised, went his way via Gethsemane to Golgotha.

But now comes the central truth. He took upon himself all our sins, all our guilt, our infirmities. He took it all upon himself and bore it in his own body to the cross. He took your place and mine. He suffered in our stead. He was made sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. [2 Cor 5:21]

Psalm 22 has also been fulfilled: ***"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*** [Ps 22:1]

"They cast lots for my garments." [Ps 22:18] All of it.

I've said this here before, and have also written about it, if Dr. Larkin, a great Bible teacher, has counted correctly, then 109 prophecies from the Old Testament were fulfilled at that time. And yet people did not recognize it.

It is exactly the same today. The religious world looks down with contempt upon what God has done. And how aptly Brother Branham said time and again:

People remain the same. They thank God for what he has done in the past, and live in anticipation of what he will do in the future, whilst overlooking what he is doing at present.

And that has always been the problem. But God has always had a remnant throughout the ages. And this holds true for our own day as well.

Even the resurrection was clearly foretold: ***"I will not suffer my Holy One to see corruption, nor will I leave his soul in hell."*** [Ps 16:10]

We shall read the Scriptures later so that you may know they are written.

For us who have become believers by grace, the day of resurrection is indeed the crowning glory of our redemption. Because he has overcome death, hell, and the devil, we too may be overcomers. After all, he did not win the victory for himself, but for us. Blessed and praised be his holy name.

Brother Russ had already mentioned this. No doubt recalling that for all of us who have been to Israel once or several times, it is indeed, and I believe I've been there 11 or 12 times, it is always the highlight of a journey when one sees the Garden Tomb there and finds it empty and one is able to give thanks to the Lord anew.

We do not need to see the empty tomb. We know because we believe what is said in the Word. And therefore we do not need to make a pilgrimage there.

There is a passage here in Matthew 28. I would like to read verses 5 to 7. Matthew 28, from verses 5 to 7:

[5] ***And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.***

[6] ***He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.***

[7] ***And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.***

We need not be afraid to tell people: ***"Come, see the place where the Lord lay."*** [Mt 28:6]

You know other religions have their philosophies. We can rightly say, as was said back then: He is no longer here, he has risen. "***Come***", as we read here, "***Come, see the place where the Lord lay.***" Praise be to the name of the Lord. Look at the place, the tomb is empty. ***"Why do you seek the living amongst the dead? He is not here but is risen."*** [Lk 24:5-6]

As noted earlier, the resurrection of our Lord is thus the crowning triumph in the work of redemption. In the flesh he had to become mortal in order to suffer death for us all. In the spirit, he had to be the Lord over life and death. And so the Lord, who is Spirit, took on this earthly form and died in the flesh. But in the spirit, he descended and preached to the spirits in prison [1 Pet 3:19], and when he had done this, ***"he took captivity captive, ascended into heaven, and gave gifts to men."*** [Eph 4:8]

We can read about this in Ephesians chapter 4 and other scriptures.

I would like to read a few scriptures for it is always good when our faith is founded on the Word of God. When doubts arise, when trials come upon us, then we need something to hold on to. Our faith needs a point of reference to which it can cling, believing unshakenly and steadfastly, as Scripture says.

From Hebrews I would like to read a few verses, first Hebrews chapter 9. Hebrews chapter 9, from verse 16.

[16] ***For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.***

[17] ***For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.***

[18] ***Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.***

[19] ***For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,***

[20] ***Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined unto you.***

[21] ***Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.***

[22] ***And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.***

Beloved, here we have a parallel between the Old and the New Testament. The first covenant too came into force through the shedding of the blood of animals. The New Covenant, the New Testament, with all that is written therein, came into force, is enforceable, and is therefore valid for us from the very moment that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross of Calvary. He said in Matthew 26, verse 28: "***This is the New Covenant in my blood.***"

You know that when someone makes a will and dies, then the heirs rush to claim the estate. And everyone would prefer to have everything or as much as possible. Beloved, God has bequeathed everything to us. Every promise he has made has become legally binding. And that is why it is written that we are "***heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.***" [Rom 8:17] Here we are reminded that the testator must die for the will to take legal effect.

Let me proclaim it clearly once again today in the name of the Lord: The will, the New Covenant, has come into force. Jesus Christ died, was buried and rose from the dead on the third day. He lives.

And then the unbelievers might ask: "Huh, but what's in it for us?" And that is precisely the point. When all the other religions hear us proclaiming what is being proclaimed here today, they shake their heads and go their own way, unless God speaks to them. We know what we are talking about. It happened for our sake. In Christ, God has brought about a new beginning, the beginning of the New Divine Creation. He was the firstborn among many brethren and therefore had to walk this path to redeem us even from this body of death. For we shall also need a body in eternity, and that is why the Lord had to come into this earthly body and had to suffer and die here, so that at the return of Jesus Christ, this mortal might put on immortality, and corruptible put on incorruption [1 Cor 15:53], so that it might also be fulfilled in us and it might be said: ***"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"*** [1Co 15:55]

But it does not end here. It goes further. ***"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** [1Co 15:57]

And we all say Amen to that. For it was done for us. He has brought us redemption.

He has given us the victory. He has bestowed eternal life upon us. So it was all about us. Let us read a little further from Hebrews 9. Hebrews 9, verses 27 and 28:

[27] ***And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:***

[28] ***So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.***

We believe this with all our hearts and with all our souls. It is appointed for men to die once. And after that comes judgment. Jesus Christ came, he died, took the condemnation, our judgment, upon himself. And as the Scripture says, whoever believes in him has passed from death to life and will not come into judgment. [Joh 5:24] This refers to the final judgment. From Hebrews 6, I would like to read from verse 13. Hebrews 6, verse 13:

[13] ***For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,***

[14] ***Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.***

[15] ***And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.***

[16] ***For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.***

[17] ***Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:***

[18] ***That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:***

[19] ***Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;***

[20] ***Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.***

What a powerful statement. With what force has God spoken here. What certainty and strengthening of faith resound from and emanate from every sentence, every verse we have read.

God cannot deceive. He himself is truthful. He must stand by his Word. There is no other way.

And here he has even stood as a surety, sworn an oath, so that even those who are still weak in faith, and sometimes struggle, may know: God himself has guaranteed our salvation.

He was of course able to do so because salvation was accomplished on Calvary. Jesus did, after all, cry out: ***"It is finished."*** [Jn 19:30]

God took no risks. He was able to do it because redemption had been provided.

My dear friends, it would be wonderful if on this day we could experience God in such a way that every shadow of doubt, all our struggles and every unbelief were removed, and we truly realized that we have here a reliable anchor which reaches not merely into the outer court, or the holy place, but beyond the veil, namely into the very presence of God, before the ark of the covenant, before the mercy seat. That is how far it reaches. And we may be firmly anchored in our Lord and God.

As you know, in the Old Testament, the high priest was permitted once a year, with the blood of atonement which he offered, to step behind the veil, where the ark of the covenant was, the jar of manna, Aaron's rod which had budded, and there where the two cherubim joined their wings together, there where God, above the ark of the covenant, could give this man who had entered on account of the blood that had been shed, the answer for the people: "Atonement has been made. I have forgiven."

And so it came to pass on the cross of Calvary that our Lord and Savior entered the heavenly sanctuary with his own blood. The veil was torn when our Lord died on the cross of Calvary. So says Holy Scripture: from top to bottom, not from bottom to top, but from top to bottom into two pieces. [Mar 15:38] This was meant to signify: here it was the hand of God, the Lord, that brought this about, and not any human being. God does everything marvelously.

As already noted, may the Spirit of God succeed today in filling us with joy and gratitude, so that we may become true Bible believers and no longer struggle with ourselves and with what we are not yet, but simply understand and accept in faith, as it is written:

"I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine." [Is 43:1]

Each of us must accept this from God in faith and then thank him for it.

There is a verse in the prophet Isaiah, in chapter 1, which actually refers to people who are separated from God, those who are born into sin and transgression and continue to live in that state. Here the Lord God speaks through the prophet Isaiah in chapter 1 from verse 18:

[18] ***Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.***

And now comes verse 19:

[19] ***If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:***

[20] ***But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.***

It is simply a "thus saith the Lord". He extends this all-encompassing, all-penetrating invitation to humanity:

"Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as crimson, though they be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, they shall be as white as wool." [Is 1:18]

So not a single blemish or wrinkle remains. And I feel I must say: God is not a man who forgives only in part, only for it to bother him again later, only for him to dig it up once more, and then for the whole process to start afresh. With God, a new life begins once the old one has come to an end. God does not act as we do.

Now just be honest: when we have something to forgive, oh, we forgive so completely one day, with such joy, with devotion, with praise, and with thanksgiving. And then, when a few days have passed, and this or that comes our way again, well, then the mood is different again. We start to think it over again and say to ourselves, "Well, I suppose it wasn't quite that complete after all."

With God, however, it is quite different. With God, forgiveness and redemption are so perfect and accomplished once and for all. Woe to the man who casts doubt on this, and blessed is the person who begins to give thanks and no longer allows the enemy to whisper that something is still left unresolved. That is how the enemy comes.

There are even people, I used to know them too, who took pleasure in digging into other people's lives and then, if possible, finding something they hadn't found before. These prophets and prophetesses did not examine their own lives at all, but they were always keen to know what in other people's lives had not yet come to the surface. These people are to be pitied. May God have mercy on them.

We do not probe into your life or mine; we search the Scriptures. And the Scriptures tell us that on the cross of Calvary, a complete and absolute redemption and forgiveness took place. And blessed is the person who can say 'Amen' to that. And blessed is the person who can still exclaim with Job: ***"I know that my Redeemer liveth."*** [Job 19:25]

Hallelujah! Blessed and praised be the name of the Lord.

Oh, yes, God invites us. He does indeed wish to enter into conversation with us. And then we may tell him, and then he gives us the promise and assurance:

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as white as wool." [Is 1:18]

This is indeed God's invitation which he gave in the Old Testament. Let us now turn to Hebrews chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2 contains some truly wonderful words in which we are given the guidance we simply need, so that our faith may remain steadfast and we may know how to confront the enemy. Hebrews chapter 2, from verse 7:

[7] ***Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:***

[8] ***Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.***

[8] ***But now we see not yet all things put under him.***

[9] ***But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.***

Here we have our redemption. Have you noticed the word 'grace' in this context? ***"He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."*** [Heb 2:9]

He had to taste death for every man, so that God's grace might come upon all those redeemed by him, and so that forgiveness and salvation might be bestowed upon us, and so that the new covenant with all its promises might become legally binding.

I shall read on. Here it has been summarized so concisely that no one could have done it better. Hebrews 2, verse 10:

[10] ***For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.***

And now, take note of verse 11:

[11] ***For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [father].***

That is why Jesus said: ***"I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."*** [Jn 20:17]

Beloved, when we were born again, it was through the divine seed of the Word and through the power of the Holy Spirit to bring about new, divine life within us.

May I ask: how many of you believe that Jesus Christ is our Savior? How many believe that God has pardoned us? May I take this one step further: How many can say with conviction: "God was merciful to me a sinner. I have experienced God. I have experienced conversion, renewal, a new birth. I know in whom I believe. I know that I have become a child of God."

Can say Amen. Hallelujah! Blessed and praised be the name of the Lord.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is proclaimed precisely so that through this proclamation, God may bring about the begetting, so that sons and daughters of God may be born again unto a living hope. Nowhere can the Spirit of God work more effectively than here, under the proclamation of the Word.

"***For there are three that bear witness: the water, the Spirit, and the blood***", as John writes in his epistle. [1 Joh 5:8]

Both the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified by him have the same Father.

That is why he taught us to pray: ***"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come."*** [Mt 6:9–10]

God has become my Father. I have received the Spirit of adoption, and may cry out, "Abba, Father". [Rom 8:15]

What a grace! What a privilege! And this day is meant to ensure that salvation and forgiveness are not merely proclaimed, but are experienced here and taken away with us. Today, on this very day, salvation is to come upon us.

As the prophet Isaiah said elsewhere: ***"And all the earth shall see the salvation of our God."*** [Is 52:10]

People from all peoples, tongues, and nations are after all destined to be saved. And the message of salvation is not merely a message, but the message of God's salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I shall read on, specifically verse 11 through the end, and then verses 12 and 13:

[11] ***For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one [father]: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,***

[12] ***Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.***

[13] ***And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.***

Hallelujah! Not just one Son of God as the firstfruits, but many sons and daughters of God who belong to the firstfruits.

And as John writes in his letter: ***"It does not yet appear what we shall be: but when he shall appear, we shall be like him."*** [1 Jn 3:2]

I would also like to read from Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2, from verse 7:

[7] ***He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:***

[8] ***And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

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

[10] ***That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;***

[11] ***And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

What a marvelous, what a glorious Word. He who was Lord became a servant, humbled himself, was made in the likeness of men, so that he might feel with us, understand us, and thus become a faithful high priest.

That is why it is also written: ***"God cannot be tempted, and does not tempt anyone himself."*** [Jas 1:13]

But Jesus, in his flesh, was tempted just as we are. He became like us, so that we might become like him. He took on our form, so that we might then be transformed into his image.

And then there is the glorious passage from 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3. We could read many Scriptures, especially on a day like this, when we commemorate the resurrection of our Lord in a special way.

I simply imagine it as majestic. The disciples were sad. They all scattered, went their separate ways, and said, ***"We thought he would redeem Israel."*** [Lk 24:21] We thought, we thought.

Things do not go as we think; they go as God wills. And it was God's will that Golgotha should take place, and thus it happened.

But I can imagine that the years in which the disciples walked with the Lord did not mean as much to them as the day of the resurrection, when they saw him who was stripped bare before their very eyes, mocked, spat upon, beaten, and tortured, their Lord whom they had come to love, whom they had followed, there he hung, naked, a crown of thorns placed upon his head, there he hung.

What must have been going through the hearts of his own? Oh, how much despair there must have been, for they did not yet understand the scriptures.

But he had said: ***"I will go before you into Galilee."*** [Mt 26:32]

And the angel said to those who had come to the tomb: ***"Go and tell his disciples that he will go before them to Galilee."*** [Mt 28:7]

And lo and behold, so it came to pass. Hallelujah! So it came to pass. How must John, Peter, James, Mary, and all the others have felt when they saw their Lord as the risen one! No longer the one who had been beaten and tortured, but the glorified Lord, who had stripped death of its power, conquered hell, overcome the devil, and risen from the dead, and who was then able to say to John on the Isle of Patmos: ***"I am he, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; Behold, I was dead, but now I'm alive forevermore, and I hold the keys of death and hell."*** [Rev 1:17-18]

This is a day of victory, a glorious day. And it is in this resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord that our own resurrection is grounded. This is our certainty, our absolute.

Jesus lives, and so do I.

Death, where are your terrors?

As the song goes.

He will raise me too from the dead.

How many hymn writers, how many preachers have proclaimed over the past nearly 2000 years that Jesus has risen, ascended into heaven, and will return. We are privileged to live in an age in which we may look forward to his glorious return. He will return, as we have read. He came once to die for the sins of many, and he will come a second time. [Heb 9:28]

He will return to take home into his glory all those for whose sins he died, whom he has cleansed and sanctified. And then we shall be with the Lord forever. [1 Thess 4:17]

Hallelujah, praise be to his glorious name.

Believe it, he has conquered death, he has stripped hell of its power. ***"Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory?"*** [1 Cor 15:55]

It is not just written down like that, it is true, isn't it? It is true.

Our Lord died, was buried, he descended, it is all true. He has taken captivity captive [Eph 4:8], rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, and will return with great power and glory, Hallelujah.

The Bible records divine facts, and one of the greatest divine truths is that our Lord and Savior has accomplished the work completely and utterly, and afterwards he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty [Heb 1:3] and waits until all enemies are made his footstool. [Heb 10:12-13]

From 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3, perhaps up to verse 6. 1 Corinthians 15 from verse 3:

[3] ***For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;***

[4] ***And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:***

[5] ***And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:***

[6] ***After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.***

What a glorious testimony. Not just a few women, not just a few apostles. He appeared to 500 brothers at once. What a cloud of witnesses. And thank God, these are the true witnesses. They were there when it happened. They saw, they heard, they witnessed it.

And we too may bear witness in these days, that we too have experienced God. We know that he has spoken to us. Many could bear witness: those whom he has healed, whom he has saved, whom he has set free, to whom he has truly revealed himself. Together we may proclaim: Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.

He lives, he is present in the gatherings of the saints, to save, to heal, to deliver, and to make his glorious gospel a power of God for all those who believe in it with all their hearts. If it really does come down to whether we believe this in accordance with Scripture, shall we not begin today by simply letting all these words take root in our hearts, believing them, and thus standing on God's side in faith, and trusting him that what has not yet happened can indeed be done and come to pass today?

For God is present, believe me. God is dissatisfied when his Word is merely preached and people hear it and affirm it but do not experience it.

God is only satisfied when his Word which he has sent has been able to accomplish what he sent it to do. [Isa 55:11] Then there is joy in heaven and on earth, there is joy with God and with us when the Word, in this case the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord, has become a real, personally experienced power of God, so that we too can bear witness: 'The Lord has saved me, he has forgiven me, he has made me a child of God, I'm allowed to be his own.' Much more could still be said. Just one more scripture, I shall therefore make no apology for reading it. One could, as Paul did in his day, preach God's Word long into the night.

2 Corinthians chapter 5, the Scripture so familiar to us all. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17:

[17] ***Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.***

[18] ***And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;***

[19] ***To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.***

We do not proclaim reconciliation in theory. We have experienced it. In our hearts that which happened on Golgotha has become an integral part of us. We have become partakers of the divine nature. [2 Pet 1:4] We are sons and daughters of God. And the message of the cross, the word of reconciliation has been placed within us. And that is why we proclaim this reconciliation of God in Christ with humanity with complete conviction and in full faith.

We are bearers of what God accomplished on Golgotha. We do not merely carry the gospel of Jesus Christ, the crucified one, as a message. We carry within us the divine reality bestowed upon us through Golgotha: perfect redemption, full salvation by grace.

Have we grasp this? Have we experienced it? Hallelujah.

Today we must declare war on unbelief, on every doubt, who wants to continue blaspheming God through unbelief, bringing dishonor upon him. Today, let us believe, believe from the heart what God has done for us. I shall read verse 19 once more and then continue:

[19] ***To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.***

[20] ***Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.***

[21] ***For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.***

That is the gospel, that is the good news for you and for me.

[20] ***Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.***

Have we sensed today that God's Word has been spoken to us, or have we merely seen or heard someone whose voice he has used? Let us see and hear no one but Jesus alone. God is beseeching by us because the ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to us, and that is why we cry out again and again: ***"Be ye reconciled to God."*** [2 Cor 5:20]

If there are some amongst us today who have not yet had this experience with God, today if you have heard his voice, and you have heard it, there is no need for a question mark, an exclamation mark can be placed there. Today, having heard his voice, let us not harden our hearts, but believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who shed his blood and gave his life on the cross of Calvary for our salvation. ***"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."*** [2 Cor 5:19] He has forgiven all our transgressions and granted us grace and salvation.

What a privilege it is to be allowed to become believers. What a privilege it is to hear the voice of God, the voice of the Word, of the gospel, and then to respond to it, to take part, to accept it, and to experience God today. Praise be to his name. Amen.

Let us stand.

And let us remain in silent prayer.

Surely, the Lord has not only spoken through his Word, he has also called, he has called, and you know that he has called you. Everyone has felt it.

Today, we would like to begin by praying for those who now wish to dedicate their lives entirely to God, who have made the decision here, in the presence of God and whilst the Word is being proclaimed, to dedicate their lives to God, to accept forgiveness and so on, and to truly experience God whilst we all bow our heads and remain in prayer.

Let me ask: who would like to be included in this prayer? Please raise your hand briefly. Thank you, thank you, thank you, God bless you.

Perhaps there are believing brothers and sisters amongst us who simply feel the call to draw closer to the Lord, to consecrate themselves wholly to him and surrender to him. Perhaps here and there a breaking away from the world is still necessary. We know what Holy Scripture says: ***"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."*** [2 Cor 6:14]

Do not be yoked under a foreign yoke. ***"What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?"*** [2 Cor 6:14–15]

If you feel that there is still something holding you back, binding you in some way, then now may be the moment, right now. And let us go one step further. Perhaps there are also those here who are sick, who are in some way suffering and perhaps even feel despair at times, or perhaps those growing older who feel the aches and pains of old age here and there. Beloved, God has not promised us eternal health in this frail body, however he has said: ***"I am the Lord that healeth thee."*** [Ex 15:26]

And we believe this with all our hearts. May it be revealed here today that the Word of God is vindicated in every way and for everyone as true: to the lost through salvation, to the bound through deliverance, to the sick through healing.

Lord, Almighty God, we come to you together. We have heard your Word, and we believe as the Scripture says. Let now streams of living water flow.

May God's salvation and redemption now be bestowed upon the lost. Lord, grant them faith through the sermon worked by the Holy Spirit so that they may now believe that you have forgiven their sins. Lord, when they call upon you, you will answer them. Place it now in the heart of each one to call upon you and simply say: 'Faithful Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner. Son of God, have compassion on me and forgive me all my guilt and sin and accept me.' Then we have the promise: ***"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name."*** [Jn 1:12]

Can you believe today that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross of Calvary for our salvation? Say Amen.

Hallelujah!

To all who are bound, can you believe today what our Lord said, what is written about him in Isaiah 61 and in Luke 4, and that he is still the same today? He says: ***"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised and to proclaim to all the acceptable year of the Lord."*** [Isa 61:1–2, Luke 4:18-19]

Lord, today you have caused the gospel of Jesus to be proclaimed in our midst. We thank you for this. May the anointing of the Holy Spirit now descend upon your people so that all things may be set in order and restored.

Beloved Lord, we also commit the sick to you in the perfect faith that you were beaten and martyred for their sake. ***"The punishment of our peace was laid upon you, and by your stripes we were healed."*** [Isa 53:5]

I thank you for this. Fulfill your Word now and make the gospel the power of God, the power of healing, power of salvation, power of deliverance, and bless us all from the riches of your grace.

To you, the almighty God, we give special thanks today for the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. We believe that he has risen, ascended into heaven, prepared a place for us, and will return to bring his own home.

Beloved Lord, grant us also a mighty outpouring of your Holy Spirit, a restoration of all gifts, of all fruits, of all ministries, of all offices. May your Spirit reign amongst us to the glory and praise of your marvelous and holy name.

Once again, we give you thanks for everything in the precious and holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.