**Sermon transcript**

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**Topic: Isaiah 43:1–4: "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I havde loved thee...!"**

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Generally speaking, we do not discuss here all the misguided developments within the message. We mainly preach Jesus Christ and that which relates to what God is doing in our day. And yet all those other things are there too. We leave them to one side and go our own way with the Lord. And we also leave aside Brother Branham's statements which are still to come or are intended for the future. And we trust the Lord that he will not be late and that he will bring everything together and do everything at the right time so that we will be amazed.

When our brother so joyfully glorified the victory of Golgotha and then concluded by saying that we now expect the same thing at the end, namely the same victory and the same things as they were at the beginning, a thought did occur to me. It can only happen when an inner pain seizes us. And we simply long for the reproach to be taken from us and for God to have his right fulfilled completely. As long as we still feel reasonably comfortable in the state we are in, not much more will be able to happen.

But when, as Brother Branham put it, we experience desperation, desperation, you know, when an emergency doctor is called, then there is an emergency, there is desperation. When an emergency call is made, there is indeed an emergency. And when a cry of desperation is uttered, then we have recognized our spiritual distress. And I would like to put this as clearly as possible. We are deeply grateful to God for all his grace, for all our experiences. But we all know that God has even more in store, that he wants to do even more and that he will do even more. But linked to this will indeed be a cry of desperation, as we call out to the Lord: "equip us with your power, so that we may carry out in thy name and for thy glory that for which you have appointed us."

For we have said this often enough here, our Lord's ministry is after all continued through the Church and is to take place as it was in the beginning by the power of God. Whenever I think of Brother Branham's ministry, I see before my eyes what God would like to do. I am not speaking of the sign of the Messiah at this moment, of the special gift of revelation, discernment, visions and so on, but of that which accompanied the preaching and was then revealed as the power of God, whereby

people were set free, healed and blessed. We believe in the full gospel and the full gospel must be revealed in the full power of God.

But let it be said once again, it is likely that the moment will have to come when we send up this cry of desperation to God and simply say: "Lord, things cannot go on like this for a single day longer. Not a single meeting must end like this again. From now on it is your turn to do the things we are waiting for." If we then take God at His word so earnestly and from the heart, He will answer.

We have our beloved brother Kupfer here today. I can't see him at the moment, ah, there he is. And you know, we haven't mentioned here exactly how things stood with him. But let me say this much in advance, God has saved him from death.

You know, the believers are all faithful, the others are complacent, believers after all take everything upon themselves, be it time or effort. But no one else here, sitting or standing, takes on as much time and effort as brother and sister Kupfer do. Every last weekend for all these years they have travelled to Zurich to translate there. Every first weekend they have come to Krefeld to translate here, all at their own expense, using their own time. As I said, the others are complacent, the believers always have time for the Lord. I wish that it were so.

In any case, we are so grateful to God, I am delighted that our beloved brother has been granted an extension of his life. By earthly standards that would have meant the end for him. God has shown mercy, we are grateful for that.

Even when he spoke of the fact that people do not accept, it is written, "***no one can come to me unless the Father draws him first.***" [Joh 6:44] One can have devout conversations, mean well and want to show people the way, but if it is not God who works in a person's heart, it is in vain. And yet it is our duty to do so and to bear witness so that people may have the opportunity to reflect on it and so that the Lord may continue to speak to them.

These two verses from Isaiah 43 have surely become precious to every believer.

[1] ***Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.***

Just imagine that, the Almighty God, surrounded by heavenly hosts, dwelling in holiness and enthroned from everlasting to everlasting, cares for the human being who is separated from Him, who is thoroughly corrupt and wicked, and calls out to him: "***Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, not another, I, the Lord your God, have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine.***"

Then verse two:

[2] ***When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.***

This passage fits very well with the scripture from the prophet Daniel, when the three men came out of the fiery furnace alive, there was not even the smell of burning on their clothes. [Dan 3:27] In the midst of the fire, yet no smell of burning on their clothes, let alone any injury. Can you believe that? I can believe it, because God has said so. God has power over everything, there is nothing that can escape him.

Verse 4 says:

[4] ***Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.***

What a word, what a declaration, "***because you are precious in my sight.***" What did God see in his people Israel? What has he seen in us, the New Testament Church, in each and every one of us? If we were to judge ourselves, where would we find anything precious in ourselves, anything of value? What are we worth? Anyone who still thinks highly of themselves will yet learn that God humbles and that he gives grace only upon the humble. He says here, "***since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give people for thy life.***"

In the Old Testament, God delivered up seven nations in order to give the land of Canaan to his people Israel. [Deu 7:1] These peoples meant nothing to him; his people Israel meant everything to him. Who can explain it? Who can comprehend it? As God has done it, so it is right.

Sometimes unbelievers in particular ask what God was thinking. I have a counter-question. What value does a person have who remains without God? What difference is there between him and a cattle in the pasture? A person has value only when God takes that person into his hands, when he can instill divine substance within him. When the will of God is carried out through a person, then that person has true value. And that is precisely what this is all about.

God has appointed the people of Israel as his witnesses, to bear witness to him, the one and only God, the one true God. So it is written in verse 10 of Isaiah 43:

[10] ***Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant...***

sometimes plural, sometimes singular.

[10] ***...my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.***

[11] ***I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.***

One could read on and on. My eyes fell on the same chapter, 43, on verse 25:

[25] ***I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.***

[26] ***Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.***

It is God who grants us mercy, who has helped us on the day of salvation, and who will continue to help us. I paused at the passage from John 1 that our beloved brother read, and when I hear his beautiful German, there are some who live in this country, who are of German origin, who make certain mistakes, and he speaks very good German. We are grateful for that. It is a great help with the translations.

In any case, there are only two languages on this continent, or in this part of the world, that are quite out of the ordinary. One is Hungarian, and the other language is Finnish. You cannot find any connection between them and any other language. These are two worlds that simply do not belong to this world, and yet here they are. And our brother speaks such fine German and equally fine English. May God bless him and strengthen him.

I was moved here in John chapter 1, when that great man of God pointed this out, and in verse 36 we read it together, where it says:

[36] ***And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!***

[37] ***And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.***

Brother Branham once said: **"If you have not found Jesus Christ in every chapter of the Bible, then you must read that chapter again."**

Wherever we open the Holy Scriptures, we find references to him or retrospective accounts of him. He is the central theme of both the Old and New Testament, and that is why our preaching is so balanced and centered on Jesus Christ who has become everything to us. Even when we set the record straight doctrinally in this place, it is not so that we might focus solely on these teachings; it is simply part of the process. But the core of the preaching remains Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, and what took place on the cross of Calvary for all of us, for our salvation.

And this is precisely where we differ from all the others who wish to be regarded as so-called message believers. They have strayed from the pure proclamation of the Gospel and have sought salvation in certain so-called revelations, finding ever new revelations, and salvation in Christ has been lost. We are grateful to God for all the teaching, for all revelations, but there is one thing we must never forget: the focus must always be on Jesus Christ.

Even when someone said to us last night: "Brother Frank, there are two groups among us; one is the Branhamites, and they are absolutely no good, and the other is the Frankists, and they are even worse." And I listened so attentively and thought to myself: "Both are wrong." We are grateful to God for Paul, for Peter, for all these men, grateful for Brother Branham, grateful for what happened, and also for the ministries in the church. But Paul writes to the Corinthians that no one should

say, ***"I follow Apollos,"*** and another, ***"I follow this one or that one."*** [1Cor 3:4] We are to be united all together for Christ, and we gratefully receive what God gives us through the ministry of those he has placed in the church.

But we do not go to the brother and thank him. We give thanks to God, who directs and guides all things. For there is no brother who could take anything for himself unless it were given to him by God. [Joh 3:27] But if it comes from God, to whom then does the thanks belong? To God, who has bestowed it by grace.

It is also important that through our preaching we do not display a partisan spirit, but that the Holy Spirit may have his nature and his work within the church. We believe that the Holy Spirit is at work where the Word of God is preached, where there are no secondary views or even self-serving intentions, where no separate kingdom is being established within the kingdom of God, but where the Lord of heaven can build his kingdom, build his church, and use us through the various tasks or ministries to play a small part, as Paul also writes to the Corinthians: ***"For we are labourers together with God."*** [1Cor 3:9] We are simply here and wish to work together with the Lord to do what needs to be done.

We need him; he said: ***"Without me you can do nothing."*** [Joh 15:5] He too needs us, for he has always used people who were on this earth, whom he could use to proclaim his counsel, and then, as we all know, in both the Old and New Testament he had men who wrote on his behalf, in his name, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Not long ago a little boy, about seven or eight years old, saw my large Bible—I have a huge, very old Luther Bible, probably the second edition, 400 years old—and I saw him looking at this Bible, and then he asked: "Did people write that, or did God write it himself?" And as you know, children can sometimes be so simple. People wrote it, but God dictated it, God inspired it through the Holy Spirit. What marvelous harmony there is throughout the whole Bible, in both the Old and New Testament. That could only have been the Spirit of God.

Here it is, and I'll read it again: ***"Behold the Lamb of God!"*** [Joh 1:36] John looked at the one he had preached about, for whom he had prepared the way, whom he had introduced to Israel. He looked at him, he pointed him out; he did not prepare his own way, but the Lord's way. [Mat 3:3] And when the time came, he looked at Jesus and said: ***"Behold the Lamb of God."*** And when the disciples heard this, they followed the Lord Jesus. [Joh 1:36-37]

In exactly the same way, it was Brother Branham's intention not to bring about various movements through misunderstandings, but rather this one movement centered on Christ, which is established in the Word of truth and which in fact does not deviate to the right or to the left, but follows the Lord. And I believe we may say here, there are no Branham fans here, nor any Frank fans or fans of anyone else; rather there are people here, and I hope with all my heart that it is true, that people are gathered here in this place who do not fantasize about a great man or a great

ministry, but who follow the Lord, because they have experienced the God-given ministry as a blessing in their own lives and have thus been established in the Word of truth.

That was quite a long sentence, probably difficult to translate, but you know what is meant by it. Not enthusiastic about a person, even if he were the greatest man of God on earth.

All these men pointed to the Lord, and all those who realized what kind of ministry they had, recognized it, and then followed the Lord. That is indeed how it was throughout all those years in Brother Branham's ministry. It was only after his passing that various brothers came together who were seeking specialties, and they then gave rise to a number of different movements. Amidst all these various movements there is a Word bride who has recognized the ministry given by God, and it was this ministry that brought us to Jesus, brought us into conformity with the Word. And for this ministry we are very grateful to God.

Another scripture from Titus, with which we are all familiar. As you know, the Apostle Paul was a man with a shepherd's heart. He wrote many letters, and when one reads them, one sees that his constant concern was that the church should receive instruction that she might be kept in the Word of truth. He sometimes sharply rebuked those who preached false doctrines, the very same man who speaks and writes of love. "***And though I would know all mysteries and would have all faith and so forth, but had not love, I would be nothing.***" [1Cor 13:2] The very same man writes: ***"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers."*** [Phi 3:2] He sometimes writes very sharply, and one might then ask: "Paul, what became of your love there?"

The love of God is the love for the truth, not a love of confusion; rather the love of God is the love for his Word. And it is written, "***because they did not receive the love for the truth, God has sent them strong delusion.***" [2The 2:10-11] May the Lord instill in us a love for the truth, for the Word of God.

Here in Titus 1, verse 1 it says:

[1] ***Pa 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.***

Up to here, this passage. We know that Paul was called to impart teachings on all subjects to the New Testament Church like no other apostle, and here we have gained a small insight into what was close to his heart, because God had appointed

him for this. And we believe that Brother Branham too was aware that the message he brought was the message from the Word. This is something that probably needs to be highlighted and emphasized anew from time to time in this context, when the term "message" is used, we mean Holy Scripture, the Word written therein, which has now been revealed and brought to our attention. There is no message of God that could exist outside the Word of God. The divine message is always found within the Word of God. And this is the only way we can test what is preached, namely by the Word, just as those in Berea did, to see whether it is so. [Act 17:11]

And so we believe that he to whom it was said: "Just as John was sent to forerun the first coming of Christ, so you are sent with a message that will forerun the second coming of Christ." And if we may look back a little, from the theme of the Godhead, all the Bible topics and testimonies have been newly revealed and placed in the proper light, and there is no need at all to focus on specialities like thunders or third pull or this or that.

Whoever has been born of the Word seed has a connection to the Word of God. And we are grateful that we are allowed to have this connection, I almost said, just as through an umbilical cord we are after all most intimately connected to God. We have been born again from the Word, through the Spirit, unto a living hope. [1Pet 1:3] And that is why we have this connection to the Word of God. And everything else simply falls away from us, it does not belong to us, it can bring us nothing.

But even back then, in the days of the apostles, it almost astonishes us, there were already people who preached that the resurrection had taken place. [2Tim 2:18] Have you read it? You all know the New Testament.

Sometimes I have found myself shaking my head, especially back then in India, when that man appropriated Brother Branham's saying as his own. Brother Branham made a slip of the tongue and said 700 instead of 7,000. [1Kin 19:18; Rom 11:4] Brother Branham said that God had preserved 700 in the days of Elijah. And this man said, that is how God revealed it to this prophet. So it wasn't 7,000, but 700. And then he went one step further and said: "Then it is I who will gather these 700 together." He did it.

I saw them standing right there in front of me, in the south of India, in the desert: 700 people, for the most part probably over 600 from India itself, the rest from America and Germany, brought along from here and there. And I went to see this man, I have already told you about it, there were only mud huts, you know what it is generally like in India, and then, in the south, 30 kilometers into the desert, far from the nearest village, nothing but mud huts. And one of these mud huts had been whitewashed and written on it were the words: "The New Jerusalem".

And you can well imagine, when you see things like that, and then seek a conversation. A few brothers had come with me, we went there by taxi, to open the eyes of the Germans and Europeans there, and then the conversation took place. He called everyone forward, everyone was standing there, and we stood there, feeling rather

left out, and then he actually said: “We’ve all been raptured, and you’ve been left behind.”

And you can well imagine, yes, you are shaking your head, I shook mine, too. And sometimes you just can’t comprehend how corrupt people’s minds can be. And when I say to him: “You are here, and we are here, so surely none of us have been raptured.” “Oh,” he said, “we’ve come back already, and behold, the city of God is amongst mankind, for he will dwell amongst them and walk among them.” “Yes,” I said, “all that is yet to come, but this old mud hut, repainted with fresh paint, it surely can’t be the New Jerusalem.” [Rev 21:2]

But do you see how foolish people are? And that man, too, had merely taken quotations from Brother Branham. He decorated himself like a Pentecostal buffoon, from head to toe, adorned solely with sayings by William Branham. All one found there were quotes, he was decked out from head to toe with them. But the Bible, he had not even picked it up anymore.

And that is why, when we occasionally speak seriously about these matters here, there is good reason for it. Even if we do not always reveal the background, it is right that here in this place we set the Word upon the lampstand and also place everything Brother Branham preached within its biblical context, allowing God to speak to us through his Word.

I do not know whether the brother was present when we held the European conference in Brussels back then. Who was there? Brother Russ, you were there, I know that. But there were a few others there as well. Now that I mention it, Eric, you were there, too. Yes, there were a few others there as well. In any case, we also had the Americans and the Canadians there at the time, and a few of them.

And as Brother Frank has always been, I always give the podium to people, so they can preach. I don’t really have all that much to say, unless God speaks through me. And what more could I wish for than that? In any case, I did grant the brothers the right to speak, they were guests after all. And they did speak.

Brother Russ, you know, we were sitting on the platform, and a brother came along with a whole stack of Brother Branham’s sermons, and just laid them on the lectern. And I knew, now it’s starting. Now it’s starting in earnest.

But what happened inside me? Have you ever heard the Lord’s inner voice? I’m not asking whether you’ve heard it audibly, there will be few who have. But every now and then one does hear the Lord’s inner voice. And lo and behold, as if a record were playing here: ***“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.”*** [Mat 23:2] And it went on and on: ***“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.”*** And it grew ever louder, my heart began to pound. And I listened, indeed I inclined my ear to hear even more clearly what was going on here.

And what can I tell you, whilst one sermon after another was being delivered and quotations of their own choosing were being read out to substantiate or confirm what

was being said, I prayed to the Lord, I said: "We are not here because of Moses, are we?" And then it became clear to me, exactly the same thing that was done to Moses, who had been placed on a higher throne as a special prophet, the same thing happened and is happening to Brother Branham. People quote him or take what he said without having the same life from God, without having part in the same ministry.

Just as we know, Moses was a mighty prophet, but then came all those who referred to him and they had no idea of the divine revelation that had truly been bestowed upon Moses. And so it is in these days, too. One can refer to Paul, Peter, James, John, one can refer to servants of God, only when a divine calling has come into our lives and we have received a share in the ministry that these men carried out on God's behalf, so that we have the same goal, the same motives, the same teachings, and there is no longer anything of our own, but rather, as Paul writes, we can be God's co-workers in order to have a full share in what he is doing in these days. [1Cor 3:9]

I have said it often enough, I really am not interested in what people do or their programs. As children of God we are interested in only one thing: what is God doing now in the church in accordance with his Word, where do we stand, how far has time progressed, and what remains to be fulfilled of what the Lord has promised and what he is yet to do?

Let us give thanks today, on the last day of this year, to the Lord, our God, for all his care, for all the love he has shown us. As we read in the prophet Isaiah: ***"I have loved you, you are precious, you are valuable in my sight"*** [Isa 43:4] — valuable because God has been able to place something valuable in the hearts of his people. That which is valuable does not come from you or from me, nor does that which is precious; it comes from God. We make ourselves available to him as vessels which he can fill, and I insist that we have been deemed worthy by God to remain in the middle of the path, without cultivating or cherishing extremes to the right or left, but simply grounded and aligned biblically before the face of God in the Word of truth.

We believe that the Bride Church will be a Word Bride, not a Bride who utters words, but a Word Bride in whom the Word can take shape, find reality and fulfilment, a Church in which the Lord God can dwell and walk, work and bless, until we experience our completion.

Paul wrote here, what God promised from eternity past, he is now bringing to light through the preaching by the commission of God. [Tit 1:2-3] There were men who did not send themselves, but were sent, and of them it is said: ***"Whoever hears you, hears me."*** [Luk 10:16] We give thanks to the Lord God that he has sent a man in our generation. And you know, when it is written in John 1: ***"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John,"*** then that is something precious. [Joh 1:6] And yet, as we have already emphasized, the honor does not belong to the

one who is sent, but to the one who sent him, the one who accomplishes his work.

And we are also grateful for this, that we have this balance: he, the faithful God, sends his Word, he sends his servants at all times. Let us heed the Word of God and give thanks to the Lord that he has graciously visited us and truly called us out of all confusion, out of the whole Babel of this age.

Ah, what was it, I can just picture you, Brother Zink, last Sunday, Brother Graf in Zurich showed me an article, written by a full Gospel minister, and in it the ancient Babylon on the river Euphrates is mentioned, which is now to be rebuilt and so on. And Saddam Hussein is said to be the antichrist, who will then rule in this ancient Babylon that is yet to be built.

When you hear such things, it's similar to what Brother Branham said, that a man announced the topic, saying he would speak about the antichrist. Who knows the sermon in which Brother Branham says that? And then this man went on to say the antichrist will be a being capable of doing anything, he will be a gigantic figure with a stride as long as a city block — that's about 50 meters — when he takes a step, he will have already covered 50 meters and so on, and he will be given an injection, and then he will become that special man. All these people who proclaim such things need an injection of the Gospel.

No, how grateful — and I'll say it again — how grateful can we be that God has sent us a prophet? Amen. Where's the amen? Oh yes, we are grateful to the Lord. He has set the Word, especially the prophetic Word, anew upon the lampstand.

I remember the time when Hitler was the antichrist and all sorts of figures were time and again deemed to be the antichrist, and then it was Communism and so on, right? No, no, it is the man who exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped [2The 2:4]; this is the man who plays the leading role in apostate Christianity. We have spoken about this often enough. I do not wish to get drawn into that today, otherwise it will look as though no sermon can end without my having given him a good threshing.

But be that as it may, Christ our Lord has become dear and precious to us. We have come to know him, we know who he is, and by God's grace we have also been able to recognize all the other connections and know in whom we believe and what we believe. We believe in the Lord our God, and we believe the entire testimony of Holy Scripture from the first verse to the last. And we thank God from the bottom of our hearts for this. In Jesus' name, Amen.