

(organ playing)

- Good morning and welcome Duke Chapel, on this the last Sunday in the Christian season of Easter. This is employee Sunday and we welcome those Duke employees who are with us this morning. Our two lectors are Duke employees, Selden Smith and Maureen Cullins. We also welcome today for the first Sunday of this summer, our summer choir. Under the direction of Donna Sparks. If you're around Durham for the summer and would like to sing in the choir, we invite you to do so and we're glad to have these talented musicians with us for the summer. Our guest preacher today is Dr. David Bartlett, who teaches preaching at Yale Divinity School. This is his first visit here at Duke Chapel and we welcome him as we welcome you. Let us stand for the greeting. Christ is risen.

Congregation: The Lord is risen indeed.

- Glory and honor, dominion and power be to God forever and ever.

Congregation: Christ is risen. Alleluia. (organ playing) (congregation singing)

- Let us pray. O God, in whom we live and move and have our being, we have gathered in your presence to sing your praise, and to give thanks for all that you have done for us. We also give thanks this morning for those who work to make this university possible. For the many unsung heroes, and those who unselfishly give so much to make this a wonderful place to be. Bless each employee and all those who have gathered here for worship. Lift up the prayer of each heart into one harmony of worship and service, that we might truly be one body in Christ. Speak to us, spirit of life, in word and melody and quiet, that we may be renewed in our faith and strengthened for your service. This we ask in Christ name, amen. You may be seated.

- Let us pray together for illumination. O living God, bring us forth from death to life, so that the scriptures are read and your word is proclaimed, we might be brought to a sure and living faith in you. Amen. The first reading is taken from the acts of the apostles, chapter 16, starting with the 16th verse. One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortunetelling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, these men are slaves of the most high God who proclaim to you a way of salvation. She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said these men are disturbing our city. They are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe. The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into the prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the

stocks. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, do not harm yourself, for we are all here. The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, sirs, what must I do to be saved? They answered, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household. They spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all who were in his house. At that same hour of the night, he took them and washed their wounds. Then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house, and set food before them. And he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God. This is the word of God. Thanks be to God.

- The psalm for today is number 97, and is found on page 817 in your hymnal. Please stand and join in singing responsively. (organ playing) ♪ The Lord reigns ♪ ♪ Let the earth rejoice ♪ ♪ Let the many coastlines be glad ♪ ♪ Clouds and thick darkness surround the Lord ♪ ♪ Righteousness and justice are the foundation ♪ ♪ Of God's throne ♪ ♪ Fire goes before the Lord ♪ ♪ And burns up his adversaries round about ♪ ♪ The Lord's lightnings illumine the world ♪ ♪ The earth sees and trembles ♪ ♪ The mountains melt like wax before the Lord ♪ ♪ Before the Lord of all the earth ♪ ♪ The heavens proclaim God's righteousness ♪ ♪ And all the peoples behold God's glory ♪ ♪ All the worshipers of images are put to shame ♪ ♪ Who make their boast in worthless idols ♪ ♪ All gods bow down before the Lord ♪ ♪ Zion hears and is glad ♪ ♪ And the daughters of Judah rejoice ♪ ♪ Because of your judgments O God ♪ ♪ For you O Lord are most high over all the earth ♪ ♪ You are exalted far above all gods ♪ ♪ The Lord loves those who hate evil ♪ ♪ Preserves the lives of his faithful ♪ ♪ And delivers them from the hand of the wicked ♪ ♪ Light dawns for the righteous ♪ ♪ And joy for the upright in heart ♪ ♪ Rejoice in the Lord O you righteous ♪ ♪ And give thanks to God's holy name ♪ ♪ All glory be to your creator ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ our savior ♪ ♪ And to the holy spirit ♪ ♪ Blessed trinity ♪ ♪ As it was er' time began ♪ ♪ Is now and will be forevermore ♪ You may be seated.

- This reading is from the 22nd chapter of the revelation of John. Beginning with verse 12. See, I am coming soon. My reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. I am the alpha and the omega, first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life, and may enter the city by the gates. It is I Jesus who sent my angel to you with this testimony for this churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. The spirit and the bride say come. And let everyone who hears say come. And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift. The one who testifies to these things says surely I am coming soon. Amen. Come Lord Jesus. This is the word of the Lord. (organ playing) (choir singing)

- The gospel lesson is from the gospel of John, the last verses of the 17th chapter. Jesus is praying for his disciples and for us. I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word. That they may all be one, as you father are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us. So that the world may believe that you sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one. So that the

world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also whom you have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous father, the world does not know you, but I know you and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them and I will make it known so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them. This is the word of the Lord. Monday was commencement at our university. Someone has said that it's not a university, it's a multiversity. And the truth is it does sometimes seem barely to hang together. All those different disciplines representing quite different ways of understanding the world. This year, a bitter labor dispute, a strike just barely avoided. Graduate students still angry at the administration for low pay. Three whole departments facing possible extinction so that we can meet a shrinking budget. But the band was playing, and the philosophy department who seldom speak to each other were at least marching side by side. The staff, who had briefly started out on strike, was now cheering the students, and the graduate students were almost, for one day, forgiving the administration. It's always splendid and colorful and a little chaotic and very, very fragile. As we marched through the gates onto the quadrangle for the ceremony, I saw standing at the very edge of the spectators two young men, each holding a placard. And on each placard was a verse from the gospel of John, the gospel we just read. On one placard, the sign said I am the way and the truth and the life, says Jesus. And on the other placard, no one comes to the father but by me. It was a kind of remarkable witness to the rigor and unity of the Christian faith, in the midst of a secular multiversity. It sounded quite appropriately a characteristic note from John's gospel. John's gospel often reminds us that as Christians, we are not finally citizens of this world, with all its bustle and its competing ideologies. In the passage we read this morning, Jesus prays for us to be a special separate family. Finding our meaning in our relationship to God, to Christ and to one another. Righteous father, he prays, the world does not know you, but I know you and these whom you have sent to me. In John's gospel, the church stands over against the world. We find our meaning in Christ and in one another. We challenge the multiversity by calling all those people to leave their diversity and come join us in the one true university. The one true united family in the church. The young men with their signs caught the characteristic note of John's gospel just right. We Christians have been blessed with the way and the truth and the life. We stand here a little to one side of your secular parade, and invite you to come over here and join us. That is an honorable way of being Christian in a secular university and a secular world. But it is not the only way. One of the gifts of scripture is that the Bible provides for us a different models of faithfulness. John shows us a kind of faithfulness that says to the world, come over here and join us Christians. Acts shows a different kind of faithfulness, where Christians say to the world, we're coming out there to confront you. This is my first time in Duke's chapel. I know it only by reputation and by my admiration from afar. But as I drove up this morning it became clear that by architecture and geography you are not allowed to be a shrinking violet on this campus. You are almost destined, called I think, to bring the gospel into the midst of secular confusion and conversation and hope. And so at the very least I think the model of the church in Acts serves to supplement the kind of picture of separated Christianity we see in John. Paul and Silas in the story we heard from Acts, do not stand at the side of the road with a sign saying come over here and join us. They march boldly into the midst of the economic and intellectual and political society of their time and say here we are. Pay attention. Their strategy for faithfulness I think, can be a model for us at Duke and Yale and in the secular multiversities of our time. Look how they do it. Paul and Silas speak and act for justice as Christian people. The poor slave girl who cries after them is twice oppressed. She is oppressed by a demonic spirit. She is oppressed by her

owners, who exploit her for her pain. She cries out after Paul and Silas, these men are slaves of the most high God. She speaks truth even in her torment until finally Luke says this about the blessed apostle Paul. Paul, very much annoyed. Turned and said to the spirit, come out of her. And the woman is freed from her torment, and useless at last to her owners. Now I love the realism of that passage. Paul finally acts for justice, only when he is so much annoyed by the pushy woman and her strutting exploitation that he is finally nagged into speaking for God's truth. And when we are honest, we will admit that even for Christian people, our love of justice often only emerges when we're nagged or forced or demonstrated into it. What does it mean, according to Acts, to be faithful for justice? It means that when we are nagged and pushed and demonstrated and prodded into seeing the injustice around us and are very much annoyed, as we are bound to be, we will use our annoyance to serve God's justice, not to protect our privilege. Women were not going to find their rightful role in church and society because men benevolently looked out and said let us be just at last. We male leaders in church and society have been nagged and pushed and demonstrated against until we got very annoyed. And when the spirit was with church and society as leaders, we have sometimes, sometimes, been graced to use that annoyance for reconciliation and for justice, and not for building the fortresses of our defense even higher. I grew up in a church which integrated for the first time in the 1950s. Believe me, that church did not integrate because the deacons went out on the streets trying to make it a multiracial congregation. It integrated because some black folk, who everyone said were much too pushy, came down the aisle one Sunday morning at the baptist invitation and asked to join that church, and when they got voted down the first time, they came back the next month and walked down the aisle again, and lots of people in our church got very annoyed. And some people knew that that annoyance was God pushing us towards justice. Christian faithfulness will not avoid annoyance. It may let us use our annoyance to serve God's just realm. Paul and Silas not only act for justice, they evangelize. They bear witness to their faith. Not standing over against the world with their placards, but right there in the midst of the world's hustle and bustle and pain. They luck out, of course. They have a kind of perfect occasion for a witness. There's this huge earthquake, miraculous escape, the jailer asks what every Christian wishes a neighbor would someday ask. What must we do to be saved, no one's ever asked me that question. But it comes to us still, the opportunity to bear witness, to questions that are more subtle, on occasions that are less dramatic, to proclaim our faith in God and in Jesus Christ. Christians like me, maybe like you. We're quick to talk about our favorite book. Our favorite restaurant. A movie you've just got to see. Try it, read it, see it, we say. Why can't we talk about our favorite church or the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Try it, see it, taste it. Taste and see the Lord is good, says the Psalm. Why can't we just once say that. Paul and Silas seek for justice. They bear witness. And then in a way a minor point, but it struck me as I read the passage this week. Paul and Silas are considerate and kind to the secular authorities who are their oppressors. Considerate, kind, respectful. Those sound like old fashioned, Victorian, Boy Scout virtues. Girl Scout virtues too. But they're not far from the old translation of the greatest Christian virtue, charity. Faith, hope, charity abide. These three. Anyway, after the earthquake, the jailer thinking that his charges have just escaped, is about to kill himself. And you think it would be a golden opportunity for our heroes to leave and leave their old enemy to his own well deserved fate. But no, they stay around out of a kind of odd, 1st century Christian politeness. To spare him trouble. Don't harm yourself, Paul calls to the distraught jailer. We are all here. When we Christians take our quest for justice into the world, there is always the danger that our zeal will turn to meanness. Have you noticed the rhetoric around abortion clinics lately? Or at the sites of executions? Usually the placards and the slogans pit Christian against Christian. When I was young we used

to sing, naively, they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Now oftentimes, they know we are Christians by our nastiness. It's not right up there with justice and evangelism at the heart of the Christian life. But Paul and Silas do model civility. In the church where we worship, the minister often closes the service with these words. Go forth into the world in peace, charity, kindness. Not a bad charge. Go forth into the world in peace, but not in peace alone. Paul and Silas, notice this, it's so different from us, I think. Paul and Silas go into the world in pride. Pride in who they are as Christian believers. Peace is not enough if it means they have to hide their faith or sneak about being Christian. After the earthquake, the police tell the jailer to let Paul go. And the jailer goes and tells Paul, the magistrate sent word to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace. And Paul says, they have beaten us in public. We are uncondemned men who are Roman citizens. Are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not. Certainly not. I am not ashamed of the gospel, says Paul elsewhere. And Acts ends with him in prison again, preaching openly. Boldly. When we go out into the world, we go in peace and justice and charity but we also go in openness and honesty and boldness. We do not pretend that we seek justice and love, charity because we are people of goodwill. We are called to justice and charity because we serve the one who died and rose again. We acknowledge our commitments. We are straightforward about our reasons. We claim our citizenship, not only in heaven and not only in the church but here in Duke and Durham and North Carolina and the United States of America. We have every right and every obligation to join the public forum from our Christian convictions. Not to coerce, but to persuade, unashamed, unembarrassed. At that commencement service in New Haven last Monday, we ended as we always end, with a hymn. It's a kind of odd, anachronistic reminder. That in the beginning our multiversity was just a little college. With a purpose unified and clear. To train leaders for church and civil state. In some ways we have come a very far distance from that vision. But there we were with those old words before us. Invited to sing a hymn which took us back and might point us forward too. The faculty did not sing very loudly. No one would confuse us with a great church choir. Some people of course find singing aloud embarrassing. Others I know, found the words hopelessly fantastic and outmoded. But above the polite mumbling and over the sound of the band, I did hear one voice begin, quite loud. Quite clear. O God, beneath thy guiding hand, our exiled fathers crossed the sea. And when they trod the wintry strand, with prayer and psalm they worshiped thee. And then a few more voices, not anything resembling unanimity, but clearly, audibly, unmistakably, a testimony, a witness. And at the last, somewhat, somewhat louder, a quite respectable hope. And here thy name, O God of love, their children's children shall adore. 'Til these eternal hills remove and spring adorns the earth no more. And then, perhaps because they knew the notes, or perhaps because they believed it, or intended to believe it, a goodly multitude of voices sang. Amen! Amen. (organ playing) (all singing)

- The Lord be with you. Let us pray, be seated. We've just sung of the kingship of God over all the world. Let us this day pray for the peace and prosperity of all the peoples of the world. Almighty God we lift our hopes and prayers to you for all the peoples of the world. You know their condition, their need as we do not. And our thoughts of them are poor because we've not cared enough to seek knowledge of them. Accept our prayers as we give expression to the concern in our hearts, as we unite our wills with your own mighty intention of good for all the world's people. We remember before you the peoples of Africa and the Middle East. Ancient home of kings, birth place of our culture, lands of bitter wrong, of ignorance and fear, disease and death. Yet lands of promise. Of great rivers and mountains and plains, eager and strong men and women seeking and finding freedom, seeking and finding you. Particularly we pray for the peoples of

Zambia. Of South Africa, of Ethiopia, of Israel. Of Jordan, of Syria, of Lebanon. Pour out your spirit upon people everywhere. We remember before you the peoples of Asia, that their divisions may be healed, their wisdom increased to accept from other cultures only that which ennobles and exalts. Particularly we pray for the divided peoples of Korea. O God who burst the bounds of death on Easter, burst the bonds that enslave us to ourselves and separate us from others. We remember before you the peoples of Latin America, struggling upward from chaos into swift achievement and promise. Yet hampered by tragic failures of government and enlightenment. That they may find their destiny anew in your purpose. Particularly we pray for the Earth Summit meeting in Rio. Oh God may we unite with peoples everywhere to care for the earth. We remember before you the peoples of Europe, many times crushed by war and born down with old divisions. That as ancient bearers of the message of Christ, they may again be inspired by your power in their common life. We remember particularly the suffering peoples of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia. O God of peace, pour out your peaceful spirit on suffering people everywhere. We remember before you our own peoples on this continent, proud, tireless, groping for new faith even as they seek to live up to the old. O God we pray that without condescension or overweening trust in our own powers we may humbly play our part in your holy desire for the world's life. This morning do we pray for the homeless, the sick, the bereaved among us. O God, you promised us your comforter, pour out your comforting spirit upon us and upon people everywhere. Grant O God that our imagination may be stretched, to enable us to really feel the poignant needs of others, to really celebrate with vibrant exaltation of people of everywhere. Give us all to dwell in a large place, and make your church strong in every land, a visible witness in every tongue for every people, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen. As a people who have received so much, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to the God who has offered so much to us. (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing)

- Let us pray. We give thanks O God for every gift received and for each gift we are blessed in giving. May these gifts bring light to those who walk in darkness, hope to those who live in despair, and justice to those who are oppressed. Grant each giver a sense of participation in the most important opportunity of all time, to share your love with the world. To this end we dedicate our offerings and ourselves. Amen. 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 trespassed against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Let us go forth into the world in peace, sharing kindness, promoting justice, witnessing boldly and exemplifying God's love for all people. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and fellowship of the holy spirit be with you all. (choir singing) (organ playing) (all singing) (organ playing)