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Subject: Mal. 3,18: “The difference between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve God!” No 2

Br. Russ:

Before we pray I want to read from 1 Thessalonians, from chapter 2:

For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word

of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus:

for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always:

For the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.

Up to here these precious and holy Words of God. May God bless his Word on us this evening. Let us thank God that we may read such words and that we feel joined with the believers at all times.

Let us stand up and pray together.

Faithful God, we thank you with all our hearts for this evening hour. We thank you for your precious and holy Word. We thank you, Lord, that you have also spoken to us through your precious and holy Word.

Lord, you have sent your servants at all times. You sent your apostles, you sent your chosen ones, your prophets.

They have been persecuted. This and that has been done to them, but it didn't bother them. They have looked to you and trusted in you, O Lord. And so we too do not want to look to any man, but we want to rely on you, Lord, for you are our comfort and our peace.

You have become everything to us, O God, and therefore we worship you and ask you fervently, may you continue to speak to us tonight. May you

also admonish us, Lord, and may you bring us to where they were, O faithful God.

They had to endure much, suffer much, for the sake of the word. Lord, if it must be so, then we too will bear whatever may come. Only help us, O Lord, and give us your grace and your strength.

We see, Lord, we have suffered much and endured much, but we can learn from it all. Have mercy on us, Lord, and bless us.

Take everything disturbing from our midst. Lord, let your word be given to your servant, our brother, even tonight, that he may say what you want him to say, Lord.

We do not know, Lord, what we should say, but you, O Lord, you know what you have to give us. You are our God. You are the faithful God, Lord.

We want to offer you honor and praise and worship.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Br. Frank

Praise the Lord for the grace that we can be here again to worship and hear his precious word.

As I read and listened to the sentence, "***We have wanted to come to you several times, but Satan hindered us,***" then the question really comes to mind: "Man of God, you great apostle, called by the Lord, confirmed, supernaturally confirmed, and then the devil hindered you from visiting the people?"

If someone were to say that here today, then all the heroes of faith would think: "He lacks trust in God. It would have been better if he hadn't said or written that."

But the great and sublime thing about God and all his servants is their absolute truthfulness.

That is the most outstanding thing.

God, as I've often said, God always has the same face, and he is always truthful, and it is the same with his servants.

Here Paul admits and says, verse 18:

Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

All those who are always overcoming and are already victorious on the other side, they would say, "Man of God, where have you been standing here with your faith? Why has the victory of God not been revealed?"

Beloved, this question "Why?", we can never ask ourselves, because then we could start with, "Why did God allow Cain to slay Abel, whose sacrifice was pleasing to God?"

You could go through the whole Bible and have one "Why?" after another, right up to the beheading of John the Baptist, the greatest man of God ever born of a woman up to that point.

But these are all God's ways at which unbelievers stumble and are put to shame and also ways by which believers are purified, tested, put to the test.

And you all know, up into our time, the greatest man of God, and there is no denying, I dare say, although I am pretty well informed about all the prophets, I dare say that none of them was used as all-encompassing and mightily as Brother Branham. And God allowed it that he was taken from time into eternity, five days after a car accident that was not his fault but caused by others.

And here too you could ask: "Man of God, God has revealed to thousands what has happened, what will happen, given warnings, given instructions, everything was clear to many." And so we could continue with these questions.

No, we have only one request and no question in the sense: That God will have his right fulfilled in us and through us. How the path looks in detail, what phases we have to go through, what all is involved, that is up to God.

Anyone who reads Hebrews 11 knows anyway that all men of God had to go through difficult paths and it really looks as if the whole world was spared, only the servants of God and the people of God had a hard time on earth.

And that's because Satan is the god of this world.

And this revelation of what happened in the Garden of Eden and the traces of Lucifer who fell is becoming ever greater to me.

And we know that God had given Adam dominion over all that was on earth. [Genesis 1:26]

But here it comes: The serpent got Eve under his dominion and it went on so that in the end Adam lost this dominion, this position as the son of God and was given over to death and that the one who tricked him took over. And that is the enemy.

And that is why the Lord had to shed his blood on this earth to purchase both mankind and also the earth from which man was taken to buy it rightfully.

And the day is coming when what is written in Revelation chapter 11 from verse 15 will be fulfilled: [Rev 11:15]

Now the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

He, the original owner, was only able to assert his right by legally purchasing everything. But that will be written about in a book.

These are all precious thoughts. Unbelievers will never understand that God allowed all these things to happen just because he wanted to reveal, had to reveal all his attributes.

He was the Savior. If nothing is lost, how can he be revealed as the Savior?

He is the Healer. If nothing is sick, how can he be revealed as the Healer?

All these qualities were in God – to be a father. Yes, where are the sons? Where are the daughters?

Everything had to go the way it did because of God's great plan of salvation. And even when things went wrong in the Garden of Eden, it was still right in the eyes of God. We cannot grasp that with our minds. But you can believe me: God is God.

He would never have allowed and permitted anything if it had not been in His will and would not ultimately have served to glorify His name. So we can rest in God and know that all will be well.

But we see that others have gone through the same trials. They have had struggles and have had to go through ups and downs in their lives so that we too will not be put to shame but know that God is the same and walks with us.

Sometimes I feel a little helpless in face of situations and am deeply saddened by them. And it would certainly be better for me and for all of us if we could spend all our time rejoicing and praising the sunshine as we

sang in the song before last: "*Sunshine of grace, shine*" how does it go? "*cheerfully into your heart.*" And that's true. It's always true. No matter how we feel, the sun of God shines anyway, whether we are sick or healthy, whether we are up or lying down.

Or does something change?

The only question is whether we can stand up to all our tests and become strong in faith and still give thanks to the Lord.

When the matter comes to divine healing, the opponents always take the scripture about the thorn in the flesh of Paul [2 Corinthians 12:7] and they also know that he advised Timothy to take a little wine and not just drink water because of his stomach [1 Timothy 5:23].

They also know that he left Trophimus sick [2 Timothy 4:20] and then they can come and say, "Paul, you were such a great man of God. Your handkerchiefs were enough to be put on the sick and possessed and they got well, and now what? You have the thorn in the flesh?"

I know what it was, but why should I always tell others? But whatever it may have been, right?

The trials were there and people's faith had to be tested to see if they will stand or whether they only believe when all goes well.

If all goes well, who can't believe? Raise your hand.

If all goes well, who can't believe? What? Huh.

Then we sing "*Always we are victors, always we are victors*" and we cheer the Lord. Anyone can do that. We don't need to put on an extra pious face. As long as everything goes well, everything is fine with us all.

But what about when someone is thrown into the fiery furnace, lands in the lions' den, finds themselves in prison and all kinds of things.

Also domestic trials. I am thinking especially of our beloved brother now. How many years have passed without any particular trials, my beloved brother, and now the trials are here.

At some point in life they come to everyone, sooner or later and how helplessly one then faces a situation.

But he who believes, believes, he believes even in the most difficult trial and does not throw away his trust.

In this Word, which is above all trials, Paul has said many things that are simply balm for our souls.

He writes that he was shamefully entreated, and yet he was bold in our God to speak the gospel of God with much contention to the Thessalonians. [1 Thessalonians 2:2] And then comes that, which is so precious to us all:

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

Any preacher can say this today. We can all read it, but the question is: Where does it still apply and where is what has been said here true?

How much enthusiasm, deceit, dishonest intentions, hidden agendas and guile in this day and age...

As I said, anyone can read it. Anyone can say: "You see, how beautifully it's written here."

It's not just that it's written here, but that we can stand our ground before God with it. That's what matters.

It's not that we are pinning it on ourselves here and hang a nice sign around us, but that what we read here could apply to anyone who preaches the Word of God.

I hope, I am not saying this presumptuously, I hope that it is true and that it applies, that God's Word is not proclaimed with enthusiasm or with any dishonest intent, let alone with a hidden agenda. No, then I would truly want to leave the preaching of the Gospel to others.

But believe me: Only people who have been called by the Lord Himself and have realized the responsibility they have before the Lord... By saying this, I am not excluding any brother whom God has blessed and with whom we proclaim the Word here together. But it takes more than just a gift of speech, more than just enthusiasm, more than just a program.

It takes the fear of God, that can really stand its ground before the Lord, that all dishonest intentions, all enthusiasm, all guile are taken away from us, and that we were allowed to proclaim God's Word as we have been honored, as the joyful and liberating message.

Then it says, ***"Even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts."***

So often it is said, what people like to hear, in order to win them over to their side.

We are not here to draw people to our side. We all want to be drawn by God and we all want to be on God's side at all costs.

And we can only do that if we stand on His Word, because God and His Word are inseparable, so they belong together.

(5) For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know.

If all flatterers would stay away from every house, many a soul would be sobered and come to the knowledge of the truth. How many flattering words are spoken everywhere, and it does so much good. Oh flattery, it tastes so good, isn't it? It always tastes good to people. You can see it around their mouths.

Nor did we use a cloke of covetousness. God is witness.

And now it comes:

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others.

And that agrees with a word of our Lord, which we have probably read here recently from the Gospel of John, where our Lord Himself said in chapter 5, verse 41, ***"I receive not honour from men."***

And what does Paul say in Galatians?

For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Galatians chapter 1, verse 10:

For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men?

No.

For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

These are all very serious words, but they concern the preachers and not those who hear the Word of God, but pray that the Lord will send true labourers into His harvest [Matthew 9:38], who do not do this and that to get something for themselves, but who actually serve the Lord completely and are devoted to Him.

What else caught my eye? [1.Thess 2:13] From verse 13:

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

That must be the case, and that is part of it. The Word of God must prove effective, and we have to recognize the will of God again and again.

We generally know the will of God as far as the plan of salvation is concerned. I don't believe that we have been left in the dark about this. The plan of salvation of our God has become clear to us. Indeed, we can even say it has been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit.

But it is often personal decisions that we have to make and trials that we face, and it is not easy to always recognize God's will and do what is right. But if our heart and our words can still agree that we are able to say and that it can stand its ground before God, "Lord, I want your will to be done in my life."

If that can be the case, that it's not just words, but that we mean it, "Lord, I want your will to be done in my life."

I once said this to a young man, "Listen, I don't know what you even want in heaven. If you don't serve God here, how do you want to appear before Him? Would you be happy to appear before the Lord without having served Him, without having been at His disposal, or would you have to put your face down to the ground there and feel unhappy and uncomfortable because you couldn't meet the Lord, couldn't look Him in the eye?"

If we live for Christ, we are ready to die with Him. [Rm 14:8] If we serve Him here, we want to see His face, as it is written in the Prophet Malachi:

Then you will see the difference between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him. [Mal 3:18]

If a man does not serve God here, then what's he doing up there? What does he want there? Would you, would I feel comfortable in the presence of the Lord if we didn't have time for Him here, if we had lived our lives here? What do we want there?

People should be told very clearly: If they don't want to be there, they don't need to be. Heaven will be full. There will be enough people who have actually served the Lord.

So don't just hope to get in at the end, perhaps right as the last one, but to love the Lord dearly, to serve Him, to be at His disposal at all costs.

What does that look like for all of us?

Because you know the word from the prophet Malachi, that God will then make the difference, not just with the one who was pious or pretended to be, but with the one who served Him and the one who did not. [Malachi 3:18]

It must be in Malachi 3, somewhere from verse 13... Verse 16:

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not.

That is the connection.

What does "serves" mean? Today people no longer know this Word, but servants served. A landowner could take these servants and they served.

And what was their job? To make the weather nice? No, that came from above. The good weather came from above. Their task was to faithfully serve their master who hired them to work. They were at his disposal and their eyes looked out for the order and they carried it out.

By the way, there are some very valuable thoughts here that belong together. Firstly, the Lord wrote the book, "The Book of Remembrance" for those who fear the Lord and have respect for his name. Many do not even know what his name is and in what name he has revealed himself, let alone have they respect for him.

There are people, and this is written in one of the church history books, that Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be the right direction because they are the only ones who bear the name of God, so to speak. Huh, they don't bear it at all.

Firstly, it was always the name Yahweh and the name Jehovah has only been used since the 16th century, but the name in which God has revealed himself to us for our salvation is the name Jesus, and we bear this name.

And our Savior says, **"I have come in the name of my Father, and you do not receive me."** [Joh 5:43] In what name did he come?

So it's very simple, but when it comes down to it, it becomes very narrow, and **"the way becomes narrow, and the gate is strait"** as we know from Matthew 7. [Mt 7:14]

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I do it.

And we are all waiting for that day, on the day when the Lord finishes his work and brings it to fulfillment. On that day, they who have respect for my name, **"they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels."**

Not just a property.

Many will be a property who will be there at the second resurrection and then enter into eternal life. No, they shall be a special property to me, jewels. They are to participate in the first resurrection. They are to participate in the rapture. They are to be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. They are to take part in the marriage supper. That is what it is all about.

They shall be my jewels when I do it. And I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Believe me, we have not yet really began to follow the Lord because we are not fully at His disposal, because we do not serve Him as we should serve Him.

And you know, as I have already said, everyone has to make their own relevant experiences.

But a son who does not serve and obey his father is an offence like no other on earth.

And I can well understand God when it says in Hebrews that **"He will judge His people and that it is terrible to fall into the hands of the living God."** [Hebr 10:31]

So I could really imagine that on that day God will deal very terribly with all those who have not served Him.

I can't imagine it any other way when He says "**Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire**" and so on. [Mt 25:41] So it's not an easy thing on that day. And these are also people who thought they were serving Him, who were casting out devils, doing great things. They thought they were serving Him and they served themselves. They served Mammon but not God and the people of God. The truthfulness of God was simply not there.

So God will "**spare a son that serveth Him.**" Let us become sons and daughters of God, who serve the Lord from the heart, who have respect for His Word and His Name.

After all, we believe that we will belong to these firstfruits who may be His jewels by grace. It is not a cheap thing, but the most precious and valuable thing that God could give mankind.

And ye shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between Him that serveth God and Him that serveth Him not. [Mal 3:18]

This cannot yet be seen today.

Everyone serves Him today. Who doesn't serve Him today? If we went to Rome, then if we were blind, we would think that everything is fine there. Who doesn't serve God today? Every evangelist, every preacher, every church, every denomination. Who is not serving God today?

And do we know what the Bible says?

He that bridles not his tongue and thinketh to serve God, his worship is vain. [Jam 1:26]

There are so many things that miss the mark. People are not even aware of this.

A service of God, truly serving God, includes a lot more than we have up to now. And I think that's what we are heading towards now – to be completely at the Lord's disposal. To serve Him, to have respect for His Word and His Name.

Not just silently thinking, "Well, I'll be there somehow on that day...", but serving Him from the heart, being at His disposal.

All those who served know what that is. There may not be any more sitting here, but you should have asked the older generation, them who served, and what was it? Loyalty will be rewarded.

(18) Then you will realize the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between the one who serves God and the one who does not.

The righteous is the one who serves God.

The wicked is the one who does not serve Him.

And do you see where this is going? Right after this comes verse 19.

For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and all who act lawlessly...

Here is the word "lawless" - 2 Thessalonians 2, "***the lawless one will be revealed.***" The Spirit has announced it. And how much lawlessness is around, because they have all adopted the same doctrine.

There is no way to separate the Old Testament from the New Testament. And all who have done this are rid of the law, and they are lawless, they are godless, wicked.

Do you know that I can show you from the New Testament that the Old Testament in its entirety was regarded as law?

There is the well-known passage in Corinthians that even what is written in the prophet Isaiah is regarded or reproduced as being written in the law. This is very interesting by the way, because many would prefer to throw away the Old Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 14 from verse 20 it say:

Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

In which law is it written? In the prophet Isaiah chapter 28 from verse 11.

God grabs all the wise in their wisdom and presents them as fools and says "You have abandoned the foundation of my word. You have built on sand."

We must realize that the New Testament Church is founded and built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets where Jesus Christ himself is the chief cornerstone. [Ephesians 2:20]

But we don't want to talk about all these things today. We are concerned that God has his right fulfilled with us. And we want to trust him and express it in prayer that we believe what he has said.

And the beautiful thing about us is that we have never deceived ourselves or others, nor will we ever deceive ourselves, but we simply admit our ups and downs.

But we have a deep desire to serve God, to believe his Word, to honor his name, to fear, love and trust him and knowing that we can and will serve him and that he will pass over us and spare us and that on that day, not yet today, on that day when God does it on that day all those who have served the Lord, really served him with everything that goes with it, will be glad that they did so.

Even if they had to put up with many things on earth. But then we will be glad that we served the Lord.

Who really wants to be at the Lord's disposal, really serve him?

Someone may say "How am I supposed to do that? What does that look like?"

Don't make a plan and don't worry about it, because it's not and won't be the way we plan it.

We just want to say: "Lord, here I am. Take me. Use me where and how you want. I am at your disposal. I am your property. And I want to serve you with all my heart and soul."

May the Lord grant us all this privilege and this grace so that no one thinks "Well, the brothers are serving up there." They are called, I will say it quietly, "ministering brethren".

But that's not the end of it.

Ministering brethren only show us through the word what God has in mind for all of us and that He included us into His program and that each of us can serve Him, may serve Him.

I emphasize it once again: Whoever does not serve the Lord, how will he come into His presence with joy?

It would be as if I had sons who go their own way, who turn their backs on me, who, as the American says, "Don't give a damn what the old man

says." And then one day you are supposed to be happy and cheerful and feel cozy.

That's not how it works with God. And that's not how it works on earth.

May God make us into sons and daughters who know how He feels when we are not available to Him and do not serve Him. How must He feel?

So, the Lord will make people out of us who are at His disposal, who serve Him and with whom He, on that day, on that day which He makes, when He will do it, them as His jewels He will take over into glory. I want to be there when the Lord does it with those who loved Him, who served Him, who were at His disposal, who lived for Him, who were prepared to die for Him. I and all of us would like to be among them by grace.

Praise be to the name of the Lord.

Amen.

Let us stand up and thank the Lord briefly.

Lord, I thank You from the bottom of my heart for Your precious and holy Word.

Before You said through the prophet **"The day of the Lord will come and burn like an oven."** You emphasized with a "Thus saith the Lord" that You single out people as Your special property who have reverence for You, for Your Word, for Your name.

People who are at Your disposal, who love You in deed and in truth, who serve You.

And so tonight, Lord, we pray that we would not only be ministering brethren, but a ministering church, a people of God who are available to You and to one another.

Lord, You Yourself said **"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."** You were called a servant and took on the form of a servant.

O faithful Lord, we thank You for Your Spirit who has so marvelously ordered Your Word and inspired everything.

Take us, beloved Master, and make us into people who serve You from the heart and are at Your disposal.

We remember all those who are in trouble. O faithful Master, You have given us the power to cast out devils and heal the sick. Give us the faith

and the courage to put all this into practice. For You have given it to us and You have also commissioned us. Now give us what we need to put everything into practice.

We thank You, faithful Lord, and worship You in Jesus' name.

Amen.