

- And to sing praises unto the name of the most high, to show forth his loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night. Therefore let us sing to the praise and the glory of God. The hymn 26. (organ music) (choir singing faintly) It is an awesome thing to come into the presence of the living God who is holy loved. Therefore, it behooves us to recognize that we are creatures and sinners, and to acknowledge the same with penitence and loneliness. Therefore, I beseech you who are here present to accompany me with sincerity and humility unto the throne of grace in a unison prayer of confession. Let us pray. Have mercy upon me, o, God. According to thy steadfast love, according to thy abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I know my transgression and my sin is ever before thee, against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done that, which is evil in thy sight. Create in me a clean heart, o, God, and renew a right spirit within me, restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit, amen. Dearly beloved, you remember that Jesus told Peter that he should forgive his brother unto 70 times seven, 490 times. Which being interpreted means always, at all times, on every occasion forever. Do you think that God will do less for us who ask forgiveness in penitence and faith. Be of good cheer. Our sins are forgiven because God is merciful. Thanks be to God. And so let us join together in the prayer, which our Lord taught his disciples, saying, our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in 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. (organ music) (organ music) (singing in Latin) (organ music) (singing in Latin) (organ music) (singing in Latin) (organ music)

- The Lord be with you. Let us pray. Let us offer first a prayer of Thanksgiving for the harvest. Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, the eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou give us them their meat in due season. What thou givest them, they gather, thy openest thine hand and they are satisfied with good. We glorify thee that thou hast again fulfilled thy gracious promise. And while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not cease. For the seasons of the ever changing year we thank thee, for the beauty of earth and sky, for cloud and sunshine, for rain and wind fulfilling thy work, for flour, and fruit, and tree, and now, for the bountiest harvest, we praise thee, o, God. And for as much as without thee, labor is vain, we thank thee for thy blessing upon the skill and diligence of those who plowed the earth, and sowed the seed, and now have reaped the fruit of the (indistinct). Thou hast crowned the year with thy goodness. O, Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. And let us offer two prayers of intercession, first for all who need us, and then for our hospitals. O, God, who has formed us for fellowship with one another, we pray for all who need us, for all who are underfed and starving, for all refugees, for the victims of oppression, injustice, cruelty, and racial prejudice. For all who are frustrated, for the sorely tempted, and for those who fall. For little children and youth who are neglected, and have never known what it is to be cared for and loved. Lord, hear our prayer. Almighty God, whose blessed son went about doing good, healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people, continue his gracious work among us, comfort and heal all sufferers, grant to physicians and surgeons wisdom and skill, to nurses sympathy and patience, to hospital administrators

diligence and foresight. Prosper their work, o, God and send down thy blessing on all who give of their substance or service for its maintenance. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. And let us offer a prayer of supplication for ourselves. Help us this day, o, God, to serve thee devoutly, and the world with sympathy. May we do our work wisely. Give suckers secretly, go to our meat appetitely, sit there discreetly, arise temperately, please our friend duly, and go to our bed merrily, and sleep surely, for the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, o, Lord, tamper with tranquility our manifold activity that we may do our work for thee with very great simplicity. Amen.

- The scripture lesson this morning is taken from the gospel according to Luke, chapter 16, verses one through nine. He also said to the disciples, there was a rich man who had a steward, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. And he called him and said to him, what is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship. For you can no longer be steward. And the steward said to himself, what shall I do? Since my master is taking this stewardship away from me, I am not strong enough to dig and I'm ashamed to beg. I have decided what to do so that people may receive me into their houses when I am put out of the stewardship. So summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, how much do you owe my master? He said, a 100 measures of oil. And he said to him, take your bill, sit down quickly, and write 50. Then he said to another, and how much do you owe? He said, a 100 measures of wheat. He said to him, take your bill and write 80. The master commended the dishonest steward for his prudence, for the sons of this world are wiser in their own generation than the sons of light. And I tell you, make friends for yourself by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations. May the Lord bless unto us and clarify unto us the meaning of this scripture. (organ music) (choir singing faintly)

- We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in the true man Jesus to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by his spirit. We trust him, He calls us to be in his church to celebrate his presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone, thanks be to God.

- The sermon title this morning is following humanitarianism or Christ. It might be subtitled Jesus, the Gale Sayers of the first century. Is a Christian different from a humanitarian? Christians readily and easily answer this question with an emphatic yes. Those who wish to dissolve Christianity either into a philosophy of existence or a code of morals are not following Jesus, they are simply following Judas. What makes humanitarianism different than Christianity? How or in what way are the acts of a Christian appreciably or categorically different from those by a humanitarian? How is a Christian act in Harlem to a destitute any way different than that of a humanitarian? Or again, how is a Christian missionary different than a member of the priest corps? I am convinced that this is a mandate placed upon us by our culture, especially as it becomes more sophisticated, more demanding. In my intermittent conversations with scholars, students, and the so-called untrained laborers, both here and abroad, this is one question that seems paramount. What is different? What is unique about Christian service? As we seek for an answer to this question, I think we must admit that it's quite different than the first one, it simply can't be answered by a easy yes or no. It cannot be answer glibly or lackadaisically. Let us be honest. And I found that as I myself worked on this, I

began to realize that I had simply not been honest to the humanitarians. I had been thinking about an atheistic humanitarianism and this isn't quite fair. So let us think, as we try to compare and juxtapose Christianity with humanitarianism. Both humanitarianism at its best and Christianity at its best. Let us juxtapose then the best in each, and in so doing, hopefully, we will have a fruitful answer to our question. I think we have to recognize that if we were to observe the actions of a humanitarian or of a Christian night and day, we would be unable to distinguish which one was the Christian. Both would act compassionately, both would act in love, and both would act selflessly. In fact, if we were to ask one of them, who is your example for this moral action? Regardless of whether he was a humanitarian or a Christian, he could very easily say Jesus. And we must admit that many humanitarians have, as their extreme example, the life of Jesus of Nazareth. And herein, I think of their first insight that whereas they both would say the same thing, behind the Christian affirmation that he was following Jesus there would be a depth of meaning that the humanitarian would wish to divorce himself from. For example, the humanitarian would divorce himself from any claims of being a slave to any man. And yet the Christian would claim that he in fact was a slave, and that Jesus was his master. I think this is an observation that we should placard before us. And I think there are two men that have laid it out best. One is Soren Kierkegaard, when he argued that if we were to examine and to follow closely the knight of faith, we would find that there would be no action that would distinguish him from the man of ethics. And here to speak more mundanely and pedestrian, we must admit that there is nothing that really can help us clarify what distinguishes a kiss by a lover from a kiss by a traitor. And this is certainly what W.H. Auden had in mind when he said, which is Tristan, which Don Giovanni, no peeping Tom can tell. Here then we have a consensus by both the humanitarians and the Christians that they would condemn the cancers in our society, that aspect of our society, which turns people into means for self gratification or success. Both a humanitarian and a Christian would condemn the aspect of our culture represented by, for example, H. Robbins "The Inheritors", which climaxes with a beautiful starlet curled lifelessly between the toilet and the bathtub, staring lifelessly into nothingness with her right fingers touching the needle still embedded in her left elbow. Or again, of J. Susann's "The Love Machine", which depicts in swelling motion the mechanistic stampedes of the sexual appetites of one Robin Stone who finally succeeds in finding himself in being human when he says, "I need you." I think both of these novels brilliantly reflect the cancers in our society, both humanitarianism and Christianity speak categorically against them. How can we explain this that humanitarianism and Christianity share so many emphases? I think we must admit that humanitarianism, as we know it today, evolved out of Christianity. It was during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, especially the 17th and 18th century, when philosophy blocked away from theology the so-called queen of the sciences in that day. When morals were divorced from theology, when ethical codes went with philosophy that we began to see the humanitarianism began to emerge, at least humanitarianism as we know it. I think we can see this as we take, for example, two attempts to write a utopia or the perfect society, the perfect society of brotherly love. If, for example, we would take the 17th century book by Thomas Hobbes entitled "Leviathan", and compare it with one a century earlier, that by Sir Thomas More, the well known "Utopia", we would find exactly what I think is to be the case. The former that is Thomas Hobbes' "Leviathan" was written by a man who rejected the biblical ideas and concept of God. The latter, which came a century earlier, sir Thomas More was a devout Catholic who was beheaded for his belief. I think this long introduction is necessary because we simply have to be honest, we are not comparing Christianity with the papier-mache humanitarianism, but we did catch one glimpse of one little thing, which seems to distinguish the two. That is the Christian, when he's says he

follows Jesus, brings with him a depth of commitments that the humanitarian refuses. Permit me to share with you what I believe are three distinguishing categorical differences between Christianity and humanitarianism. Now, I admit this takes some audacity, what can be said that hasn't been said already, and certainly much better. But shouldn't we admit that just because it's been said before, doesn't mean that it has been read? Or to admit that it has been said better does not mean that we have memorized it? The three things that I see that distinguishes a Christian act of love from a humanitarian act of compassion are, first, Christ, the incarnate word, second, Christ, the radical, and third, Christ, the pioneer. Christ, the incarnate word, Christ, the radical, Christ, the pioneer. Let us look at each of these seriatim. Every Christian act of love is done so in light of the imminence of God, and the affirmation that God himself is behind that act. This was succinctly said by Thomas a Kempis "De Imitatione Christi" when inspired by Paul's poem on love, and anticipating Immanuel Kant's primacy of the will over action, he wrote, "Without love and outward act, prophet's nothing, but whatever is done out of love, no matter how small and of little repute, it will become holy fruitful. For God weighs more the motive than the act. For God weighs more the motive than the act." Christian service is an acting out of a commandment, a divine commandment to love. Christianity is an attempt to embody God's will. Whereas humanitarianism, according to Webster's Dictionary, is a doctrine that man's obligations are limited to the welfare of mankind. Christianity is a faith that focuses upon an attempt to do God's will, and sees this action of doing God's will or attempting to do God's will not only in the context of men, but in the totality of all creation. And, of course, that includes ecological concerns. This means that the image of God is man, and service to man is as much the conclusion as the presupposition of the belief that God is love. I am one of those who see that this has many other aspects of Christianity, as been inherited from Judaism, and permit me, therefore, to turn to the book called the "Zohar". Which has a very beautiful story, it goes like this. When God loves a man, he sends him a poor man so that he may do to him and for him deeds of compassion. And by so doing, he winds around his head the cord of grace on the right side. So that when the time of destruction comes, the destroyer would see the marks, the imprints upon the forehead and leave him alone. And palpable contrast to other religions, however, Christianity has more than an idea, more than a cord, it has an example, an example reflected in Jesus, the incarnate word. In Jesus, the Christian has sufficient example of what God's will is for man. And this is best explained, I think, in the gospel, according to John, chapter five, verse 19, where Jesus himself says, "Truly, truly I say to you, the son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the father doing. For whatever he does, that the son does likewise." In essence, Jesus is the reflection of God's will. This is beautifully portrayed in the earliest Christian hymn, which says, "Behold, the Lord is our mirror, open your eyes and see them in him." Here we see the first categorical difference between a Christian act of compassion, a Christian act of love and that by a humanitarian. He has an example, he has placarded before him the incarnate will of God, Christ, the incarnate word. The second is that Jesus is the radical, Jesus is the radical. And this entails the infinite possibility for radical action. Here, we confront the incisive question, and this may be the pivotal one as of all, as we look at when comparing humanitarianism with Christianity. If we recognize that humanitarianism has a moral code as a guide, but Christianity, an unseen force, then is it possible that a Christian would be authentically motivated to an immoral deed? That means, since Christianity does not have as its guide a written law or a written code, but the guide is God himself, then is it possible that the Christian would ever hear the words, which would force him into an immoral act? The way I see it, Kierkegaard is the only man, the only Christian theologian who has sensitively heard this paradigmatic question. His answer was unequivocal, the answer yes. He turned to the story in Genesis 22

that you all know, the time when Abraham was called to sacrifice Isaac. Kierkegaard claims that God called Abraham to perform an immoral deed, and immoral action. But it seems clear to me that Kierkegaard has simply read the mores, the codes of his own society, his own culture back into the second millennia when Abraham lived. An age in which it was highly religious and ethically proper to sacrifice the firstborn son. While much in Genesis does support Kierkegaard's insight that Abraham is grasped by the absurd, here he is promised, Abraham is promised, that through him his descendants would be as numerous as the sands in the sea, and the stars in the sky. And yet as absurd as the record has it, he is told subsequently to sacrifice his only son. So we must admit with Kierkegaard that Abraham is grasped by the absurd. But nothing in the Genesis' accounts, nothing in Genesis, nothing in the New Testament, nothing in the Old Testament intimates that Abraham thought he was doing something that was unethical. Is there no other text that we can turn to? Is there no other passage in the Bible that will help clarify our dilemma? There is one parable, the parable you heard this morning that I think presents this question to us. Here, we have the story, the parable of the unjust steward who cheats his master, falsifies the records, and even alters the debts according to an iniquitous standard, one man owes a 100, it's reduced to 50, another man owes a hundred and it's reduced to 80. And yet, it concludes with these incredible words, the master praised the steward. The master praised the dishonest steward. After reading some of the voluminous work published on this parable, I must say that I'm convinced that there's only one point being made here that Jesus is the one who says to commend the steward. It seems that this is a parable of crisis, that the one point that made is that Jesus is pointing to the prudence of the man in the light of an impending crisis. Jesus is by no means commending the morality, the immorality, or the dishonesty of the steward. He encouraged rather the foresight and imprudence in face of the impending crisis. Here, again, we can look to the life of Jesus himself. Is there anything immoral, is there ever an unethical or immoral act in the life of Jesus? There is one that has been highly suspect, especially over the last few decades. What was Jesus doing in the temple? By what criteria and by what code was he whipping those men? And is now recognized by both Jewish critics and Christian critics that there wasn't anything immoral about Jesus' action. The temple cultists had become unbelievably corrupt, and Jesus, in an act of anger, tried to correct the evils poured upon his own people. I think we need here to juxtapose Jesus, the man who loved and knew how to hate with the Buddhist monk who sits contemp in his little corner, never raising a finger to help anyone, shunning any thoughts of hate because they would moral his placidness. Jesus was a man who loved and balanced this by righteous indignation. One of the greatest preachers of this century said it best when he said, Jesus hated evil tremendously because he loved the people whom evil was ruining. I think, though, we have to admit to Jesus' action in the temple was radical. It was radical not only for himself, but also for his contemporaries. But was it a violent, physical, and political revolutionary act bent upon destruction of the Roman Empire? The last decade and a half has seen numerous books, which have argued precisely that, that Jesus was a political revolutionary. And if this is the case, you can follow him, except the militant, such as Reverend Cleage. Saner research has proved conclusively that Jesus was a revolutionary, but he was not a political revolutionary. He did not advocate political violence. He advocated self sacrifice as example for the passage in John 13 where he washes the disciples' feet. And his goal was not nationalism, but spiritualism, as well exemplified in the passage where he says, "Do you not know that my kingdom is not of this world?" The ground has again been cleared for social activists to follow Jesus and to imitate Christ. And his calls were radical. Let the dead bury the dead, still, all you have, give to the poor, come follow me. And the statement, which follows the parable of the unjust steward, no man can serve two masters. Here, we see Jesus, the

radical. We have seen Jesus, the incarnate word. Now let us take a glimpse at the cons of Jesus, the pioneer. Christianity has a dream, it has a dream that God will act very soon and bring an end to all secular history and all finiteness. The humanitarian also has a dream. His dream is quite different. He believes that through his own moral power and those of others that a new and golden age will be inaugurated. But the Christian knows all too well that no matter how he performs an ethical deed, no matter how infinite number they may be, this will in no way entice God to act, and bring in the final day. This is best exemplified by the parable of the seed growing secretly, the man out night and day, and though he crawls through the thickets with his ever-ready batteries and stares at the spot where he laid his seed. He does not know how it grows. He has no control over it. The kingdom of God is as this seed, which sprouts and grows, he knows not how. The charges often made that this claim is much too idealistic, Christianity is certainly too idealistic, but is it? Is it not more realistic than the humanitarian things that as man has brought in tech technological society, so will he bring an immoral society? Is not Christianity much more realistic when it admits that man of his own efforts can do nothing without God's help, that man has fallen far short, he's in sin. Isn't this the explanation why the Christian was shocked, but the humanitarian was shattered when they both saw rising over the country of (indistinct) Ramsbach and Schweitzer, the shocking smoke from the ovens of Auschwitz, Belzec, Treblinka, and Belzec. Out of the terrible inhuman atrocities that we have seen, both in Germany of the late thirties and nearly forties, Biafra, Vietnam, the Middle East, the Christian has the audacity to have the incredible dream and hope of a better future. He finds this in the New Testament where we have the claim that the world is under the throws of evil forces. But that a new age will come in God's own time, an age of peace, prosperity. I think the conclusion to what we've been saying this morning, the categorical difference between the humanitarian and the Christian is best exemplified on page 43 of Gale Sayers "I am third". But to understand its import, permit me both an autobiographical and biographical note. About 20 years ago, I loved to curl up on the floor and to read biographies. Two in particular must have made a profound influence upon me. One was about Thorpe, and the other about Red Grange. I was convinced that never again would a man wed such magical moves with such infinite speed. I was wrong. More recently, a pro football player has accepted the epithet magic. In 1969, the pro football hall of fame picked an all time pro football team, and the backfield was not Thorpe and Grange. But Jim Brown and Gale Sayers. Now, if I were to read to you the statistics of what he did in his rookie season, 22 touchdowns, six in one game, and how they are still standing in the NFL records, they would not portray to you as beautifully as Bill Cosby has done in the introduction to "I am third". When he says, "I was standing on the sidelines and here came Gale around the left end, there were five or six defensive men standing and waiting, just waiting to catch him. And Gale Sayers simply split himself in two, threw part of himself on the right side of the field, and with the rest of his body continued down the left side. The defensive backs looked at each other, then looked at the referee, claiming that a rule had been broken." But diligent research showed that nowhere was there a rule in the NFL record books or anywhere in the rules books that a man could not split himself in two. And what does this come down in terms of this sermon? Around Gale Sayers' neck hangs a medallion, and inscribed on it is the motto, the Lord is first, my friend second, and I am third. And he himself says, what a wonderful thing to live up to. I am third. I believe Jesus alone lived this standard, and Gale Sayers himself admits that he can't. But he tries, for Jesus alone, God was always first, others were second, and himself third. He therefore, is our paradigm for authentic Christian Love. And that is simply what we mean when we say that he is the incarnate word, the radical, the pioneer. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the lives of great men, such as Gale Sayers, and Brian Piccolo, and others in their human ways in their own

weakness attempt to do thy will. We thank thee for the example, for our blessed Lord. And pray for courage and insight to follow him, amen. (organ music) (choir singing faintly) (faint organ music) (organ music) ♪ The reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ ♪ The purest ♪ ♪ The fairest ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young ♪ ♪ With tender reflection ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ ♪ The fairest ♪ ♪ The purest ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young ♪ ♪ With tender reflection ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ (organ music) ♪ Thou must meet him with a heart with love overflowing ♪ ♪ With a heart with love overflowing ♪ ♪ Hasten then with heart over ♪ (music drowns out singer) ♪ Haste then, haste then with heart of love ♪ (music drowns out singer) ♪ To welcome ♪ (organ music) ♪ Thou must meet him with a heart with love overflowing ♪ ♪ Haste then with a heart of love ♪ (music drowns out singer) ♪ To welcome ♪ (organ music) ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest, this day to receive ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest, ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young ♪ ♪ With tender reflection ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ ♪ The fairest, ♪ ♪ The purest ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young ♪ ♪ With tender reflection ♪ ♪ Repair thyselfes the young with tender reflection ♪ ♪ The purest, the fairest this day to receive ♪ (organ music) (organ music)

- All things come of thee, o, Lord, and of thy known do we give thee, grant that as we live by thy grace and by the labor of others, so by our labor, others may live the better Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. May the strength of God pilot you, may the power of God preserve you, may the hand of God protect you. May the way of God direct you. May the shield of God defend you. May the host of God guard you against the snares of evil and the temptations of the world. This day, and forevermore, amen. (bells ringing) (organ music) (organ music)