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(Two women singing a hymn)

SPEAKER #1: And now this is that time in the service when we would like to greet one another, and we will begin by asking all visitors to please stand. Okay, we welcome you. The women's day committee, on behalf of the pastor and our ministerial staff would like to welcome each and every one of you this morning. We pray that you will find some voice, song, or some words said that would nurture your spirit this morning, and we pray if you don't have a church home that you would consider Bethany. Now will the Bethany family please stand up, for it is now fellowship time.

(piano plays and the choir sings "Sisters in Christ" followed by "I've Decided to Make Jesus My Choice" and a section from "Lead Me Lord, I Will Follow")

SPEAKER #2: Our scripture will be found in the second chapter of Samuel, the 11th to the 14th verse. "And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him. And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place." May the lord add a blessing to the reading of His word and sanctify within our heart, amen.

(choir sings a section of "Lead Me Lord, I will Follow")

SPEAKER #3: Our hymn of consecration is hymn number 309 "Higher Ground"

(choir and congregation sings)

REV. DR. WILLIAM AUGUSTUS JONES, JR: I've called to your attention verses 11 and 12 in chapter 9 of the book of First Samuel.

"And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, "He is, behold he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in

the high place.” I’ve given title to what I hope to say, “More Than Drawers of Water,” “More Than Drawers of Water.” There was a man of the tribe of Benjamin whose name was Kish. Kish had a son; his name was Saul. The young man Saul was tall, handsome, brave, and godly. From his shoulders on upward, he was higher than any of the people. In my formative years, they had a designation for people like Saul. If Saul were living then, he would have been called tall, tan, and terrific. One day Saul’s father Kish was faced with a great problem. Some of his asses were lost. Kish, anxious to locate and retrieve those beasts of burden, said to his son: “Saul, take now one of the servants with thee and rise. Go seek the asses.” The young man, in the spirit of filial loyalty, departed with his servant in search of the lost asses. They passed through Mount Ephraim and then through Shalisha, but with no success at all. They then passed through the land of Charlene, but the asses could not be found—and then through the land of the Benjaminites. They went to the locale of his father’s forebearers, but the asses they did not find. Their determination was not deterred by these disappointments, they kept moving—but still to no avail. But then they came to the land of Zuph and Saul, young, strong and stately, decided that their search in reality was an exercise in futility. He says to his servant, “come and let us return lest my father begin to worry about us, take leave from the asses yet in the fold and start looking for us”—and then an episode already warm and charming rises to an even higher level of warmth and charm. Servant insight takes over. A kind of knowledge seemingly reserved for ordinary people doing commonplace things comes to the fore. Saul’s servant speaks, “Sir I know where we are, we’ve been through mount Ephraim and Shalisha and to the lands of Charlemagne and Benjamin. We are now in the land of Zuph. I’m familiar with the territory, I know quite well where we are. Behold, there is in this city a man of God—and he is an honorable man. Everything he says comes to pass. He’s not a person of undisciplined mind and loose lips. That which he declares is soon seen. Now let us go thither, it may well be that he can show us the way we should go.” Saul says “fine, but we’ve got another problem. We are empty-handed. The bread in our vessels is depleted. We have no gift for the man of God and simple decency demands of us that we express our gratitude.” Servant ingenuity again speaks up, “Saul, sir, I’ve got that covered. For I have in my possession the fourth part of a shekel of silver and that I will gladly give to the man of God.” Standing in the valley at the foot of that city set on a hill, Saul looks at his wise servant and says to him, “well said, come let us go.” The writer tells of their movement with a single line: “so, they went unto the city where the man of God was.” The charm escalates even further, the intrigue heightens—mystery is breaking in on their pilgrimage, and they went up the hill to the city. And as they went, they came upon some young maidens on their way to draw water. They inquire of these maidens of Rhema, “is the seer here? We seek the seer. Any word on the seers whereabouts? Is the seer here?” They answer pleasantly and excitingly and knowingly. “He is. He’s here, behold he is before you. We know the seer; we are quite aware of his presence among us. You must move quickly. Make haste now for he came to the city today. You see today there’s a sacrifice of the people in the high place. As soon as you arrive in the city, you shall straightway find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes because he’s the one who blesses the sacrifice—and then they that are bidden, proceed to eat. Now that will get you up for about this time, you shall find him who is the seer”—and then comes the finale of their search for the seer. Says the writer, and they went up into the city and when they would come into the city behold Samuel came out for to go up to the high place. How fascinating, how utterly charming—the happening moves on to other touching dimensions. It is revealed that God had already advised Samuel of their coming. They were received with much hospitality. The asses, Saul informs them are found so they break bread together, they commune in the high place. One with another, and

then Samuel appointed Saul the King of Israel. So much charm, so many nuances. Sermon nuggets everywhere, but today let's back up and behold these damsels. These lovely maidens whose task it is to draw water and then bear it. That's what they are, drawers of water—unwept, unarmored, unsung, drawers of water. That's all they are on surface examination. Unnamed and unknown drawers of water—but for some reason I feel something lacking in the designation. I sense some degree of verbal inadequacy. There's a pull on my mind and spirit, something pulls me closer for a better view. Drawers of water is not descriptive enough. It comes short for some reason; it smacks of too little. A pronounced deficiency. I know that this is their daily duty, trekking back and forth to the town well, bearing pitchers of water. I realize this to be their routine function. By now they're able to make that journey with eyes closed. Their footprints have made the pathway familiar. Each journey is at the same pace with the same familiar faces and the usual salutations. It's all routine by now. Rote habit—commonplace. No meaningful deviations ever. Drawers of water, that's what they are. That's who they are. They are defined solely by what they do, and that definition is also a description. Drawers of water—but I reiterate I sense something. I get the feeling that they are more than drawers of water. They have “more than” status. They belong to the “more than” category. They are more than that which meets the eye. They are more than they seem to be. They are more than they present themselves to be. I tell you again—they are more than drawers of water. To know it, you've got to see clearly, you've got to have God-given discernment, you've got to have that sight which is beyond mere eyesight. You've got to see past jugs of water and routine tricks and common attire. Your vision must behold more than household chores, toil, and sweat and tears. I tell you these fair maidens are more than drawers of water. Regardless of how society viewed them—and the 10th century worldview, notwithstanding, they are more than drawers of water. The historian doesn't say so, their fellow citizens don't either, nor do their relatives and friends, but when you lift them up and look at them with serious scrutiny your eyes behold more than drawers of water. Please don't limit these lasses. For heaven's sake don't diminish these damsels, don't minimize these maidens. I realize quite well that I'm about to tamper with ignorance made sacrosanct, I'm getting ready to assault a certain historic folly. This mean and nasty way of categorizing persons and confining them to some nasty category—and then acting as though you're amazed when they seek to break out of such confinement. It goes on all the time. It's the modus operandi of all victimizers. Racist regimes, economic exploiters, uncaring systems, and ruthless tyrants. It's the means by which cast and class are preserved. Look at them, label them, limit their resources and then leave them to groan and grimace in the little sphere to which you have located them. That's precisely what they tried to do with our slave forebearers. Put the subhuman informata on their persona. Brand them with a hot iron like cattle. Limit their cultural exposure, strip them of their heritage, treat them like beasts of a common herd, tell them they are three-fifths of a man, convince them that they are without souls, misuse the women and abuse the men, call their children pickaninnys, make their nomenclature read nigger and then hold them up for public scrutiny and say to a sick world—what you see is what you get. Anytime you permit others to position you, then your activity is prescribed and proscribed and sometimes permanentized. They have a way of consigning contextually for the purpose of containment. It was a slave master's desire and determination to keep our fathers and mothers forever contained. They viewed them as nothing but hewers of wood and drawers of water, but something within—something good and godly—something that has its roots in eternity—something called the Imago Dei, the image of God. Something within said “not so.” We are more than hewers of wood and drawers of water. Can't you hear them singing in the cotton rolls of dixie beneath burning scorching blistering suns? I got shoes, you got shoes, all of God's chilluns got shoes. When I get to him, I'm going to put on my

shoes, I'm going to walk all over God's heaven. Don't you hear their pinings in the deep dark of the night, down in the brush harbors long after the evening sun has gone down? Before I'd be a slave, I'd be buried in my grave and go home to my Lord and be free. They knew beyond the shadow of any doubt that they were equipped with "more than" status. Look at these maidens of Rhama, known to history only as drawers of water. I remind you the designation falls terribly short. I reiterate—they were more far more than drawers of water, and I say this for at least three reasons. First of all, they were in tune with truth and in touch with the times. They knew who, what, when, where and why. They knew who the prophet was. They knew what he was about. They knew when he was present. They knew where to find him. They knew why he was in town. There's something about the insight of ordinary people who are possessed of a sense of commitment. I tell preachers everywhere—keep in touch with the plain folks. Those who perform so-called ordinary tasks. They know what's happening and they know who's making it happen. _____?? used to tell us that dumb saints were preferable to smart devils. He was talking about people like maids and porters and waiters and waitresses and chauffeurs and shoeshine boys and all the folks that big shots tend to ignore. God gives such people special seeing and listening equipment. A lot of the prayers of our people during the days of sharp segregation came about as a result of black men and women going about their menial task—but seeing stuff and hearing stuff that they passed on to people who knew what to do with such information. When you've got people like that who love the Lord and his church, you've got more than drawers of water. You've got saints in Caesar's household. These damsels were in tune with truth and in touch with the times. Secondly, they knew the highway to the holy place. They knew where the prophet did his special work. They knew where sacrifice was made—"is the seer here?" They answered, "he is, behold he is before you." "When did he arrive?" "He came today to the city, for there is a sacrifice of the people this day in the high place." They knew where to send Saul and his servants. They knew the whereabouts of the prophet. He doesn't hang out at city hall; he's not playing patsy with the powers that be. He's not out there soliciting funds for some questionable project. He's not currying the favors of the elite—the prophet is on his way to the high place and everything he does is preparatory for the presence of the eternal. He's on his way to higher ground. Drawers of water, yes, but "more than." They knew the highway to the holy place. Now thirdly, they were couriers of that which was certain. No guesswork, no speculation, no if, no maybe, no perhaps. Nobody like that fella, the late Reverend D. King used to talk about. D. King said he went to college at LeMoyne in Memphis, Tennessee and he sang in the college choir; and one day the choir traveled to Little Rock, Arkansas to give a concert at Philander Smith College. When the college bus rolled into Little Rock, the driver needed help direction-wise—and he saw a certain brother standing on the corner and pulled over and said "Hey fella we are lost, and we need to get to Philander Smith college. Do you know where it is?" He said "Yeah" said "You go down to the bottom of this hill and there's a big tree there and you make a right turn and then go up the hill and when you get up there and see a great big old tree turn left and go and go and go. Man, I don't know where that is." So, the driver took off in a state of understandable disgust and he hadn't gone but a few yards when he heard a voice saying "Hey, hey y'all wait for me!" And he looked back, and it was the same fella who had ended up not knowing just a couple of minutes before. So, he pulled over thinking that the fella suddenly remembered the location of the college campus, and he came up huffing and puffing and said say "Hey, aren't you all the people who stopped me back yonder asking me how to get to that school?" The driver said "Yes" said "Well you know, right after y'all pulled north my cousin came up and I told him y'all were trying to get to that college and I've been running and running trying to catch up with y'all to tell you that he said he don't know either." (crowd laughs)

These damsels who are more than drawers of water, spoke with certitude, absolute certainty complete certitude. “We know the prophet, we know his pattern, we know where he's located. As soon as you enter the city, you'll find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes because he's the one who blesses the sacrifice, and then they that are bidden to come eat. Now for that will get you up for about this time, you shall surely find him”—and it happened just as they promised. They knew for themselves it wasn't secondhand knowledge, they didn't deal in reason, in rumor—they knew the record, they knew the truth and spoke the truth. They were couriers of that which was certain. No misinformation, no credibility gap, no lying. Faithful and true witnesses, they were of the activity of the almighty and that's all that God wants. Go tell them what you've seen and heard, no fabricated testimony, no dressed up report. Just tell them about your experience with God. You don't have to dress it up with polysyllabic language. These maidens were couriers of that which was simple and certain. In tune with truth and in touch with the times. Knowledgeable concerning the highway to the holy place, couriers of that which could be counted on. Anybody who's all of these has to be more than a drawer of water. So don't let the menial misimpress you. Don't let the water parts and the pictures fool you, don't let people engaged in routine duties mislead you. For God is at work in ordinary places, among ordinary people. So, for God's sake don't you relegate anybody to a state of meaninglessness on the basis of what you see. Don't even misread yourself. You, every one of you, you are more than what you appear to be. Oh, help me Lord to make it plain. You may be a housekeeper, but you're “more than.” You may be a domestic but you're “more than.” You may be a waiter or a waitress, but you are “more than.” You may be a teacher, doctor, lawyer but you're “more than.” You may be a scientist, a secretary or a social worker but you're “more than,” and we need to tell our children—you are “more than.” I know that I'm a lot of things to a lot of people. To my tailor, I'm a customer; my grocer I'm a patron; to my doctors, I'm a patient ; to my lawyer, I'm a client; to my family, I'm a breadwinner; to society, I'm a citizen; to the government, I'm a statistic—but I'm more than any of these. If anybody ask you who I am, I'll tell you who I am. I'm a child of the King. I'm an heir of salvation. I'm a member of the royal family. I'm a son of the great king. I'm a follower of the lamb. I'm a confidant of the Holy Ghost. I'm a baptized believer and bloodborne born again. I'm a child of the living God. Yes Lord! Do I have any witnesses? You're “more than”—don't let anybody fool you. You're more than sod, for you've got some sky in you. You are more than mere dust, for you all so divine. God was at his best when he made each of us. “More than!” “More than!” “More than!” Yeah Lord! “More than!” “More than!” Within us this house, the image of God and God put some of himself in every one of us. “More than!” “More than!”

Pause in recording as cassette tape, side 1 ends.

Recording of cassette tape, side 2 begins.

JONES: Sub-status, don't you let anybody try to tell you that you are ordinary. The stuff of eternity is in you! Blood made by God runs through your veins. Folks that have their origin in eternity flow through your mind . More than! More than! More than! Yes! More than! When I get done with my living, on the way down to death's door, I'm going to go saying to myself I'm “more than.” They will bury me in the ground and this flesh will turn to dust. These bones will dissolve and decay,

but even then, I'm "more than." I'm so much more than that when the resurrection trumpet shall sound, hearing will come to these ears. Yes! I'm "more than" I tell you! More than! More than! More! I'm stopping for your sake. The doors of the church are open. Is there anybody here who desires to acknowledge his or her "more than" status? Anybody here who's begun to feel that when God made you, he was at his best? Is anybody here who has not made the connection between the you that they see and the real you? There's something on the inside, someone inside, something within me that holdeth the reins, something within me that banishes pain, something within me I cannot explain. All that I know, there is something within. Have you that something? That burning desire? Have you that something that never doth tire? Oh, if you have it—it's the heavenly fire and you ought to let the world know that there's something within. Forget about that hymn of invitation, listen _____?? and lead us in it, "Something Within" that's what I want to hear. "Something Within." "Preachers and teachers would make their appeal, Fighting as soldiers on great battlefields; When to their pleadings my poor heart did yield, All I can say, there is something within" Have you got it?

SPEAKER #4: Two seventy-five.

JONES: Let me hear from you do you, have it? Do you have it? Do you have it? That's "more than!" Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Thank God for "more than!" Yes! Yes! I'm feeling mighty good here. Yes! Let folks say what they will, but I know. Sure, enough I know. See, there's some things you know that you don't know fully how you know, you just know that you know that you know. I know that in my heart there's some God stuff! I know I'm "more than!" Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise his holy name, thank you Lord, thank you Lord. Sing. Let us stand, _____?? is going to lead us in this grand old hymn and if you're present and without Christ, we bid you come receive him in your heart and if you're living here without a church home don't go down without one. Come on, come.

(Choir and congregation sings "Something Within")

JONES: Reverend _____?? is going to lead us in prayer. We've got a special case before us, sister Eleanor Warren's grandson, 12 years of age Trevor is his name has been missing since yesterday morning. I know somebody who doesn't operate a lost person's bureau. He knows where everybody is at the same time and their lost sons and daughters all over the land. Many lost unto themselves. The lost folks in the church even, lost unsure of their salvation. Pray. Pray _____? pray, lead us to God. Oh yeah, something within, I cannot explain, all that I know there is something within.

Speaker #5: Let us be on one accord. Oh, beloved father, my master and savior, our creator, our all in all, our help and our God. We come this beautiful Lord's day to say thank you for all your blessings. We thank you Lord for our pastor and we thank you Lord how you used him today in a special way. We thank you for bringing us here. We thank you Lord that you saw fit to clothe us in our right minds. Lord, you had your hand upon us, and your hand is still on us. We are your people, and we are thankful. We're thankful that we had the energy and the herewith all just to come up to say, "pray for me," so we thank you, Lord. We praise you and we worship you and we magnify your name today. We thank you for the little children that are here that are present. Pray

that you would bless them and keep them, put your loving arms around them. Now Lord, we ask your favor because your people are hurting. A mother is in pain, heart is heavy she don't know where to turn but thanks be to the almighty God. You say when we're way, way down low and when we can't see our way up that we can call on you so we're grateful. So, lord hear our prayer right now. You know all about us. You know the pain right now, Lord. You know that agony, you know that dark spot, that lonely spot—the helplessness that we feel when we want to make it right, but we don't have the power to make it right! Lord have mercy now; Lord have mercy there's someone that's out there! We don't know where he is! Lord, have mercy on him right now, Thou knowest where he is! In this dark city, this mean city where all kinds of things are happening—touch him and keep him safe right now, thou knowest where he is! Every corner Lord you know! There's nothing hidden from you. Thou knowest where he is right now—touch him Lord and make a way, make a way in this wilderness, make a way Lord. You said when we call on you, you would hear our prayer. Answer us and we call on you with all of our hearts. Touch him right now Lord, make him well. Keep him safe Lord. Wherever he is thou know his soul together. Help this aching heart, help us Lord. So many children that are abandoned and so many that are lost and homeless, so many that are missing in the land and in this city. Touch them Lord, keep them safe and bring them home bring them home, bring them back to their loved ones Lord. We'll praise you; we'll worship you; we'll magnify you. We'll thank you; we'll glorify your name. Do it this time Lord we beg and plead! Be merciful oh, Lord, be merciful. On this Lord's day, show mercy Lord in the city that is dark and sometimes wicked. Show mercy Lord in sometimes a city where there's hardly no compassion but Lord, be merciful—and then others that have come and said I need prayer, thou knowest all Lord. We all stand in need of something in all of our lives. Something is wrong, but the house can fix it Lord. Sometimes there is misunderstanding between family members but you can fix it up Lord! Whatever it might be Lord continue to bless us, continue to keep us in the palm of your hands—continue almighty God to let us hold on to your truth and righteousness. May your holy spirit ever abide with us. We need you Lord; we need you more than ever in a land like this. So, hear our cry and our plead—don't leave us nor forsake us and we'll be careful to give you all the praise and all of the glory and we'll magnify your name—and Lord we just want to thank you right now for what you're going to do and what you've already done. Thank you, Lord, for answering our prayer! Thank you, Lord, for answering our prayer. Thank you right now. We thank you and glorify your name, in the name of Jesus we pray. In his precious name, in his precious name, in his precious name. No name like the name of Jesus—all of God's people said Amen! and Amen!

(choir sings a portion of “Something Within”)

SPEAKER:#6 Is there someone to give us direction regarding the downstairs following this service? There's someone from the committee who should like to tell us what we should ____??

SPEAKER:#7: Good day everyone. All I'm asking is that you join us in fellowship hall. We're gonna give the people who have a business taking care of up here a little while so that they can join us after. A meal will be served, a light meal will be served to keep you and we have a couple little items that we will partake of while we you know await the financial report. It's just going to be something short, but we ask you to stay and join us. Thank you.

SPEAKER:#8: We also received word this morning that sister Bridges, sister Mary Bridges, mother of Sister Christine Valentine is not doing well at all. We're going to ask that you would certainly remember sister Christine Valentine and her mother, sister Mary Bridges in your prayers and there are many other concerns that was articulated that was lifted up and let us continue to pray for those who are struggling and otherwise but particularly we have been asked to mention the name of sister Mary Bridges who is the mother of sister Christine Valentine and also pray for sister Valentine because she's taking this pretty hard and we're going to ask you to remember her in prayer as well. Our father and our God we're thankful today for today. We thank you for your mighty word that you sent our way today through our pastor. We ask that you might continue to undergird him in a mighty way. Continue to strengthen our pastor from round of head to soul of foot and then bless all of us together and we want to thank you our Father for this effort as it moved forward today by these women of Bethany church. I just want to lift the petition in your name and do Lord bless us for Bridges and for sister Valentine at this time as our will. You are still the mighty good God that we know that you can do anything but fail and we just ask our blessing upon them all and we lift this petition in the name of your son Christ Jesus our Lord, it is in this precious name that we pray, amen. We're now ready for our closing.

(Organ begins playing and choir and congregation sing "When We All Get to Heaven")

SPEAKER:#8: Our father, our God, we first want to thank you for guiding our footsteps to your house today and may we keep uppermost in our minds our "more than" status from this day forward. We thank you for this mighty word which has come our way today and may that word envelop us may that word continue to guide us and may we oh, God remember that we are far more than what appears to be and now may the rich benediction of God, our father and the steadfast love of Jesus the Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. May he be our ever-present reality in our lives in our down sitting and in our uprising, in our going out and then our coming in, in our rising and in our falling. The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord makes his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift his countenance upon thee and give thee peace, amen.

(Choir sings)

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