FINDING ANSWERS

a sermon
delivered in the
DUKE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL

by
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Evangelist

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Scripture: Psalm 23

It was my privilege to be in this pulpit 21 years ago. I have
been invited back on other occasions but because of scheduling in
various parts of the world I have not been able to come, so I am de-
lighted to have this opportunity to speak to another generation of
the Duke family. I have always wanted to come back to Duke University
Chapel because of the warm hospitality here.

In the passage of Scripture that was read by the Chancellor a
moment ago, David is describing his feelings as a young shepherd
under the stars in the Middle East. So much of the world's history
revolves around the Middle East today. If you picked up the Raleigh
newspaper this morning you noticed that the number one headline had
to do with the oil crisis in the Middle East. The whole world is
concerned about the conflicts and violence that may come out of the
oil crisis that is surrounding the Middle East at this moment.

David was a young man in that part of the world. Writing hun-
dreds of years before Christ was born, he touched upon the three
greatest problems that we face in 1973. These are three problems
that science has not been able to solve. In all of these centuries
and with all of our scientific developments - and knowledge is
doubling every fifteen years in the scientific world - we have not
been able to solve these three problems; at this very moment they are
your problems, they are mine, they are America's, they are the
world's. David said, I have found the answer to those three problems.

David touched upon the first problem when he said, "He restoreth
my soul." "He restoreth my soul" is the answer to the problem of
human iniquity. What causes lust, greed, hate, jealousy, war, social
injustice? What is the root cause of it? The Bible says, "For all
have sinned and come short of the glory of God." David said, "He
restoreth my soul."

Jesus asked a very searching question, "What shall it profit a
man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" When the Berlin
students were rioting sometime ago, the press asked, what is the
purpose of this trouble? What are your objectives? He said, "We want to restore the 'soul' of Germany."

When I first heard of "soul music" and "soul food" - I asked a black friend of mine in Watts, what do you mean by "soul music" and "soul food?" He said, "Everything, man! Everything that's good in a man is soul." The Bible teaches that you have a body but inside your body is a soul—a spirit. That is the part of you that will live on forever after the death of your body. That's the real you! The part of you that can remember. It is the part of you that feels and thinks, it is the real you. That's the soul.

A nation also has a soul. The past few months, America has been going through a soul crisis as we have seen the unravelling of a part of our government on television. The television has been a classroom. We have been taught something about our government—it's strengths and it's weaknesses. We have asked ourselves can the system survive? Can it bring social justice to a nation that desperately wants it and needs it and can it bring peace to the world?

He restoreth my soul. How can the soul of a nation or an individual be restored? That is what Good Friday is all about. That is why every Catholic Church and every Protestant Church has a cross. Jesus Christ came to die on that cross for a purpose—to restore our souls. When He died on that cross something mysterious happened. Something thrilling and wonderful happened. God took your sins and my sins and the sins of the whole world and laid them upon Jesus Christ. He became the world's great sin bearer. Because of that cross, God can say to you and to me, you are forgiven—I forgive you!

I visited a mental institution sometime ago. The head of that institution said, I could release half of my patients if they could only be assured that they are forgiven. You see, one of the greatest psychological problems that we face today is guilt! We don't know what to do with our guilt. That is why Christ died—to take away our guilt. God is saying through the cross, "I love you!" "I love you!" "I forgive you!" "I restore your soul." Your soul was separated from God by sin, but he forgives the sin. Reconciliation between man and God takes place at the Cross. But there is another part of that story. They buried Jesus, but as our confession states, "He arose from the dead."

Once I visited a man approaching 90 years of age who was the head of his country. He gave me a cup of coffee, then looked at me and asked, "Young man, do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" I said, "I do." He replied "When I leave office, I am going to spend the rest of my life studying the resurrection of Jesus Christ; because if Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, I see no ultimate hope for the human race." Christ is risen! He is alive! The message we proclaim today is not about a dead Christ still hanging on a cross, but a risen Savior who is willing to come into our hearts, forgive our sins, and restore our souls.

How can a nation have it's soul restored? America needs to repent! Not just the Republicans, but my own party—the
Democratic Party as well. We all have something to repent for because there's a little bit of Watergate in all of us. The Lord said to Solomon, "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land." We as a nation need to corporately repent and confess and turn to God. He will restore the soul of a nation, a soul that we are in danger of losing.

David touched upon another great problem. He said, "I shall not want." The problems of our world are tremendous--poverty, race, pollution, the population explosion, war, crime, drugs, kidnapping, bombing, assassinations. The papers and the television are filled with stories about these problems. What is the answer? David said, I have found that even though I am poor, "I shall not want." I have found a resource.

Some of my colleagues have just returned from central West Africa. We have set up an emergency relief fund to help the people there. It is estimated that 5-6 million people will die of starvation before Christmas unless the nations of the world come to their aid and rescue. When I was in Northeast India, I flew over Bangladesh. I looked down and felt anguish over the statistics and stories I had read about the hunger and suffering.

But there are other kinds of suffering, too. There is suffering even in affluent America or affluent Sweden or affluent Britain. There is personal suffering that comes to students and faculty alike at Duke--boredom, guilt, loneliness, a marriage that went wrong, poor health, getting old, dreams unfulfilled, a friend that betrays you, the pressure of life that seems too great to bear, a child that disappoints you, a broken love affair. Job said, "Man is born into trouble as the sparks fly upward." What are you going to do when the crisis comes? What are you going to do when trouble comes? What are you going to do when the betrayal and disappointment and loneliness and emptiness comes?

We talk about cosmic loneliness today. You can be in a crowd, a party having a good time when all of sudden for a fleeting second there is a moment of loneliness. That's man's great loneliness for God. We are made for fellowship with God. We try to bring in substitutes, but nothing will work until we come into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

I was in New Dehli a few months ago. At the airport I saw hundreds of American university students. They had been there for two weeks sitting at the feet of a Guru. Three jumbo jets were there ready to bring them back to America. So I decided to move among them and ask them questions. I asked, did you find what you came to India to find? They sadly shook their heads and said, "No!"

They could find what they are looking for in their own backyard. Acres of diamonds are there, available to every one of us in a personal relationship with God. We can say with the Apostle Paul, "I have learned that in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."
There is of course a Christian discontentment. We are discontented with the world in which we live. We want to do something about it, and rightly so. We ought to tackle the problems of pollution. We ought to tackle the energy problem. We ought to tackle the population problem. We ought to tackle the war problems and try to eliminate them from the human scene. But what about those millions who are caught up in other kinds of problems? Where are they going to turn? There is a resource that David found. He said, "I shall not want."

The third problem that science has not solved is the problem of death. We have not solved the problem of human iniquity. We still have it. We have not eliminated the problems of poverty and war from the world, we still have them after thousands of years. But the greatest crisis you will ever have to face is the crisis of facing death. David said, I have found an answer there too, "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."

When C. S. Lewis was a professor at Cambridge he made a statement one day that shook me. He said, "war does not increase death."

He added, "You think about it a moment, every generation dies." Death comes to the whole human race. Because of war, some may die earlier, but all die. Every generation passes away. You will die. The Bible says, "It is appointed unto man once to die." Now, how are you going to face that great crisis of death? If you are prepared to die, I believe you are prepared to live.

Death today is a suppressed subject. I spoke to the presidents and deans of eight universities on the west coast sometime ago. The big-ten schools were represented there as well. I spoke on "The Missing Link in Modern Education." One of the points I made was that I did not know a university at that time that offered a class on death. There were no classes on how to die, or exploring the possibilities of a future life. When I got through, one of the university presidents came to me and said we are going to look into that. I am glad to say that his university has put into its curriculum a class on death. Do you know, it is crowded out.

Listen to the songs and lyrics of the modern music of young people and you will notice that a great deal of it has to do with suffering and death. When the University of Kentucky took a survey to find out what students were thinking about, they found that university students most often think about, of course, sex. But second, and a close second, was death. We don't admit it. We would be embarrassed even to talk about it just as we were embarrassed to talk about sex 40 years ago. We are embarrassed to talk about it but there it is, our greatest crisis. But how much time and energy are we giving to solving it? Modern science has not increased the longevity of life. More people are reaching the age of 70 but after 70, that is about it except for a small handful, and most of those are in primitive societies.

David said, "When I face death God will be with me." It is a wonderful thing to know that you are prepared to die. It is a wonderful thing to know that your sins are forgiven. It is a wonderful
thing to know that when a crisis or trouble or difficulty comes "I shall not want." It is a wonderful thing to know that when I face the greatest of all crises that God is there with me.

Do you know God? You can know God for yourself. You don't have to go through a clergyman or a priest. This was the message of John Wesley and George Whitfield 200 years ago. They said you can know God for yourself. They went into the fields of England and preached it. That's how the Methodist Church was born. You can know Christ. George Whitfield, one of the founders of Methodism, preached every night on the subject, "You Must Be Born Again." Some of the leaders of the church came to him and said, "Why don't you change your text?" He said, "I will when you become born again."

Every person can be a new creation through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

PRAYER: Our Father, we thank Thee that these three great problems that seem to be insoluble find their solution in the person of Jesus Christ. And we pray that today, as individuals and collectively, we may commit ourselves totally and unreservedly to Him. For we ask it in His Name. Amen.