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(choir sings)

SPEAKER #1: The Lord be with you.

(choir responds)

SPEAKER #1: Oh Lord show thy mercy upon us.

(choir responds)

SPEAKER #1: Oh God may clean our hearts within us

(choir responds)

SPEAKER #1: Oh, lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world

(choir responds)

(recording cuts and restarts with choir singing "The Lord's Prayer")

REV. DR. WILLIAM AUGUSTUS JONES, JR: Good morning and welcome once again to the Bethany hour. I'm deeply delighted to greet you after being in Australia for the past five weeks. There I received a very warm and open reception and had opportunity to witness in various cities to many, many people. Here at Bethany, we are presently involved in the celebration of our 95th year as a congregation. These services will culminate on next Sunday with the anniversary celebration proper. Our guest preacher will be the Reverend Dr. Charles W. Ward, pastor of First Baptist church, Raleigh, North Carolina. He will bring the messages at the 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services. The day culminates with a festival of black sacred music at 3 p.m. We extend a warm invitation to you to come and share with us on next Sunday and any and all of the services as we celebrate 95 years of continuous witness in the borough of Brooklyn. Here at Bethany, a warm welcome awaits you always. God bless you today and throughout the length of your days.

(piano plays and choir sings "The World Didn't Give It to Me" followed by a short unknown hymn)

JONES: Here now the reading of the scripture lesson as contained in the book of Jeremiah, chapter 36, verses 27 through 32.

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned. And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore, thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not. Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words.” God blessed the reading of his holy word.

(organ plays and choir sings “Day by day, Dear Lord, of Thee Three Things I pray”)

JONES: The hymn of consecration is selection 238, “Standing on the Promises”

(choir and congregation sing “Standing on the Promises”)

JONES: Today I lift up verse 32 in chapter 36 of the book of Jeremiah. Here's what it says, “Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire.” On profits and potentiates, that's what I want to talk about for the next little while. Five Saturdays ago, my plane touched down in Sydney, Australia where I would commence a month-long series of sermons and lectures. After clearing immigration and customs I was greeted by some of those who hosted my visit and then quickly ushered to a room in the airport terminal for a press conference. Almost immediately I was asked to comment on the actions of certain Australian Christians who had been deeply involved in demonstrations against the government of the state of Queensland on behalf of aboriginal rights. The aboriginals you know, are the original Australians. People of dark skin and strong negroid features who have one of the oldest continuing cultures in the world. When their land was taken by the British and used by the British to establish a colony for convicts, many aboriginals were killed. As a matter of fact, I was told by several white authorities that it hasn't been too many years ago when aboriginals were often killed for sport. They are now about 50% less in numbers than when the British first arrived and they continued to suffer in many ways. Interestingly enough, uranium has been discovered on some of their sacred tribal lands and the government of Queensland has ordered their relocation in order that rich uranium might be mined for profit. There are some white church men in Australia who have protested this violation of aboriginal rights. They've done it through street marches in the city of Brisbane. The government responded with force, arresting preachers and laymen and banning all demonstrations. When asked, what is your position with respect to the Queensland government's

action? I replied quite frankly, saying it smacks of political tyranny. Other questions then came in rapid fire succession. In the name of the God of justice, I dodged no questions I responded with courage and with confidence and then came that question which I knew would surely come. By what right do you come to Australia and speak out in such manner? That's the question that's always lifted up whenever prophets challenge potentates. It's a question that has precipitated serious discussion and heated debate throughout the history of the Christian church. Theologians have wrestled with it. Lay people have split over it. There were those within the church who assert with all of their strength that the gospel has no ethical implications in terms of the world's governmental structures. They lift up passages such as Paul's word to the Romans, "let every soul be subject unto the higher powers for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God." Another of their favorite texts is Jesus' admonition, "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and under God the things that are God's." But there are others among us who believe sincerely that the gospel speaks to every human situation. That no segment of existence is off limits to spiritual scrutiny. This is a holistic view of religious faith. Some of us make the claim that every soul should be subject unto the higher powers but only insofar as the state's behavior coincides with the purposes of God.

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Recording of cassette tape 1, side 2 begins.

JONES: We believe with all of our hearts that it is proper to render Caesar his due— but never at the sacrifice of that which belongs to God. The Christian's first loyalty ought always be to God and not to government. The bible is replete with testimony to the rightness of this posture. Here and there in its narratives, one reads the shining accounts of men and women who had to say yes to God by saying no to government. Jeremiah is a lustrous example, born in a little village named Anathoth, he heard God speak to him shortly before he came to manhood. Said Jeremiah, "the word of the Lord came to me saying, before I formed thee in thy belly, I knew thee and before thou camest forth out of thy mother's womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." "I have set thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to destroy, to throw down, to build, and to plant." Convinced of the authenticity of his calling, Jeremiah went forth declaring the word of the Lord. His task was not easy at all. He had his down days. He knew some lonely nights. Utterly frustrated at times, he even tried on one occasion to resign from his work. He cried so much over the sins of the nation that he's known as the weeping prophet. He confronted evil men and sinful structures in the name of the Lord. He was God's prophet and without fear or trembling, he preached to the potentates. Here in this setting, he's a prisoner of the nation. A cell dweller during the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, the southern kingdom—but even from his place of confinement he remains faithful to the prophetic function. He senses the imminent collapse of the kingdom. He sees judgment riding across the horizon because of corruption in the palace and in the people and he interprets his continuing role as that of crying aloud and sparing not. Truth begins to usher forth from a dungeon. Jeremiah has the benefit of a secretary named Bharuch. He tells his scribe to take a scroll and begin to write as he dictates. He dictates God's warning to Israel, Judah, and all the nations, and what a word it was. A word of judgment and also a word of mercy if repentance takes place. How often has God spoken from prison cells? It seems that more of his truth can come out of dungeons than out of the mouths

of free men and women. You remember that he spoke through Joseph from a prison. He talked with us through Daniel in the lion's den. We heard from heaven through Paul and Silas in the jail at Philippi. From Bedford jail, God spoke to the world through John Bunyan. He did the same thing through Dietrich Bonhoeffer from his German prison and through Martin King from Birmingham. Jeremiah talked and as he talked, Bharuch the secretary recorded and then came the prophet's instructions. "Bharuch, I want you to take the scroll and go down to the house of the Lord and read it to the people in the Lord's house." That was appropriate for judgment always begins at the house of God, "and then Bharuch take the scroll and read it to the officials of government." When the politicians heard what Jeremiah had written, they began to tremble and commanded that Bharuch and Jeremiah be hid. These officials then sent the scroll to the king's chamber and reported on its contents to the king. Jehudi, the king's usher was commanded to fetch the scroll and read it to the king. The king sat before a glowing fire in his winter house and as Jehudi read, anger and contempt welled up in the king's heart. Then in a spirit of utter arrogance and an attitude of defiance of the divine, he took a pen knife and began to cut up the pages of the scroll and throw them into the fire. Some of his aides cautioned him saying, "don't do that king," but like all demonic men, he had no fear of God. His only desire was to destroy Bharuch and Jeremiah. It seemed that the mission was a tragic failure. Early on Jeremiah had warned Jehoiakim saying he shall be buried with the burial of an ass drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. The potentate is a mad man. What will the prophet now do? Well with the kind of courage that God alone can give, Jeremiah upon receiving word that the king had burned the scroll, told Bharuch take another scroll and write everything that I wrote the first time and even some more that I'm compelled to say. I'll re-dictate and I want you to rewrite. In that decision and in that action, there is set forth I'm sure, the church's continuing mission. My friend Dr. Ernest Campbell, formerly of the riverside church once said in the sermon, "the church lives by recitation and repetition." How true and how necessary that we never forget it. We recite week after week a story of God's engagement with the world in and through Jesus for human redemption. We tell the story of heaven come down to kiss earth. We tell the story of a field preacher from Nazareth who entered the alleyway of our affliction, walked our walk, talked our talk, died our death. ___ ?? the alien and took captivity captive. We tell the story of God's encounter with the kingdoms of the world, and it is a story told not once. We repeat it over and over again. We keep on telling this story. It's a living story. Men may destroy the written word but they cannot destroy the living word—and how urgent is our task of recitation and repetition in the present era? The church can ill afford to be the soothing conscience of society. The church ought always be the critical conscience, telling Caesars everywhere, "he that ruleth over me and must be just, ruling in the fear of God." We ought to keep on telling the Jehoiakim's of this world, "be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever man seweth that shall he also reap." How badly we need to tell it. In our time, military madness has put the world at the mercy of a few men. The world now spends 350 billion dollars a year for arms. There are a hundred thousand nuclear weapons in the world. Ten thousand people die every day from starvation. We live at the edge of destruction and foolish men continue to make decisions on the basis of color and class. Societies seem hell bent and hell-bound and some believers do not seem to care. Some of us Christians are beset by a narrow individualism. We are possessors of a personalized, privatized faith. Some of us are happy with Jesus alone—but timid souls cannot preach to a wicked world. The times are too terrible everywhere for God's people to be at ease in Zion. I believe with all my heart; I believe we've got a story to tell to the nations that can turn their hearts to the right. The nations need help, this nation needs help and leaders need to hear the word of the Lord and it is our duty to tell it and to retell it—but somebody

says they won't listen, —well, tell it anyhow. What if they burn it? Tell it. Suppose they distort it, tell it. What if they reject it? Keep on telling it. Suppose they jail you for telling it, well, turn the jail into a preaching station. If slaves could declare in the midst of the worst brutality, “my God's going to move this wicked race and raise up a nation that shall obey.” If that was their song, beneath burning suns on dixie plantations, surely, we can tell men that God is sovereign. That he is just and that his glory he will not give to another. Tell it and then expect God to do the rest. I have to tell it wherever I go. I dare not betray my sacred trust. That Australian reporter said to me, “by what right do you come to Australia and speak out in such manner?” and I answered as politely as I could, “I’m a citizen of my father's world. Wherever I am, he is. I cannot segregate the truth. I cannot pick my places to declare God's counsel. I’m a free man telling freedom's story and I’ll tell it wherever go. I fear no one except the God I serve. So then, I’ll tell it. Yes! I’ll tell it in the congregation, I’ll tell it. In royal palaces, I’ll tell it. On city streets, I’ll tell it. On burning sands, I’ll tell it. In trouble waters, I’ll tell it. When the going is rough and the road is tough, yes, yes Lord! I’ll tell the story. When friends forsake and friends desert, I’ll tell the blessed story. It's a grand old story but it's the hope of earth and the joy of heaven. It's the story that rescues the perishes and cares for the dying. It's a story that will set your heart on hallowed fire, make you right in the sight of God, give you peace with your fellow man. Yes! Oh yes! Have I got a witness? You see I was delivered by this story; I never shall forget the day when Jesus washed my sins away and ever since that blessed day I’ve been on fire for my Lord, and I’ll keep on telling it. I’ll tell it until my day is done and then you know what I’ll do? I’ll go down to the river and stand on the bank of Jordan and scan the distant horizon. I can envision it now, I’m at the river's ____?? and in the distance my eyes see a little speck. The speck gets larger. It gets larger and larger in the distance. I see something that looks like a ship! It is a ship. I believe I recognize it. It's the old ship of Zion. Somebody asked, “do you know the captain?” “Yes, I know him, met him a long time ago. Jesus is his name.” “But aren't you afraid of the water?” “No, there's no danger in the water.” “Do you think the ship can make it?” “Yes! For she's landed many a thousand.” And then, I’ll get on board and go on home. Yes, and when I arrive in my father's land, my Lord will say, “well done, well done, well done, prophet. Well done, Servant. Well done.” Yes! Don't you want to hear him say, “well done, well done, well done, well done, well done?” If when you give the best of your service telling the world that the savior is coming be not dismayed when men don't believe. He'll understand and say well done, well done, well done” Yes! Well done, well done. They may burn a scroll, but they cannot destroy the truth concerning the justice of our God. For truth across earth will rise again to convict, to indict. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I belong to a kingdom that shall not fail. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he will reign forever and forever and even forever, and I plan to be a part of that everlasting domain. How about you? (congregation responds, “yes!”) How about you? The doors of the church are open. It may be there are persons present this day who want to say I believe on Jesus Christ; I accept him as Lord and master. If that's your decision, I want you to come, whoever you are, whatever your condition. Whether you're in the balcony or on the main floor, come while we sing the hymn of invitation and in the event that that there are persons present who live in this city and who know Jesus Christ as Lord but who belong to no congregation in this city, we bid you to come and unite with the people of God in this place. Will you come while we sing the hymn of invitation, “No Never Alone?” He promised never to leave me, never to leave me alone, selection 262.

(organ plays and choir and congregation singe “No Never Alone)

JONES: (speaking while everyone is singing) The doors of the church open let us stand and sing to the glory of God. God bless you. Jesus is calling, let's have another. God bless you, Sir. God bless. God bless. Oh, God bless you, sir, yes, another. Jesus is calling.

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