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Collection Name: The Papers of Rev. Dr. William Augustus Jones, Jr. (Accession #2007-012)
Title of Sermon: When Nothing is Everything
Date: 1/01/2001
Original Format: audiocassette
File number(s): C624_A / C624_B
Transcriptionist: Sheana Corbridge

(choir sings)

SPEAKER #1: Let us pray. Our father and our god we come again thanking you for this opportunity to be in your house. We thank you Lord for us to be able to come together and give you all honor and praise. We ask you now Lord to send your spirit into this place, to teach out one of us individually and collectively as a body of believers. Lord give us the power to go out and tell others about Jesus. Lord, we love you, we praise you and we magnify you. For Christs sake, amen.

(music begins and choir sings "The Lord is Blessing Me Right Now")

SPEAKER #2: Amen, amen. Please remain standing for the hymn of praise, selection 12, "Praise Him," "Praise Him."

(music starts and choir sings "Praise Him," "Have You Got Good Religion?" and "My hope is built on nothing less")

SPEAKER#3: Jesus is a rock on which we all stand. At this time as ushers admit the worshipers, we would like to now take the opportunity to recognize any visitors that are visiting with us, in and around the city or out of town, will you please stand at such time. (congregation claps) Bless you, on behalf of our pastor, The Reverend Dr. William Augustus Jones and the Bethany family, we would like to welcome you, we would like for you to feel at home in the Lord's house. At this time, we gonna ask the Bethany Family to stand and greet each other in Christian love for it is now fellowship time.

(organ music starts playing and choir sings 3 hymns)

REV. DR. WILLIAM AUGUSTUS JONES, JR: Here now the lesson as recorded in the gospel of Luke, chapter 22 beginning with verse 31 and ending with verse 35. "And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." And Peter said unto Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." And He said, "I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me." And He said unto them, "When I sent you without purse

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Recording of cassette tape, side 2 begins.

JONES: and pack and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And they said, "Nothing." Here endeth the lesson. God bless the reading of his word.

(choir sings)

SPEAKER #: Let us now contemplate our hearts with the singing of selection 254 "More Love to Thee"

JONES: Today I lift up verse 35 in chapter 22 of the gospel as recorded by Luke. "And He said unto them, "When I sent you without purse and pack and shoes, lacked ye anything?" And they said, "Nothing." When nothing is everything, that's what I want to talk about for the next little while. That upper room in old Jerusalem was a scene of many moods. Its intimacy permitted the unveiling of myriad realities. It was a scene where the rarified atmosphere of honesty, candor and authentic spirituality was the dominant reality. That's why Judas had to vacate. It was crucifixion eve you remember. Storm clouds were gathering, betrayal and denial were in the air. The crucifixion of the finest figure whoever stood on terra firma was imminent. The religious political juggernaut of Jerusalem and Rome was getting ready to assault and as the twelve sat with the Lord of life, he allowed their moods and even their folly to fully manifest themselves. They argued with each other over the question of greatness. Cocky, impetuous Simon was made to listen as Jesus lifted up his weakness and then there came a shift, marked and clear, direct focus on a significant aspect of their three-year journey together. It was a reminder of sorts, and how essential are reminders? Every now and then all of us need to be reminded of the nature of our pilgrimage. We should remind ourselves on occasion of what and where we once were. For if Jesus is master of your life, there was a time when he was not master—and since he became master it has spelled a difference in our days and in our lives—and it is both good sense and good religion to look back across the experience with him and be reminded of the nature of life with and without him. This should be a part of every believer's practice. You really should do it on your own for if you don't, somebody who knows you will do it for you and their motive may not be positive and proper. So, they're at the table, Jesus looks at them and he sees the totality of their tenure together. His view is sweeping and complete. He sees every moment of every day. He remembers every lesson, every prayer, every admonition, every correction, every mercy, every healing, every indictment, every judgment, every prophecy. He surveys the total situation and then says, "I must ask you a question, just one question and here is the question: When I sent you forth without purse and without script and without shoes, when I sent you out to witness in my name with no money, no suitcase and no walking shoes, lacked ye anything? Were there any shortages? Any minuses? Any short falls? Were you ever up the creek without a canoe? Did the well ever run dry? Were there any unmet needs? Any wants? Any unfulfilled desires? Tell me now, tell me this night at this table. Any hunger? Any thirst? Any nakedness? Any poverty? Lacked ye anything?" And then the answer came without deliberation and without discussion. The answer was collective, it was unanimous. The answer was nothing n-o-t-h-i-n-g. Not a thing. Nothing, no hesitation, no pondering, no historic perusal, nothing. Immediately, instantly, quickly, unhesitatingly without delay—nothing, nothing, nothing. All things supplied. All things needful, everything has been provided. We declare

in unison and without reservation, “nothing” and this my friends was a time and a situation when nothing was everything. Now if you lack nothing, you've got everything. That's clear simple logic. That's a necessary, ineluctable deduction. If all bases are covered, nothing is lacking. That's the whole truth mathematically, philosophically, and theologically. Nothing is everything. Do you see what takes place here? These opposites, these antithetical realities merge into a blessed oneness. “Nothing” experiences a translation, a metamorphosis, a cancellation. If you please, the negative is rendered positive. I tell you “nothing” experiences a transformation. Its verbal water changed to verbal wine. “I thought I was lacking; I thought I was barren; I thought I was at the bottom of the barrel but Jesus, now that you've asked the question—I have to answer honestly. I have lacked nothing. Every need is met, every prayer is answered, all is well. I've got everything.” Now my friends, I'm talking kingdom-talk. I'm not speaking in tongues; I'm speaking language, with an infinite accent. This is the language of total adequacy. This is the speech of absolute sufficiency. This is that category of utterance which solemnly says my God is able to supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Yes, this is the language of heavenly windows that pour out blessings. This is overflowing cups and uncontainable blessings. I tell you with no hesitation and without reservation this is kingdom-talk. This is unsearchable riches, marvelous multiplication, sickness that has become health, death turned to life, little that's enough—nothing that's everything. Now somebody is asking a certain question. That question is dancing around the perimeter of your mind, I hear it clearly. You're asking when does this happen—when does nothing become everything? And I'm pleased with the spirit's assistance to answer your question. The answer is not singular, it's a foursome. Four factors working together make nothing everything. It happens when you truly love the Lord. It happens when you stay with the ship. It happens when you surrender all and it happens when you accept his assurances. You've got to love the Lord in order to witness the translation of nothing into everything. That's basic, that's fundamental, that's square one. You've got to love him for who he is. He's Elohim, God. He's Yahweh, the Lord. He's El Shaddai, the breasted one. He's El Elyon, the most high God. He's El Olam, the everlasting God. He's El Roi, thou god seest me. He's Jehovah-Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts. He's Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord that heals. He's Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord my banner. He's Jehovah-Shalom, the lord of peace. He's Jehovah-Rohi, the Lord my shepherd. He's Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide. I tell you; you've got to love the Lord for who he is. You've got to love him for his excellent greatness. You've got to love him for all he has done, he has created, he has preserved, he has redeemed, he has loved. The unlovely and the unlovable, he has found us where we were and carried us to where he wants us to be. He has done so much and done it so completely that I have to declare every now and then with my elders, I love the Lord. He heard my cry and pitted every groan, long as I live and troubles rise, I'll hasten to his throne. Yes, nothing is everything when you truly love the Lord. Nothing is everything when a second factor is operative, when you stay with the ship. Now, the ship you know is his church. He founded it, he established its agenda, he gave it marching orders, he gave it perpetuity and permanence. Didn't he declare at Caesarea Philippi, “upon this rock I build my church and the gates of hell shall not reveal against it?” There's safety in the ship, there's security in the ship. Sometimes persons who claim to love the Lord fall out with persons who make the same claim, and they decide to leave the ship. I'll tell you today that's a dangerous decision. Anything can happen off the ship. There's no guidance, no direction, no communion, no fellowship off the ship. Without the ship there's no moral compass, no continuous gospel, no music for the soul, no solemn assembly. Without the ship, there's no bread of heaven, no water for our thirst, no honey in the rock Zion and no light for our darkness. You must stay with the ship. That ship, which is the old ship of Zion. That ship whose captain is king Jesus. That ship which already has landed

many a thousand. That ship that will take you home to glory. Nothing is everything, when you stay with the ship. All right again, nothing is everything when you surrender all. Now our lord is not the god of partial blessing. He does not extend his mercy in fragments. His grace is not a limited dividend. He is the lord of fullness. He never exhibited littleness or smallness. Whatever he did, he did totally. No partial healing, no halfway restoration, no limited feeding, no semi dying on the cross, no partial resurrection—his dying was complete. His getting up was complete. His promises are complete. His mercy is everlasting. His grace all sufficient. All is his impromata and he demands our all, our faith, our trust, our commitment, our praise, our hope, our joy, our minds, our bodies, our souls, our best thoughts, our highest emotions, our testimonies. Now, since he's all, and in all we ought to declare within the throne room of our souls regularly that "Jesus is all the world to me, my life, my joy, my all; he is my strength from day to day, without him I would fall. When I am sad, to him I go, no other one can cheer me so. He is my friend. Yes, Jesus is all the world to me, and I want no better friend. I trust him now; I trust him when life's fleeting days shall end. Beautiful life with such a friend, beautiful life that has no end. Eternal life, eternal joy, he's, my friend." Nothing is everything when you surrender your own. Moreover, nothing is everything when you in faith, accept his assurances. He has promised to fully provide. He has never come short on his word. There are no shortages in his storehouse. He has promised abundance, declaring all things are yours and whatsoever you ask the father in my name, he'll give it. Tragic it is that so many who claim to know him fail to pass the assurance test. They're in the pews, they're even in the pulpit. I accept his every assurance. As the Scots put it, I believe it from giver to kipper in the blessed Bible and that's one reason that in nearly 39 years as pastor of this congregation, we have never sought nor accepted any kind of funding from governmental or philanthropic sources. That's why I have no interest at all in the Bush faith-based initiative, which is anxious to provide public funds to churches for social programs. I don't want it, I cannot accept it, I desire no sense of obligation to secular authority and the reason is simple. I don't work for government I work for God. Just the other day I read on the front page of the New York Times words attributed to a certain Georgia pastor and here's what he says, "I want that money. If I have to remove the Bible and take down the cross, I'm going for the money" How sad, how tragic, how non-prophetic, how weak the witness. I cannot eat the king's meat, it's always contaminated. I cannot put the flag above the cross. I cannot depend on Caesar. I depend solely on Christ. Therefore, you won't find me in any line waiting for a government handout. For you see, from eternity provision has already been made and I'm opposed to every form of pseudo-dependency. God is well able to take care of his church. The divine economy is fully operational. I accept his every assurance and then if you accept his assurance, you'll be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. I accept his assurances. Ask and it shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto you. I accept his assurance. Walk with me and I'll give you the desires of your heart. I tell you I accept his assurances, all of them, every one of them. No good thing will he withhold from his own, believe me for my very work's sake. I tell you again I accept his assurances. You see my mother and my daddy planted it in my mind and in my heart that if you trust and never doubt, he will surely bring you out. I accept his assurance. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters: He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou prepare us a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely! Surely! Surely! (congregation loudly

claps and says "Surely!" in response) goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. What a blessed assurance and I tell you again, I accept all of his assurances. When I do that then "nothing" is everything. Now if these four factors are operative, are you praying with me? If you truly love the Lord, if you stay with the ship, if you surrender all and if you accept his assurances, I declare unto you that "nothing" becomes everything. You can relax, you can bid anxiety farewell. My "nothing" spells everything. It's been blessed and anointed. It's been touched by grace. It's been sanctified by Jesus himself. Therefore, I'm completely at ease. I'm relaxed. My nothing is everything. I have no mansion, but I do have a dwelling. I have no Rolls-Royce, but I do have transportation. I have no fortune, but I'm blessed with meager fair. I have neither caviar nor chateaubriand, but I've got food on my table. I don't have access to the White House, but I've got a seat in God's house. I have no particular favor with people in power, but I am on speaking terms with the king of kings. I tell you I'm not lacking, I have everything. I've got it all. For I'm a child of the king and that makes me a prince, does it not? If you don't believe it check my pedigree. Look at my royalty. Observe my majesty. I'm no waif. I'm no orphan. I tell you I'm a prince and nothing is everything. I'm a child of the king. My father is rich in houses and lands, he holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands—of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold, his coffers are full, he has riches untold. I once was an outcast, a stranger on earth, a sinner by choice and an alien by birth; but I have been adopted, my name's written down, an heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown. Therefore, a tent or a cottage, why should I care? They're building a palace for me over there. Though exiled from home, yet still I may sing. All glory to God, I'm a child of the king. Yes! I'm a child of the king. I'm a child of the king. How about you, are you in the family? Do you belong to the king? Where Jesus my savior, I'm a child of the king. Yes! I'm a prince. I've got Jesus, who fully provides. I've got Jesus and he's enough. I belong to him who stood on the brow of nothingness and called whirling worlds into being. I belong to him who scooped out the ground and laid out desert sands. I belong to him who opened up oceans and rivers and lakes. I belong to him who piled up the mountains. I belong to him who tessellated the heavens with stars and constellations. I belong to him who flung the stars out along heaven's heels and told them to shine and stand sentinel. I belong to him who stepped into history through a barn in Bethlehem, walked among us for three years and then stepped into eternity by way of the cross, the resurrection and the ascension. I belong to him who sits at the father's right hand making intercession for me so that whenever I sin and fall short of God's glory, I can go to Him and ask forgiveness in the name of Him who's my mediator, my toner, my sorrow sharer, my burden bearer, lily of the valley, bright and morning star, rock in a weary land, shelter in the time of storm, help for the helpless, hope for the hopeless. Yes, Lord! Do you know him? Do you know him? If you really know him, "nothing" is everything. He supplies all of my needs. He's got everything any believer needs. Have you been to the storehouse? Have you drawn on the bank of eternity? If you haven't, you ought to cultivate the habit. Every time I feel a need, I tell my Lord and he says, "come on in, take your pick" and the storehouse never runs out. How wonderful it is to walk with him and to talk with him. It's with him and in him and through him and because of him that "nothing" is everything. Jesus asked those men, "did you lack anything when you decided to give up everything to follow me? Did you lack anything?" and so pronounced had been the blessings that they answered him simply and succinctly, "nothing, nothing, (congregation responds "nothing) nothing, nothing" and that's my testimony. I hope I've got some witnesses here who can say the same thing. This doesn't mean that the oil won't burn low. This doesn't mean that the well won't look like it's running dry. This doesn't mean that there'll be no days when you'll feel some hunger pains, but it does mean that in every dire situation he'll come to see about you. Yes, he will!

I know he will. How many times has he come my way? How many times has he blessed me totally? I believe in him. I trust him. I believe his word. I believe his grace. How about you? Try him. Give the master a chance. Let him prove to you that he's everything he promised to be. "When I sent you forth with no purse, no script, no shoes, did you lack anything?" And they said, "nothing." I can make it on that. (crowd responds, "yes sir." I declare can, I make it on that. Somebody's saying he never has left me alone, never has left me alone by night and by day he's been with me all the way. He never, never—let me hear you say—"never," (crowd responds "never!") he never has left me alone. So, I go forth. I go forth with that confidence—never, never, never—somebody said nev-er, never. The doors of the church are open. Anybody here want to get into this never mode? Where "nothing" is everything. If somebody came here today apart from a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ, we don't want you to leave here in the same state of being. He'd like to go home with you. He'd like to receive you into the kingdom. God bless. If you're here, I want you to come while we sing this hymn of invitation. You know your situation, and, in your heart, you feel a need for that which transcends all that's before you. God help you to come receive Christ as your Lord—hold him as your savior and go down from here today a new creation. Whoever you are, whatever your condition, we bid you come as we sing this hymn of invitation, "I Surrender All," selection 227 in the hymnal. "I Surrender All," and if they're persons present who live in this city and who know Christ, but you have no abiding relationship with the congregation of believers, we urge you to come and unite with the people of God here at Bethany. Let's stand and sing to his glory.

(music starts playing)

JONES: Come to Jesus. The master is calling. Receive him in your heart today.

(congregation and choir begin singing "I Surrender All")

JONES: (speaking over singing) God Bless. God Bless. Don't let this harvest pass. Come to Jesus. The master is calling. Who will come to Jesus? Don't let this harvest pass. Come right on, come to Jesus. Jesus is calling.

The creation of this transcript was generously funded by Jennifer Jones Austin.