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We would love nothing more than to be caught up, as Paul wrote, "***to be with the Lord always.***" [1The 4:17] This wedding is indeed a blessing for us all, and we hope that no one will find even this short sermon this evening a burden. It is simply so wonderful to know that God brings His offer of salvation through the proclamation of the Gospel to all people, so that no one has any excuse for not having known about it.

Since it is a wedding, I would like to read a few scriptures that speak of the great wedding feast in glory. First we shall read Revelation chapter 19 from verse 1. I shall simply assume that we all believe that the Bible is God's Word, and that the Bible does not recount fairy tales but divine facts, and that everything written in it is yes and amen. [2Cor 1:20] What has not yet come to pass will still happen, we all know that. For heaven and earth will pass away, but God's Word remains forever. [Mat 24:35]

I am grateful to the Lord that we are not dependent on the opinions of men, but are taught and informed by God Himself through His precious and holy Word, which is brought to life and made clear to us by the Spirit of God. Revelation 19, verse 1:

[1] ***And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:***

[2] ***For true and righteous are His judgments...***

Then it goes on and on. I would actually rather not read this verse, but it is here, so let us read it. It is part of the Word of God. I shall now read verse 2 in full:

[2] ***For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.***

[3] ***And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.***

From this context you can see the way in which the prophets were revealed God's plan of salvation. How they mentioned, one after the other, things that actually have nothing to do with one another, but happen at roughly the same time. Here we have two facts. The first describes the redeemed multitude in glory, offering praise and worship to the Lord. Then we are told that God is just and true, and has judged the great whore.

Well, who can make sense of this? Look, because it is part of the Word of God, it must also be proclaimed from this very place. There are only two cities on earth, two places, from which a proclamation has spread throughout the whole world. One is Jerusalem, the city of the living God, with Mount Zion. All who were there are also familiar with the locality. And in the book of Isaiah, right in chapter 2, there is already the announcement that the Word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem. [Isa 2:3]

Isaiah chapter 2, also with a view to the end times, it states here in verse 2:

[2] ***And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.***

[3] ***And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.***

The true proclamation of the true Word of God went forth from Jerusalem. There, on biblical ground, the prophets walked. There lies the land that God promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. [Gen 28:13] And all the prophets of God were descendants of Abraham and proclaimed what God had to say. When our Lord was on earth, the same thing happened. The Word took its course. The apostles received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the upper room on Mount Zion, which is still there today. [Act 1:13; Act 2:1-4] And the Word of God, the true proclamation, has spread from Jerusalem across the whole earth.

Then, after the Council of Nicaea in the year 325, what we know today as the Roman Church, the Roman Catholic Church, took shape. And forgive me for saying so, but that is what it says in the Bible. And God does not need to apologize. He calls this apostate church, which has separated itself from Him and become unfaithful to Him, a harlot, a prostitute, a whore. Just as a woman who breaks her fidelity to her husband is a harlot, so God describes the Roman Catholic Church in the Word of God, not just once, but repeatedly. [Rev 17:1, 5; Rev 19:2]

And because the greatest religious deception on earth is being perpetrated here, on that day when He will hold judgment, God will destroy this great deception. And of course Rome too, as is written three times in Revelation 18, in a single hour He will destroy it and burn it with fire. When it comes to eternity, the matter is very

serious. One cannot simply say, perhaps it is right or wrong, true or false. One must be certain that one believes as the Scripture has said.

So, if the proclamation in these days takes place just as it did in the early church, coming from the mouth of the Lord and from the mouth of the apostles, then we must take the matter seriously. For then God speaks to us through His Word and we must respect His Word and believe it. We read this once more here in verse 3:

[3] ***And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.***

Look, beloved, God cannot stand by forever whilst this great religious deception is being perpetrated worldwide in His name. Everything has been changed. There is no trace left of the original Gospel and the message of salvation. Traditions, dogmas and various rules have been introduced. They speak of God whilst promoting their own agenda. That is how it is.

Jesus, our Lord, said in Matthew 16: ***"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*** [Mat 16:18] It is very important that we do not merely belong to a church or a denomination, but that we belong to the Church of the Firstborn, as it is written in Hebrews, to the Church of the Living God, which one does not enter through membership, but by being born again through the Word and the Spirit of God. [1Tim 3:15; Heb 12:23; 1Pet 1:23] As our Lord said in John 3: ***"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*** [Joh 3:3]

We read on from verse 6:

[6] ***And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.***

[7] ***Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.***

What a marvelous passage! As I just mentioned, the prophets, and here John in particular, saw in visions what was to come. He saw the perfected multitude in glory. He heard their rejoicing. He heard their singing. He was able to recount what was being sung up there.

This is not an imagination. These are the true words of God. Just as it is written here, so it is, and so it shall be. Then we read on about this bride who is invited to the marriage of the Lamb. In verse 8:

[8] ***And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.***

Here today we have the bridal couple. The bride is dressed in white. This is meant to signify she is pure, she is untouched. When the Lord returns as the bridegroom,

he will not bring a mixture. He will not bring home something that has already been used by others. He will take a pure, holy bride to himself into glory.

And we must be washed in the blood of the Lamb and sanctified by the Word of Truth.

[8] ***And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.***

We have been made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. [2Cor 5:19] Whoever can believe this from the heart, is taken out of the unjustified, sinful state, out of separation from God, and brought into reconciliation with God, into forgiveness and salvation, and receives a complete and absolute justification from God. And this means that by virtue of redemption through the blood of the Lamb, we are restored to our former standing before God, as though we had never sinned, as though we had never been separated from God. Redemption in Christ means complete atonement for the fall, a restoration to fellowship with God, and the receipt of eternal life. And we are only waiting for the transformation of our bodies at the return of Jesus Christ. [Phi 3:21] That is why Paul also writes, "***we carry this heavenly treasure in earthen vessels.***" [2Cor 4:7]

Let us now read verses 9 and 10 of Revelation 19:

[9] ***And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.***

[10] ***And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***

What a marvelous word! We are indeed living in a time when Bible prophecy is actually being fulfilled before our very eyes. When we say that the Lord's return is imminent, we are speaking the truth. The signs of the times point to this, and we see and recognize that we are living in the last days and that, according to Matthew 24:14, God is having the gospel of the kingdom of God proclaimed to all peoples, tongues, and nations for the very last time. Some will believe, others will not; some will accept it, others will not. Our task is to proclaim the Word, and each time we will be able to say exactly what Paul said in Acts chapter 13, verses 47 and 48. Acts 13, verses 47 and 48:

[47] ***For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.***

[48] ***And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the***

word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

[49] ***And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.***

We would wish for the same thing in these days, that the nations and languages might be reached through the mass media, so that everyone might once again have the opportunity to hear the true Word of God, the everlasting gospel in its original form, and thus be able to make their decision for the Lord. It says here:

[48] ***And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord.***

In connection with this, I have a question. To which of you has the Word of the Lord already become so great and precious, that you have praised the Word of the Lord? As you know, there is that passage in Psalm 119: ***"The word is sevenfold refined, and the word is a lamp to our feet,"*** and so on. [Psa 12:6; Psa 119:105] Man does not live by bread alone, and God will send a famine, as it is written in the prophet Amos, not of water nor of bread, but of hearing the Word of the Lord. [Deu 8:3; Am 8:11; Mat 4:4]

Beloved, this is actually the touchstone. Many may say, "Lord, we praise you, and Lord, we do this, and Lord, we do that," and go their own ways, accompanied with cymbals and trumpets. Whoever the Lord speaks to directly, through the revelation of the Spirit from the Word, and to whom it is truly revealed, will praise the Word of the Lord. That person will thank God from the heart. They will simply say: "My God, I had no idea that all this was already written in your Word." And then we too will be able to say with a psalmist: ***"For thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."*** [Psa 138:2]

"***They glorified the word of the Lord.***" [Act 13:48]

Has it not happened to us several times already, when the Word was revealed to us fresh from the throne? Have we not partaken of spiritual manna? Have we not felt the power of this Word of God, which does not return void, but accomplishes what God sent it to do? [Isa 55:11] "***When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.***" [Act 13:48]

As you well know, this Word, especially the promises for this age contained within it, has become so precious to us, particularly through the ministry of Brother Branham, who was indeed a man of God like Paul, like Moses, like other prophets, simply a man sent by God, with the revelation of the Spirit and the Word, to reveal anew, through inspiration, this living Word, that was written down by inspiration, and to bring it to life for each individual. For the fact is this: originally, the Word came directly through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the prophets and men of God were overwhelmed. But what about us? Ever since the Word was written down, many have had only the dead letter and no living revelation. [2Cor 3:6] The word has not been made alive to them through the Spirit, and therein lies the great mistake.

The moment the Lord speaks to us and the Holy Spirit can take effect, the letter, the letter comes to life. For the words of the Lord are spirit and are life. [Joh 6:63] So he himself has said. The Word that was written down is placed anew upon the lampstand by the preaching, and the Holy Spirit then reveals it to each individual.

Another passage concerning the marriage supper, from Matthew 22, verse 1. Matthew 22, from verse 1:

[1] ***And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said:***

[2] ***The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son,***

[3] ***And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come.***

Now imagine that invitations are sent out or passed on and the guests make up excuses and do not come. Then the two of us would be sitting here alone today and there would be no guests. If the guests do not accept the invitation to the wedding, what then? See, and here we have a description that sends shivers down our spines. I shall continue reading from verse 4, perhaps the last part of verse 3:

[3] ***...and they would not come.***

[4] ***Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.***

What an invitation! Our Lord spoke in parables. The meaning is of course hidden in these parables and is revealed to those who truly come to the Lord. In verse 5 we read:

[5] ***But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.***

[6] ***And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them.***

Just imagine, the invitation to the wedding has been issued, the guests refuse, they do not come, they then even become angry with those who passed on the invitation, beat them, reject them, cast them aside and carry on with their daily business and fail to realize that here the King of Kings is inviting them to the great wedding feast. Beloved, on this wedding day, the King of Kings invites all the guests who are here today to the great marriage of the Lamb, of which we have already read in Revelation 19. Verse 7 reads:

[7] ***Then the king became angry.***

Yes, what else can he do? He has prepared everything, everything is there, the guests are not coming, but everything is ready.

[7] ***But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.***

[8] ***Then says he to his servants: The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.***

[9] ***Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage.***

[10] ***So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests.***

See, we are living in the time when this is being fulfilled. The first shall be last. [Mat 19:30; Mat 20:16; Mar 10:31; Luk 13:30] Some did not want to come, but now the invitation is extended to us, and we read here, "***the wedding hall was filled with guests.***" I want to be there.

In Matthew 25 we read, perhaps starting also from verse 1:

[1] ***Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.***

[2] ***And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.***

Verse 5:

[5] ***While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.***

[6] ***And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.***

We are all familiar with this scripture, of course. In our own day the call goes out: ***"Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."*** What more can we do than pass on this divine invitation to the great marriage supper and, as we have read, "***bring in everyone you find, both bad and good.***" [Mat 22:9-10]

Some have a lot to answer for, others less so. But everyone needs grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God. Whether much or little, we are all separated from God and we have all been reconciled with God. But we must accept it personally and experience this reconciliation with God for ourselves.

Our two brothers from Wroclaw, who are also here today—we send them our warmest greetings, by the way—they repeatedly bear witness: "Brother Frank, I now have peace in my heart." Is that true, beloved brother? Two former priests—yesterday, during our conversation, the words came to their lips once more: "Brother Frank, I have peace in my heart, peace with God." Beloved, it is not religion that brings salvation, but faith in Jesus Christ, the personal experience of salvation with our God.

What happened on Golgotha, and what Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 5, namely that "***God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself***", it is something everyone must experience personally. [2Cor 5:19] Everyone must first literally experience their separation from God. And for this to happen, we must be awakened from our slumber of sin through the preaching of the gospel.

For look, this is the crux of the matter: ***"On the day you eat of it, you will surely die."*** [Gen 2:17] Man is dead in his sins and transgressions and does not realize it. He thinks that if he sings, "Great God, we praise you," then everything is all right. First of all, we must be awakened from this state of death in sins and transgressions, hence the term "revival" followed by "conversion" and then the new birth and renewal through the Holy Spirit.

And it must come about through the preaching that people who are after all initially dead in sins and transgressions are shaken awake and then they realize it and cry out: "My God, I am lost! I am separated from you! I am on the broad way that leads to destruction! Have mercy on me! Forgive me! Be gracious to me! Accept me! I wish to become your own!"

It is an experience; it is a process we go through. Conversion is not simply a matter of hearing a sermon, perhaps raising a hand and making a decision for Christ.

We must personally experience this process of conversion, feel the separation from God in our very souls and cry out: ***"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*** [Psa 22:1; Mat 27:46; Mar 15:34] And then we receive the answer that this happened as a result of the fall. And as has just been emphasized, it is through the sermon that we are awakened from spiritual death, this turning towards God, this awakening, this conversion, and then on to renewal, to being born again, right through to being filled with the Holy Spirit. We must experience all of this.

And I pray to God that this may simply happen to all of us, that we may not only have heard the full gospel of Jesus Christ through the preaching, but may have fully experienced the full blessing of the full gospel of Jesus Christ, so that we too may praise the Lord and his Word and give glory to him, the living God.

I would like to pass on this invitation, which we have read here today, from the bottom of my heart, in the name of the Lord, and simply say: God has prepared a great wedding feast in glory. Today the invitation goes out to everyone. Do not say: "I am doing this or that." You all know the Bible quite well. One had this excuse, another that. One said: ***"I have bought some oxen and I must go and inspect them."*** [Luk 14:19] Another had bought a field. [Luk 14:18] The third had taken a wife and could not come either. [Luk 14:20] Instead of both of them coming, he too stayed behind.

And so we understand that the Lord simply became angry and said to himself: "Now I have prepared everything, sent out the invitations, sent my servants out with this invitation and lo and behold, the guests do not want to come." And then there was

a second attempt and the hall was filled with guests. [Mat 22:10; Luk 14:23]

May we, when this great marriage supper of the Lamb takes place, be present by grace. But anyone who wishes to be there must accept the invitation now and come to the Lord, truly experience a genuine conversion, a pause, a turning towards God and then be renewed and born again through the Holy Spirit, through the power of God. I believe the Lord will grant this to everyone.

And I ask you to take this invitation seriously. It is not about joining a church. As I said earlier, the Lord's church does not consist of a membership; it is the body of the Lord. And by being born again we receive new life from God. And through the Holy Spirit we are baptized into the body of the Lord, into this living organism. [1Cor 12:13] May the Lord God bless us all. Amen.