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Chapel Transcript: Black Heritage Week - February 17, 1971

Oral Roberts

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Black Heritage Week

AA 1.C 1971 2/17/71 TR A
Observance of black heritage week
Chapel 2/17/71 Oral Roberts

STAMPS: ...introduce our speaker for the morning. I've introduced him several times, the greatest introduction I've ever heard made of Oral Roberts was by Brother Leroy Jordan, who is pastor of the First Baptist Church on the Northside. Brother Jordan simply introduced him this way. Jesus gave the commandment, He gave one commandment not two. He said the second was like the first and must be connected with it. That is that we love God with all our heart and likewise our brother. Oral Roberts has been called to love God with all his heart and his brother likewise. He has fulfilled that calling. A lover of man and a lover of God, our brother and our founder and the youngest man in our midst, Oral Roberts.

ORAL ROBERTS: Let's stand, turn over in the gospel of Luke and also Acts 13. These are marvelous, marvelous and appropriate scriptures for the observance of our Black Heritage Week and from them I'll share with you. From Luke, chapter 23 and verse 26. It has to do with Christ carrying His cross on the way to the crucifixion. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. This is significant because Simon was a black man. The 13th chapter of Acts, the Christian church was established in Antioch just north of Jerusalem and what is now the country of Lebanon. Now there were in the church, there was of Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon, that's called Niger, Niger is the word for black. This was a black man. And there were others and as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. May God bless the reading of His Word and let us all pray the Lord's prayer. Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be 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, the power and the glory forever, Amen. God bless you and be seated. One of these times we will go into the Old Testament and find the role that the black man played in the life of God's people and of

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the world. Briefly today we shall share of that role in our New Testament. Simon had come out of Africa, up to Jerusalem at the time of the feast of the Passover. The city of Jerusalem was filled with hundreds of thousands of worshipers and it was at this time that they chose to arrest, try and crucify our Lord Jesus. And He was carrying his cross at the head of a large group of people, surrounded by the Roman officers. He was on his way to Golgatha outside the city and among the people who were onlookers, spectators, was this black man. And suddenly the weight of the cross was too much, because Christ had had no sleep the previous night and He had been beaten and scourged until a great deal of His blood had poured out of His body. His face was horribly scarred, His hair was matted by His own blood, besides He had been forsaken by everybody. And no doubt that was weakening His body more than the physical treatment He had endured. But you know yourself that you can stand up to a physical blow easier than you can to a blow that's rendered you by the desertion of someone close to you. And He was utterly alone though He was in the midst of the crowds. And as He staggered, the Romans looked around for someone to help Him carry the cross. Their eyes fastened upon Simon and they said, Here, you, and if he were like us he would say, Who? Me? I don't know Him. This is not any of my affair. I'm here to worship God. That's the way most of us would have replied. Because even in our religious acts when we are on the way to the house of God we don't always see that we are to be involved with people who suffer and they forced Simon to carry the cross, and that is significant that in the crucifixion a black man was forced, that is, his own prerogative or initiative was taken from him. He had no privilege to choose whether he would or he would not. Here, you, and they put it upon him. He was black and he was forced. And that's all we have of that scene. But later Paul is writing to the churches and he mentions Rufus and Alexander, who are the sons of Simon. Somehow in this process Simon the black man went from being forced to carry the cross to being honored to carry it. And he transmitted this to his sons and Rufus and Alexander became great in the New Testament. In the early church there was something from their father that touched them and forever they were proud to be the sons of the first man to carry the cross. Now I think that's wonderful. It's something the world needs to know about. What has the black man done? Well he's done a

great many things and not the least of which is to be the first one to carry the cross of our Lord. Well the first place that the disciples of Jesus were called Christians was not in Jerusalem but at Antioch. Antioch was in the country that's now called Lebanon and there the word spread because at the death of young Steven the disciples were scattered and driven away from Jerusalem. It was there that many people came to worship God, diverse races and backgrounds, even many of the Jews came up from Jerusalem to become part of that church, such as Barnabas. He was called in the Bible a good man and who is the man who we are told found Saul of Tarsus and introduced him to the Christians, even introduced him to the apostles in Jerusalem. Now that's interesting that a Jew would intercede for Saul of Tarsus and bring him in. Here's another minority race that's represented here. But in the church at Antioch there's a number of people, among them Niger, which is a black man. And they laid hands later upon Saul and Barnabas and anointed them and sent them to be the first missionaries of the early church, after fasting and praying they put their hands upon them and separated them unto the service of the Lord. Now, you see that the cross was integrated, there was no separatism, there never has been and there never can be. The wildest bitterness of a white man's heart is separate himself from the races, or the bitterest heart of a black militant who would separate himself from the whites and others, this is not of God, has never been, will never be. The apostle Paul standing in Athens on Marris Hill facing the crowds that came from all the nations to discuss new things said that God has made of all men, made all men of one blood and so God has made everybody with the same blood. And Christ came for every man and even at the cross there was a Jew and a black man coming together. In the church that was first called a Christian church there was the integration of these people and their worship. Why should it be strange for a white man to go into a black church or a black man to come into a white church? Why should it be strange that we will be a part? Well now let me share with you one or two personal things. A year ago I received a call from the Northside from a group of businessmen who have been trying to found a business there and were having difficulty because they couldn't get the white business power structure to cooperate and they had to have the cooperation of the white power structure in order to establish this business. The leader went to New York to

secure help and they said, Do you know Oral Roberts? And the man said, Yes. Well you go back and you call him. He's the one man in Tulsa who can help you, so they called me. And I wanted to know why they thought I was the one man and he said, We don't know, we here don't know but in New York they seem to know. So I had Bob Goodwin with me whom most of you know, who graduated here last year, and we sat down with a group of about 11 men that night and spent three hours and I said, Tell me your story. Well in the establishing of a savings and loan institution we had to have so much deposits in order to get federal insurance, federal insurance means if something happens and we have to close down, the people's money which is deposited is protected. But we cannot get the federal insurance until we have so much deposits. And the problem is, people want to deposit but they say, do you have federal insurance and we say, No. Well I'm sorry, we can't deposit. And it was a vicious circle, you see. Without deposits, no federal insurance, without federal insurance you can't get deposits. And that's what you call being defeated. You can call it anything you want to but that's defeat. And then we began to explain some ideas we had and some deposits that our endowment could make there and they could take a picture of us that night and run it in the Oklahoma Eagle and let people know how we felt about it and what we were personally doing, but that was only a drop in the bucket. The real root core of it had not been touched. And then I asked them if they would let me share with them openly and honestly. They said, Oh sure. I said, Even if you are offended. And they said, Yes. Well I said, We may walk out of here tonight offended, but if I tell you what I really believe the Bible teaches, you may like it and you may not. And here we feel a closeness at this moment but we may not feel this if I open with you. And they said, Well do it. And I said, There's no way you can win with your present attitude. They wanted to know what I meant. Well I said, All this evening you've been telling me what the white men owes you and every word of it is true. Well then why isn't it right, if they owe it, they said, Look what we have been for 300 years, we've been forced to do this and forced to do that. I said, That's just it. The

man who first carried the cross was forced, but somewhere, somehow he had to get it in his heart that he wanted to give. I said, There's no way God can give to you until you give first. He said, Give and it shall be given to you. Well we are giving, we've been giving all these hundreds of years. No, you haven't given. It's been taken from you. You hated every moment of it and the people who did it hated you. It's been hate on both sides. And God can never do anything for anybody through hate and bitterness. What about the white man? Well I said, He's paying a far greater price than you are. Greater price than we are? Yes, look at his hang-ups, look at his conscience, look what's happening to his cities and his schools. Look what's happening to the white man. You think he's not paying a greater price than you are? Look what he has to stand, look what he has to face when he stands before God. Brother, he's in trouble. But you are in trouble too. The white man isn't giving. When I say white man in the broad sense because there are individual white men and there are individual black men that really give, but now we are talking about a national identity and there's no way, no way anyone can win unless he has a source for his life and God is our source. You are looking to the government, you are looking to the Supreme Court, you are looking to the state government. And they said, We have to have laws. I agreed. But I said, That's an instrument, only God is your source. Secondly, you've got to give and when you give it has to be given in joy. That applies to me and it applies to you. There are no differences, no exceptions. This is what Christ said, not what I said. We have to give. We have to give in joy. Then we have to expect a miracle. We cannot win this by our laws alone, we cannot win this by our marches alone, we cannot win this by our wishes to solve it, we have to have a miracle. We've got to have a spiritual revival in the hearts of people. You can force me to come into the room with you and sit with you, but you cannot force me to love you, and that's what happened and is happening in the country. The laws can force us to do such and such, but you can sit there side by side and hate each other's guts. And I said, this is where it's at. We've got to get Christ inside us. OK, that brought up a whole new subject. Look at Christianity what it has done. I said, No sir, it hasn't done much because the people who say they believe it haven't allowed it to do much. You cannot equate Christianity with people who say they are Christians. You

and the white are praying and worshipping and living together. Well this isn't Antioch. That's right, it's in the now but it's the same problem and the same answer. It's Christ. Nobody can have Jesus in His fullness and not be colorblind. There isn't anybody. No one can have Jesus in His love and not love his brother and his brother is the man who needs him most. We are torn in our city over our schools and we bus people from here to the North and from the North to the South. It's not only silly, it's cruel. Well what's the answer? Well why don't we be brothers and open our city, open our districts, our areas where we live and be willing to live side by side, then we can go to any school we want to go. You know, it's so simple. When you get down to it, why don't we open up our employment and our jobs and just hire the man that can do the job, whether he's red or black or yellow or white. Let's look at the man. It's not whether the church is black or white, let's be concerned whether we are brothers in the house of God. Or here on the campus. And I asked one of the leading businessmen there that night, are you giving? And he told me how much he had given and how much the white man had taken from him and said, Every time I see a white man I think of what he's done to me. And I said, Now I could turn that around and I could say every time I see certain preachers who have fought me, that's all I could think about, and there's on denomination in this country that used my name in their ads and their stories, they even printed I was in the federal penitentiary, never been in jail in my life. I may wind up in jail, but I haven't been there yet. And every time I think of them, guess what I think about? Now am I being a Christian? Am I giving? No sir, I'm not giving. And I said, You are not giving. You are not giving until you have Jesus and you give in joy and that's the cross. Because everybody wants to have it for himself and nobody wants to have it for himself and somebody else. We come in the world like this. The seed of sin is in our heart and no matter what social reforms we get and God knows we need more than we have, they are not going to work. Because we've got sin in us and we've got to give it up and take the cross and the cross is giving, giving of ourselves, and being willing to be ridiculed and persecuted. We can't lift our hand against one another. We've got to watch our rhetoric and our words because you can kill with words like you can knives and guns. We've got to have Christ and Christ means that we take up His cross daily

and deny ourselves and follow Him. That's giving, that's really giving. And this man that was talking to me, you know what? He burst into tears. Well he said, I've always considered myself a Christian man. I go to church every Sunday, but you've shown me something that I've not been giving. And he said, I'm going to change. He turned to the other men in the room. He said, Brothers, we've got to change. It's true what's been done to us, but the question is, what are we doing? What are we doing back? Are we loving and are we giving? We ended that by putting our arms around each other and praying, praying for ourselves and praying for other people. And I know Jesus can solve it but He can't solve it unless we allow Him to solve it. All right, here we have a situation, 1965 just before we opened the doors of this campus to our first Freshman class I received a telephone call from the United States Government of the Education Division and said, Mr. Roberts, we understand that you are opening the school and you are the president? Yes. We want to know your stand toward the black student. I had applied for certain things from the education department and I knew what he had in mind. And the only way they can get some people to even admit students like that is by law and I said, Well I can tell you my stand. ORU will be international. It will be inter-denominational and it will be inter-racial. He said, But I don't think you understand my question. I said, I do, I do understand your question, and I did. I said, There won't be any difference. Do you understand that you cannot get the loan for which you are applying to HEW without this? I said, We will do this with or without the loan. You don't have to give us a loan to get us to do what's in our heart. If we do it to get the loan, what kind of Christians are we? He said, Mr. Roberts, I've been calling all over America the past three months to the college presidents, I've never got an answer just like this one. But I meant it. Now in the now what does that mean? All right, when you go with a person that's not of your race, you've got to ask yourself at least three questions. Because it's a real problem and people are highly emotional about it to the extent of killing one another. You've got to ask yourself some questions. One is, have I the courage to inform my mother and father? Some say, well what business is it of theirs? Just that they gave you birth, small little matter like that. And the Bible says, Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the earth. They may say yes,

they may say no. The point is that you love enough that they know. They don't find out second hand. They don't let rumors come. I met a fellow the other day who said, Mr. Roberts, have you heard the new rumor? And I said to him, Which one? And he told me and I said, Where did it originate? Oh he said, A certain fellow. I said, Would you be honest with me if I ask you a question? He said, Yes. I said, Didn't you originate it? He said, Yeah. A lot of times rumors you hear are originated by the guy. He says them out loud so he can hear them and he says, I heard it, then he spreads it. Well this actually happens. So this fellow admitted it. Let me tell you something else before I finish that. The other night my mother had to be taken to the emergency ward of the hospital overnight and she's 85 and we thought she was passing that night. Thank God she didn't go. And your sleep is broken and you get up and you go to the hospital and you pray, then you get in your car and come back. And that's when you really think about your parents. Maybe you should have thought about them more before, but you really think when your mother or your father may be losing their life. I have a letter on my desk from one of you who has just had this experience and this girl said that it really made her think about her father. And I had to look in my heart and I've had the rare privilege of sporting my parents. It's been no burden to me. It really hasn't. And I can honestly say that I'd honored my father and my mother and all the money in the world couldn't have bought that that night. You've got to honor your parents, whether you agree with them or disagree with them has nothing to do with it. This is basic humanity. And the second question that you have to ask yourself, would I date that person if he were not that color? Is this a gimmick, is this a fetish, is this a fad? If it is you are not real, you are not real. That's not Christianity, that's not humanity. It's not real. And don't think the other person doesn't know that. They know whether they are an object or not, or whether you are concerned, or you really respect them. And the young people today are teaching older people a great lesson about that, that we must not be objects, physical objects. You just remember it yourself and it's basic to your humanity. Would I do it if they were my color, or am I just going because it's white or it's red or it's black? Am I going because the color, or am I doing it because he's the human being that I respect and that I want to be with?

Do you agree? These are questions I think are basic and I've found that regardless of color the real ones are real and the unreal ones are unreal. And the third one, you've got to ask yourself the question, am I willing and am I ready to face the social implications, because they won't banish. I'm here to tell you the human race is not going to change because the human race is

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rejecting God. I'm here to tell you that there will be a minority of people in the human race that will accept Jesus and take His cross and the rest of them won't do it. So you've got to be willing to face the attitudes of people, attitudes which have been built up and nourished for centuries, attitudes that are wrong. You've got to face it. You will suffer over it and if you suffer over it you have to suffer for joy, or it's not the cross. If you suffer out of bitterness, it's not the cross of Christ. And this is really basic Christianity. 1926 the Indians became citizens of the United States. Did you know that? They were not citizens before. You think they are just now being cruel to the black people? This nation is not a Christian nation and you can just knock your brains out getting mad about it, but they are going to be like that but there will be a minority in this country who will love Jesus and they are not all church folks. And some of them are church folks. But faith is where you find it. Whether it's in a church building or outside one, it's where you find it. And the best way I know how to show honor and respect to my black brothers this week is to do it every week. And we are brothers. And I feel that way about my sons and my daughters, in their relationship with the yellow man or the red man, the black man or the brown man, the white man. They've got to ask those questions, inform their parents, and then ask themselves, would I do that if he or she were my color? And third, am I willing to suffer whatever it takes and I will not do it as a fetish or a fad, I'll do it for humanity's sake, for Christianity's sake. I feel encouraged at ORU. We've got a long way to go. There are some on our campus who make it a fad, on both sides. And they suffer. The price is too big to pay, but if it's really inside you, if you really do it as part of your love for Christ and your brother, it will work. And you

can look anybody in the eye without bitterness and say, this is what God wants me to do. I feel better because I've had this on my mind about two or three years I wanted to say it, so now I'm going to change the order of the meeting and make one or two announcements that are a part of our spiritual outreach, make an announcement that will please 90% of you. And the other 10% if you are usually as vociferous as you usually are, why I'll feel it clear up here. We are going to stop making announcements in the chapels. We have student assemblies and they can be announced. What we announce here has to be in harmony with what we are doing. We don't come into an academic class or a health class or PE class and say, Wait a minute, folks, we want to take 15 minutes and announce about the chapels. We don't do that. Therefore, the academic and the PE and others have no more right to come into our chapel period and take up 10 to 15 minutes, because we only have two little 50 minute periods a week, only two. And we've got to take care of it. If we are going to be basically honest about making a spiritual and the academic and the physical in the same level then we've got to take these 50 minutes and make the most of them for God. And when we walk in this building I know the way most of us feel. We want to walk in quietly with our thoughts turning back to God because it's hard anyway to get your mind off the things that's secular on to God. You know that. And with a bunch of announcements going here and there, hulla baloo, but it's pretty hard to sit down out there and get your thoughts on Christ. Isn't that right? So we've taken the bull by the horns and Brother Bob and I have prayed and studied this out and so we are ready to go. That's why there were no announcements to start with and wasn't it better? Because it's in harmony with this chapel. We are announcing the three black heritage films at three o'clock today, three o'clock tomorrow and three o'clock Friday and the auditorium on the second floor. And I hope you will all be there and they are tremendous films. That's today, tomorrow, the next day at three o'clock. Oh yes, and your witness, that's in harmony with this chapel. Almost every day when I'm in Tulsa and sometimes when I'm away, when I meet people who have been here, people tell me, one of your students really helped me, either by praying for me or a smile or a word. It's getting through. Three hundred and fifty high school juniors and seniors will be here this weekend, what a privilege to witness, what a privilege. Now that kind of announcement is in harmony

with our chapel. Let us stand together please. What time do you have? Twelve till, we are suppose to dismiss at ten till, is that right? We have two minutes? Can I tell you one story? This has to do with Brother Bob Stamps. I've been telling him he's been preaching too long and he timed me the other day and I preached a third longer than he did. And he was very gently reminded me and I've been hunting a story. I found onethis morning. This preacher graduated from Yale University from the divinity school and he was proud of Yale and every year he preached one sermon about dear old Yale. And it took 15 minutes for his introduction and 15 minutes for each letter in the word ^Yale, plus 15 minutes conclusion. And when he got to the word "Y" 15 minutes on youth. And "A" I forgot what it was, but it was 15 minutes on that. And "L" was for love. And "E" was for excellence, and then 15 minutes, it totals an hour and a half, wore people out. So he called people up to pray and everybody prayed and then he dismissed the service, but one old brother was still kneeling. And when he had to go he went over and said, Brother, I've got to go. Go ahead and pray. But when you leave go out the side door. By the way, why are you praying so long? He said, Pastor, I was just thanking the Lord that you did not attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. God bless you, you are dismissed.