

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT THE BROWN
MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: First, I want to give honor to God – without him this day would not be possible.

[Applause]

And it is an incredible honor and joy to be here at Brown on the occasion of your 104th anniversary. Congratulations.

[Applause]

So this church has a powerful role that it plays in this neighborhood and in all of Brooklyn, all in New York City. This church is one of the great churches this city, when it comes to doing not only the work of spiritual renewal, but also of civic renewal. This church is a conscience for this borough and for this city. I want to thank you for that, and I want to thank your pastor. It is true. I have known him 30 years and he is a great man.

[Applause]

And whenever I talked to him, I know he feels deeply the lives of everyone that he pastors and the greater community. When he fights for affordable housing, when he fights for social justice is not something he does just as an idle task time. It's something he does with his whole heart. He feels the urgency of need and knows that something can and must be done. That's why this is a place where people come to do the work of change to do the work of making our communities better. So let us thank from the bottom of our hearts, Reverend Clinton Miller for all he does.

[Applause]

I have had the great joy of knowing the Miller family. Back in the year, 1989, I had the honor of working on David Dinkins' first campaign for mayor and I had the role on that campaign – it was the lowest role on the organizational chart. I was the volunteer coordinator and one day a woman came in to volunteer and she was full of purpose and focus, and she knew so much her name, Flora Miller, a great woman.

[Applause]

And I really admired her. I appreciated her. I enjoyed her company. The only thing was I realized after a time, that she was coordinating me more than I was coordinating her. She had a lot to teach me and she did, and we miss her, don't we? We miss her, but her spirit lives on. Her spirit lives, and I remember her with joy and Reverend, I want you also to know that Chirlane and I think about your family a lot, and we're praying for your dad, Bill, and we are with you. His great family has done so much for this church. This church has done so much for the city and I am here just to take a moment to take stock of where we stand, because I think you would agree if you want to hear from naysayers, and if you want to hear from doubting Thomas's, you can turn on the TV any time you can open a newspaper, you can go online and you could really feel very bad about life. But if you want to feel some hope, you come here. If you want to feel some faith, you come here.

[Applause]

But if you want to feel some faith in this city, just think about for a moment what the people have done. Do you want to feel some hope for this country? Think about what the people have done. Not always the most controversial moments or figures, but what the people as a whole have done. I came in here today with my VoteNYC mask on to celebrate this momentous election because we all now get to say those very, very important words: thank you, and congratulations, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris who is changing this country already and will do so much more, and as flung open the doors of leadership to everyone.

[Applause]

And thank you, and congratulations, President-elect Joe Biden.

[Applause]

And I could say the words President-elect Joe Biden all day long, and I would be happy like a mantra. Just keep saying it, it'll make you a calm you down. It will make you feel a little better, but the people did that – in the middle of a pandemic, the people came out in droves. Think about it. Did you see those lines for early voting? You were one of them? I was two, three and a half hours, but I'll tell you, you could be frustrated. You could be upset. You're waiting in line, but I felt uplifted. There were so many people who wanted to make their voice heard, and again, it would not have shocked us at all – with all the problems we confronted in 2020 and all the pain and all the challenges that people had just said, I can't do this. I'm not going to be a part of this. It wouldn't have shocked us that people didn't feel willing to go out and vote. But did you notice there was no fear – there was resolve and people showed up and they have now changed this nation.

[Applause]

And that is my simple point today, what the people do, because here in this city, this epicenter of the coronavirus crisis, what we went through in March and April, unimaginable, what this church went through, the elders you lost, the loved ones, the revered figures in this church community, we went through so much and yet there was no quit at Brown Memorial. There was no quit in

Brooklyn. There was no quit in New York City. We came back. We literally went from worst to first. The first shall be last, and the last shall be first. We proved it here in New York City this summer. We became one of the safest places in the entire United States of America, and now we face a challenge again, but we can't have amnesia. We can't forget what we just achieved. When I think about the battle we waged against the coronavirus and how far we came, it gives me hope. When I think of all those people standing in line to vote, it gives me hope. When I think about our school communities, our educators and staff and parents and kids who brought back our school system when they said it couldn't be done, and we have a struggle ahead right now, I'm not going to lie to you, but I do want to let you know, school is open tomorrow and that's a blessing, and every additional day school was open as a blessing. The people did that, and so I conclude with this simple point, never let anyone diminish your power. Never let anyone tell you what you can't do. I like to say never let anyone talk you out of your own power, because we have overcome so much in this city, and yes, a second wave is bearing down upon us, but we can stop it. We can stop it with all of our resolve. Every single time people take those simple acts to protect each other it helps everyone and it will not be the same holidays. I hate to tell you, and I'm in pain myself. I won't see some of the people I love most these holidays. I won't travel and they won't travel. We won't get to do everything that we normally do, but we will fight back and we will overcome the coronavirus. I know it.

[Applause]

There is a vaccine finally, amen. There is a new president who will give us direction and leadership and real truth about how we fight back. There is hope so we will have some tough times in the weeks ahead. I don't doubt it, but I have total and absolute faith in you, and in all other New Yorkers. We have overcome before – we will overcome again. Someone said to me a few weeks ago, do you think New York City will ever regain its glory? And I said, I'm sorry, I think that's the wrong question because New York City is wonderful, but New York City has a lot of things we need to fix. New York City has disparities that are unacceptable. New York City needs to do a lot better. So the question is not, can we regain our past glory, but can we reach our greater glory, and the answer is yes, because of every one of you. Thank you. Thank you for keeping the faith. Thank you for waging this fight and bringing us forward, and God bless you all.

[Applause]

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