

(upbeat organ music)

- Sunday morning, February 3, 1957. Preacher, Dr. H. Richard Niebuhr from Yale University. (record scratching) (choir singing) (worship organ music) (choir singing)

- Let us offer unto God our unison prayer of confession. Let us pray. Have mercy upon us, O God, according to thy loving kindness. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities and cleanse us from our sins, for we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. And now as our savior, Christ, hath taught us, we humbly pray together saying: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. (worship organ music) (choir singing peacefully) (singing becomes powerful) (worship organ music)

- I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity. Not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. While we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit. Even we ourselves roam within ourselves waiting for the adoption to (mumbles), for the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeeth why doth he have hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Likewise, the Spirit also help with our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them but love God to them who are the call according to His purpose, for whom He did furlough He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His son. That he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His son but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justify. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, ye rather that he'd risen again who is even at the right hand of God who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation of the stress, or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword. As it is written for thy sake, we are killed all the day long, we are (mumbles) of the sheep for

the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us, (mumbles) and persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ, Jesus our Lord. The Scripture lesson is from Paul's letter to the Romans, the eighth chapter. (worship organ music) (choir singing)

- The Lord be with you. (audience mumbles) Let us pray. Lord, God of our fathers, and our God, who art alpha and omega, we adore and worship thee at the beginning of this new semester. We pray that we may be mindful of every opportunity to serve thee. Eager to learn, ready to be trained for thy service. Implant in our hearts that fear of thee, which is the beginning of wisdom, and fill them with thy love apart from which all knowledge is vain. Help us to pure thoughts and unselfish conduct. And grant us the grace of perseverance to the end through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us offer unto God our prayer of thanksgiving. O God, our Father, merciful and gracious, hear the thanksgivings with which we come before thy throne in the name of Jesus Christ, thy son. For the wonder of thy beauty manifest in the world, for thy wisdom inspiring the works of men, and for thy fatherly love shone forth to us in Christ, Jesus, praise be to thee, O God. For the happiness of our earthly life, for home and school and friends, for the joy of loving and being loved, praise be to thee, O God. For the power to worship thee, for the right to pray to thee, and for thine answers to our prayers, praise be to thee, O God. But above all, for Jesus Christ, thy son, the word incarnate, who came to end the reign of sin and death, and to bring in the reign of righteousness and life, praise be to thee, O God. Let us offer unto God our prayer of intercession for the hospital. We commend unto thee, O Father, all who hallow suffering. Those who, in their thoughts for others, leave no room for pity of themselves, those whose patience inspires others to hold on; we commend unto thee all who endure suffering. Those whose bodies or minds are distressed, those who cannot be themselves because of pain, grant to all who are bound to one another in the fellowship of suffering the sense of comradeship, the knowledge of thy presence, and give them thy peace which passeth man's understanding. And let us offer unto God our prayer of supplication for the spirit of Jesus in our own lives. O Lord, God, father of Jesus Christ, give us a measure of his spirit that we may be enabled to obey his teaching, to pacify anger, to take part in pity, to moderate desire, to increase love, to put away sorrow, to cast away vain glory; not to be vindictive, not to fear death. Ever entrusting our spirit to thee, the immortal God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with us all evermore. Amen. (worship organ music) (choir singing powerfully) (worship organ music) (music becomes powerful) (choir singing) Accept, O Lord, these the gifts of thy worshiping people, and grant that our love for thee may be as great as our need of thy mercy, in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (worship organ music)

- My text this morning is a double one. First of all, it is the statement of St. Paul read to you from the eighth chapter of Romans. Particularly I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us or toward us. And the second place, it is that opening part of the general prayer of thanksgiving which is so frequently used in the churches of Christendom. There we say we thank thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life. But above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord, Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. I do not know how it is with you. But with me, it often seems that I can be reasonably thankful, reasonably polite to the Almighty in the first part of that prayer. I know what creation, preservation

and all the blessings of this life are, and that is thankfulness. Sometimes one begins to stumble a little over the phrase, "above all for thine "inestimable love in the redemption of the world "by our Lord, Jesus Christ." For the greatness of that event and its significance for us and what it means in our existence often seems to be covered over. But when it comes to the phrase, and for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory, one sometimes wonders whether this isn't simply a polite statement. It is as though we have received presents, and we're writing our thank you letters. And someone tells us don't forget the hope of glory; and we say, what was that? Something we received (mumbles), yes, we did receive it but in what package it came and what it looked like, we simply have forgotten. We put it away somewhere in the attic. It wasn't like that for Paul. For Paul, the hope of glory was one of the magnificent gifts that had been given. It was one of the three great things: faithfulness, or loyalty, love and compassion, and then hope. These were the marvelous gifts that had been bestowed on men out of the treasuries of the unsearchable riches of Christ. These were better than gifts of prophecy, wisdom, gifts of healing, of interpretation, speaking with tongues, of all the many wonderful things that Christians thought they had received, but they had indeed received. Now abides faith, hope, love, these three. And the greatest of these is love, and the first of these is faith, and the central thing is hope. Hope was that gift which enabled you to say despite all the sufferings, all the disappointments in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For in Jesus Christ, the love of God was bestowed upon us, and that love gave us the hope of glory, and by hope we are saved. Well we say yes, it was like that. For Paul, it was like that. And for the early Christians, it was like that. We remember now what the gift was. It was the gift that was celebrated in the poetry of the Book of Revelations. It was the idea that a glory was coming, a heavenly city was to come to men. A city which could be described partly in physical terms as a city of gold and glass and of all things beautiful. It was a city in which all the marvelous achievements of men would be saved. All those things of which we thrill when we remember the history of mankind: courage, nobility, everything that was good was to be in that city. And what was to be burned up, all the trash heap of the world, was everything that was shameful, everything that was degrading. All this would pass away. The glory of Egypt and the glory of Assyria, and of Athens and of Rome, this would be there. But the cruelties of men, these would be gone. These would not so much be the subject of punishment as of utter destruction. And overall, this city, the Prince of Peace, the merciful Christ, in power and great glory would preside; and there would be no night there, and every tear would be wiped away from every eye, and death would be no more. And of this reign, there would be no end. This civilization would never pass away. That was the hope they had. No wonder then that they could stand great persecutions. They were about to become the heirs of this last wealth, sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ. They were also to see the triumph of nature's spring. The unfolding of the meaning of nature, the salvation of nature from corruption, this was to be a part of that glory. The whole creation groans and travails together until now. The long story of natural life is without meaning, it is subject of vanity. But it will reveal its meaning, its meaning will be revealed and all the glory of the natural world as well as all the glory of the world of culture, civilization; all this would be united in the presence of the radiant light of God. It will be glory. And so these men could say... who shall separate us from this love and Christ from this glory? Persecution, nakedness, poverty, anguish; all the difficulties of existence in all these things. We are more than conquerors, we are saved by hope. That was the hope of glory we say our Christian forefathers had. They were very naive, weren't they, in their acceptance of it? Life must have been wonderful for them. No wonder they could say rejoice in your tribulations; rejoice for the Lord is at hand. But now for us, this hope of glory seems to be something quaint that we have put into the attic of history. And we remember too that this gift of hope was

given to us personally, individually. Perhaps a connection with the gift that was given to us as a group in the Christian church, as Christendom, as mankind; perhaps given to us with our creation the promises of God. These were made known to us in moments of childhood or of youth when all the world seemed to be transformed. When behind the veil of ordinary things we saw, or thought we saw a radiance and a light of a reality that was glorious, in which we were to participate, in which we were participating. It is because so many of us have had experiences of that sort that we can read Wordsworth and feel a responsive vibration in us when he speaks of our birth being a sleep and a forgetting, of the fact that we trail clouds of glory as we come from God, who is our home. Albany celebrates that sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns and around ocean, and the living air and the blue sky, and in the mind of man. Or... When he reminds us of that blessed mood in which the burden of the mystery in which the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world is lightened. C. S. Lewis, in his biography, the biography of his youth entitled *Surprised by Joy* speaks of some of these moments in his childhood and in his youth before he was converted to Christianity and before he brought these experiences into connection with the Christian faith. One of these experiences is related in this wise. The first itself is the memory of a memory. "As I stood beside a flowering currant bush on a summer day, "there suddenly arose in me without warning, "and as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, "the memory of an earlier morning. "I remembered my brother had brought a toy guard "he had fashioned out of moss and twigs and flowers "on the top of a biscuit tin into the nursery. "It is difficult to find words strong enough "for the sensation which came over me. "Milton's enormous bliss of Eden, "giving the full ancient meaning to enormous "comes somewhat near it. "It was a sensation, of course, of desire, "but desire for what not certainly for a biscuit tin "filled with moss, not even though that came into it "for my own past. "Before I knew what I desired, the desire itself was gone, "the whole glimpse withdrawn, the world turned "commonplace again, only stirred "by a longing for a longing "that had just ceased." It is because, perhaps because these moments of understanding are of revelation, of a glory behind the veil things that philosophies such as Platonism, all the natural Platonisms of men flourish among us. It is perhaps for this reason that in Eastern thinking, the world seems to be so much of an illusion. World behind this world of masks. There lies the nirvana of pure joy. (mumbles) this is how different, this hope of glory... This anticipation of the transformation of all things, how different it is from optimism. One reads the story of the 1920s, Galbraith's *Great Crash*, for instance. And it is evident that what the 1920s were so happily anticipating was not glory. It was prosperity, it was security. One reads the financial and the pages of the papers, the reports of the economic advisors of the nation, and one notices optimism. Optimism about the next nine months, perhaps, or about the next five years. But it is not the hope of glory, it is the hope of survival, it is the hope of continuing a little longer. Sometimes it is the hope of glamor, but not the hope of glory. We hear the predictions about our own existence that we may be enabled to live longer than our predecessors. That the lifespan increases, and who knows, in another hundred years, it may be that men will live to be 120 years old. But that is not the hope of glory! (mumbles) contrast this hope of glory in the Book of Revelations, in the eighth chapter of Romans, in the poetry of Wordsworth, in the thinking of a Plato, one contrast this hope of glory with the religious hopes of glory for me. An egotism and a utilitarianism which translates this whole idea, or depraves this idea of the transformation of all things, of the liberation of nature, of the realization of splendor and of radiance into the idea I'm going to be saved out of all of this. I will be better off than those who are punished. (mumbles) contrast the hope of glory with the hope of immortality, of going on and on and on. This was not the hope of glory that Paul was speaking of. It

is connected with the hope of immortality; it is connected with the idea of eternity, but it is the hope of God, and of participation in God, in ultimate goodness, in ultimate unity. We ask ourselves what was the use of this gift which we have put away into the attic of our social history which we have put into the attic of our mind. We know that one use of it was the increase of our sensitivity, increase of man's sensitivity to evil, to the inglorious, to the shameful, to the irrational, to the humiliating, to the meaningless, to the cruel, to the meretricious, to the superficial. One who had the hope of glory, the men who had the hope of glory experienced pain in the presence of all that was inglorious. It gave them a new sensitivity. Sometimes we think there must be a hope of glory in those men who are so sensitive to the sordid. The castle, when he can paint a thing like Guernica, indicate that he has the hope of glory because he is so sensitive to what is cruel and shameful. Does Faulkner have the hope of glory somewhere hidden in his life? The writers and the painters, and who, in our time, show what is sordid and mean and do not revel in the animality of man may be indicating what they know, what the contrast is against what the shameful in life is to be presented. I suppose one of the uses of the hope of glory, of that gift was also the ability it gave to men to fight and to endure and to continue in their effort to overcome evil in themselves and in others without compromise, without ever letting down; with the ability to rise after every defeat because they had the hope of glory and would not accept defeat. It enabled them to endure suffering, to wait with patience with the immense fortitude of those who had to endure, not only through months and years, but sometimes through decades without the hope of finding in this life or in this time an answer to their prayers. There was an admirable endurance. We find the hope of glory perhaps today in the work of those men who labor apparently in vain, in hospitals and elsewhere; labor in vain in politics and in statesmanship. There's the possibility of an endurance. Perhaps one of its uses was that it made men good workmen. One marvels at some of the craftsmanship of men who lived in a time when it was expected that the world would come to an end very quickly. In some of the medieval centuries when the end was near at hand, and yet men wrought so skillfully; did work that was not signed and which could not glorify them in any way; did work which endured and which was good not only in its visible parts but also in its invisible parts. Why did they do it that way? Perhaps because they had the hope of glory. Now we may say of this gift, which was given to us with life, which was renewed, reconstructed, raised in its dynamic power by Jesus Christ. We may say, well, it's been taken away from us; the experiences of life have taken it away from us. How can the 20th century have a hope of glory, the 20th century which has experienced concentration camps, wars, depressions, a totalitarian attempts to fasten on men reins of mortal power; how can the 20th have the hope of glory? How could we, who need to be mature and to accept life as it is, how can we have the hope of glory? It's been taken away from us by life, personally, by social history. But then we begin to wonder. Men had this hope of glory who lived in more desperate times than ours; who were more mature perhaps than we are who have suffered personally more than most of us. Has it been taken away from us or have we put it away? Is it one of those things in life which we suppress, for in our unconscious are not only the traumatic experiences which we do not want to remember, but perhaps also the great beneficent experiences which we do not want to remember. Perhaps we have put it away so that we might have freer scope to admire and to set our heart upon all that Paul calls the flesh. An American humorist, as described now by his son, appeared to all of his contemporaries to be a very happy and a gay man. But he was obsessed with the deep sense of the tragic failure of his life. And particularly when he met an old friend who had become one of our leading poets and biographers, he felt in the eyes of that man an accusation. Or he remembered that he, the humorist, had had gifts as great as those of the poet. But that he had found that he couldn't get the \$500 a week, which his

certain brand of humor allowed him to earn if he were to devote himself to, to a kind of work that the poet gave his attention to. He had put away the hope of glory, not of his own glory, but the hope of a life in which good work, in which integrity was recognized and vindicated and became a part of the structure of things. He had put it away. He hadn't had it taken away from him. What about our American Dream? We've had the dream in this country that earth shall be fair and all men glad and wise. But this was to be the new world in which a new life could be lived. Has the American Dream been taken away from us by the experiences of American life, or have we put it away because it doesn't quite comport with those things which we love a little more, perhaps, than the hope of glory? Can we indulge in the hope of glory and also have all the immediate joys of our prosperity? Can we entertain the hope of glory and also expect glamor? We have perhaps put it away far more than we have lost it. What, have we put it in the church? Have we put it away because, if we have the hope of glory, we could not glorify ourselves in our past quite so much? We could not use the hope of glory quite so much as an instrument for saving ourselves and for condemning others. Perhaps we have not lost it, perhaps it has not been taken away. Perhaps we have suppressed it, and perhaps, having suppressed it, it is there in the beneficent spiritual world of our root, social mind, of our personal mind. We have tried to repress the hope of glory, but there are times when we become aware that it is a part of our being still, in our history and in our personal life. We become aware that it is there sometimes. When we are forced to take into account the desolateness of our existence without the hope of glory, there come moments in life just the opposite of those moments described by Wordsworth; when the desolateness of existence, the brassy skies and the earth of mud, and the meaninglessness of being seems somehow to strike us, then we say thank God for the hope of glory. For if it were not for the hope of glory, this would be our humorless state. And when we read some of the interpreters of men on this existence, for whom all life is wasteland; or for whom it is all animality. And then think of our ordinary existence, we say, thank God for the hope of glory which is still present in us and modifies all our thinking. There is a glory behind the shame. There is a glory behind the vanity. That it is repressed and not absent may become apparent to us in the patient labors of good workman in every calling and profession, who will not yield to the easy temptations for our personal glory, for advancement in time, for quick rewards; but to work as though they worked for eternity and for the construction of glory. They may understand and phrase their ideas very differently from the way we do in the church. They may speak of truth for the sake of truth, or art for the sake of art, or justice for the sake of justice. But in any case, they seem to be working for the hope of glory as we understand it. When amidst all the time serving and all the temptations to seek quick rewards, all the efforts at a specious success, we see the work of such craftsman; we say thank God for the hope of glory. That it is only repressed but not lost to us is revealed too in the power over suffering, so often exercised in life. Sometimes coming to us as a surprise in ourselves, more often apparent in others. When in the midst of this (mumbles) men are enabled to endure without compromise and without disloyalty to their fellow men, we know that love is at work but it is love combined with the hope of glory, to celebrate the moment of defeat as a nation's finest hour, that is to confess to the hope of glory. The hope of a vindication and a conservation of man's best virtues in a time and place beyond all times and places. That is to make an appeal to the eternal rather than to time. When we see steadfast loyal men in the midst of suffering, remaining steadfast and we can say, thank God for the hope of glory. Our period in history is not a very hopeful one. Our national life is no longer greatly inspired by the idea of America, the Beautiful whose alabaster cities will gleam undimmed by human tears. Our church is a church which celebrates the fact that Christ came, but does not celebrate the fact that he will come again in power and great glory. The hope of

glory seems faint in us. We live towards the past so much more frequently than towards the future. We live towards the apparent so much more than towards that which is hidden behind the veil of things. And yet... the hope of glory is not gone. There is in us a longing for a longing. The time will come again when we shall move forward toward this newness of life. And the proper response to that... is gratitude. We do not ask each other what can we do to increase the hope of glory, and to make use of the hope of glory. We say it has been given to us like the small mustard seed of faith, and the first thing we can do is to thank God it's still there, operating by that spiritual power which is beyond the reach of our explicit will. We can live by the expectation that we have. And through our gratitude perhaps, evoke in one another the slumbering hope of glory. Let us unite in prayer. All Mighty God, Father of all mercies, we (mumbles) unworthy servants to give thee the most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. And we beseech thee, give us that few sense of all thy mercies that our hearts may be unfaintedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with thee in The Holy Spirit; be all honor and glory were without end. And now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace and believing so that by the power of The Holy Spirit you may abound in hope and the blessing of God, Almighty Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen. (choir singing)