

- Duke University chapel service of worship, March second, 1980. (organ music) (light organ music) (organ music) (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music)

- Friends, I greet you today in the name of the one who creates and sustains us, who saves us, and who walks with us. We are come together this morning in the presence of Almighty God, and of the whole company of heaven, to make humble confession of our sins and to our God, to set forth praise worthy of God, to hear God's most holy word, to declare our faith in God, to ask for ourselves in all people those things that are necessary for the body and soul, and to offer unto God the service of our lives, and to receive God's blessing. Therefore, let us begin by confessing our sins that we may claim again the forgiveness already offered unto us. Let us pray. Almighty God who art rich in mercy to all those who call upon thee, hear us, we beseech thee, as we confess our sins before thee. In the presence of thy love and our neighbor's need, we acknowledge our disobedience and ingratitude, our pride and willfulness, our heedlessness and indifference. We confess that we are not worthy to be called thy children, yet do thou in mercy keep us as thine own. Grant us true repentance, and forgive us all our sins through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. Let us confess in silence our personal sins. There is no sin so terrible that God's love cannot forgive. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven.

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- Let us give thanks, for God is good, and God's love is everlasting. Thanks be to God whose love has made us, thanks be to God whose mercy forgives us, thanks be to God whose promise secures us, amen. There is a car parked out front which has its lights on. It's a North Carolina license plate, HLK 939. There will be an organ recital tonight at seven p.m. by Grigg Fountain. Today in the memorial chapel to my right immediately following this service, there will be a service of holy communion. We welcome to the pulpit today the Right Reverend Paul Moore, bishop of New York, the Episcopal Church. We look forward to the message he will bring to us. Let us pray. Prepare our hearts, O Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own, that hearing we may also obey your will through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. The Old Testament lesson is from the 61st chapter of Isaiah, verses one through nine. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, "because the Lord has anointed me "to bring good tidings to the afflicted, "He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, "to proclaim liberty to the captives, "and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, "and the day of vengeance of our God, "to comfort all who mourn, "to grant to those who mourn in Zion, "to give them a garland instead of ashes, "the oil of gladness instead of mourning, "the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit, "that they may be called oaks of righteousness, "the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. "They shall build up the ancient ruins, "they shall raise up the former devastations, "they shall repair the ruined cities, "the devastations of many generations. "Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks, "foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine dressers, "but you shall be called the priests of the Lord, "men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God, "you shall eat the wealth of the nations, "and in their riches you shall glory. "Instead of your shame you shall have a double

portion, "instead of dishonor you shall rejoice in your lot, "therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion, "yours shall be an everlasting joy. "For I the Lord love justice, "I hate robbery and wrong, "I will faithfully give them their recompense, "and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. "Their descendants shall be known among the nations, "and their offspring in the midst of the peoples, "all who see them shall acknowledge them, "that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed." Here ends the reading from the Old Testament. (organ music) (choir singing)

- The gospel lesson is from the 16th chapter of Matthew, verses 24 to 27. Please stand for the reading of the gospel. "Then Jesus told His disciples, "If anyone would come after me, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. "For whoever would save his life will lose it, "and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. "For what will it profit a person, "if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? "Or what shall a person give in return for his life? "For the Son of man is to come with his angels "in the glory of his Father, "and then he will repay everyone for what he has done." Praise be to God. (organ music) (choir singing)

- Almighty God, open our hearts and open our minds and open our lives to your love, amen. It is good to be in the sunny south once more, having come down from a lovely day in New York City to celebrate winter sports. I think if they're worried about where to have the next Winter Olympics, I've got a nomination for them. But I must say, I'm impressed by those of you who are here, and who have come out through the snow for this service, and it's a great privilege for me to preach here for the first time in this beautiful chapel. I can't believe that this is not an Episcopal institution, (Congregation laughs) but it makes our cathedral in New York look like a humble little chapel in the wilderness. It is beautiful though, seriously, and I feel very much at home here, and very grateful to Bob and the others who invited me to be at Duke today. The first lesson this morning from Isaiah is the famous passage which our Lord Himself used when He first preached in the synagogue, proclaiming liberty to the captives. The second lesson spoke of our Lord saying to His disciples, "If any man would come after me, "let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." And the other text I'd like to use this morning, "I, if I be lifted up, "will draw all men unto me." The theme being the openness of Christ and how this is deeply part of the passion, the suffering, and the love of Christ. Did it ever occur to you that the way Jesus died was no accident of history? Not just because the Romans happened, at that time, to execute most criminals by means of a cross, but rather that there was a much deeper significance about the way He died, so that the symbol of His church coming down through the ages would always be the cross, always symbolize the openness of Jesus whereby His hands were nailed open, and His arms stretched open forever in the symbol of the openness of His love. We believe that the church, you and I, are the body of Christ. This is not just an easy symbol, a word picture, but it has a very, very deep reality, and if indeed we are the body of Christ, then we must be exposing our whole body, our arms nailed open as a church, our arms nailed open as individuals. So I'd like to talk through a little bit today about the physical openness of the church, the intellectual openness of the church, and the openness of the church in its heart and in its love. Around so many of our congregations, our invisible doors, the first parish I ever went to symbolized it so well, it was an inner city parish in a very poor neighborhood of Jersey City, and they had this lovely Old English lychgate over the entrance to the garden, having been built in more prosperous times, and across it were inscribed in gothic letters, "Enter His gates with thanksgiving." Beneath, on the iron gate, were the signs: Keep Out. This is what we keep saying in our churches again and again and again, oh yes, we welcome all people, but when they come into the churches, they do not feel at home for so many,

many different reasons, and it isn't just that the Christians are keeping out those who are not Christians, the Christians are keeping each other out of each other's churches. We pray for the unity of the church, and we bemoan our divisions, so often blamed on doctrinal differences, and we labor hours in our seminaries trying to resolve these. That's not the real reason we're separate, I think if tomorrow morning all the doctrines of all the churches were made exactly the same, we would still be separate. It was a very convenient thing, I know to my grandparents and parents, that when the Irish, the unwashed Irish came into America, they were Roman Catholics, and therefore in another church. It's been a very convenient thing that most black people have been Baptists for those white churches that were not, because then we didn't really have to mingle very much, and so on and so on and so on, and then some of the cultural differences. What keeps, I think, the Episcopalians apart from the Methodists more than anything else is that one uses grape juice at the Eucharist and the other uses wine. Don't think our Lord is too concerned about that, of course He would have... He used wine, and that's quite clear but... (Congregation laughs) What I'm trying to say is these differences really have more to do with culture and with differences of economy, of class, of money, of race, and of culture than of doctrine. And we do close ourselves one to another. I remember feeling so strongly in the 60s when the younger generation was so culturally different from the old, I thought there was a border of invisible doors there which were keeping our young people out of church because of their hair. And it would be wonderful, wouldn't it, someday, if people looked around a community, and said isn't it strange that the only place in this community where all the different parts of the city come together in love are the churches of God? That's a long ways away, but also, we have to be concerned about the openness of every part of church's life to everybody. Finally, in the Episcopal church, we've caught up with the rest of Protestantism, and now have women in the priesthood, and that was not an easy fight. But it is beginning, I think, to deal with a much more subtle kind of theological closedness, the cosmic sexism of a male God, which is another invisible door keeping out many of the levels of the psyches of our women as well as much of the sensitivity of response of men who are responding unconsciously to a maleness in God rather than understanding God to be full of all kinds of personal being. Another great battle in the church has been the battle to accept homosexual people equally to all others. Gay people, as they're now called, who over generations and centuries have been loving pastors, have been martyrs in the life of the church, but now we say no, they may not be part of us. Is God as interested in what people do in private to give each other pleasure as He is interested in starvation, as He is interested in unemployment, in the breaking of people's spirits in war, in injustice? These are the things He's interested in if you read your Bibles from the Old Testament to the New, rather than the petty littlenesses of some aspects of our personal life. And it may be that our corporate sin is much more grievous to Him than our individual sin. But the point is the reverse is to be physically open in our churches to all people, and all parts of the life of our church, judging each person hopefully the way in which God judges us. Sinners, yes, but everyone made equally precious in God's own image. Everyone, no matter how repulsive or difficult for us to accept, having down there deep within him or her, the image, the glorious image of God Himself, ultimate dignity, ultimate glory in the heart of every single human being, every being for whom Christ died. Jesus said I have got many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. Albeit, when he, the spirit of truth, has come, he will guide you into all truth. There are invisible doors locking people out of the church on the intellectual level. I don't think there is anything more heretical than this kind of rigid fundamentalism, whether it be a fundamentalism of Bible or of doctrine whereby we say you cannot come in because you have ideas which I cannot handle. And we say to our people close your mind when you enter the church. This kind of dogmatic rigidity has been more

damaging than anything else in the life of the church, and only intellectually and in terms of evangelism, but also this is what has cost lives in the wars of religion down over the centuries, and still does. Now remember that when God Almighty wanted to totally reveal Himself, He did not write theology. He came into the changing, dynamic actions of history, and the response of people to that. He took on a human person, person of Jesus, a person remains the same person, but a person can always change, a person responds to different events that come upon him, and he can respond differently now than he will tomorrow, because the constancy of his loving personality needs different responses today than tomorrow, and therefore in order to remain the same, the person of Christ keeps responding differently. Because what was loving yesterday is not loving today. Time makes ancient good uncouth, in the words of that old hymn, so in order to remain the same open, compassionate Jesus, Jesus must continue to express love in different ways. And this is where we find God, not in any rigid doctrine. Well, think then of the church, the body of Christ, clumsily trying over the ages to respond differently to different times. And think of the image now for a moment of Jesus as the word made flesh, word, mind made flesh, and think of the unfolding by the action of the Holy Spirit of the mind God gave us responding to the word made flesh as the mind of man through the grace of God reveals deeper and deeper truths about reality. Well now, the body of Christ must be opened to respond to these new truths, whether it be Darwin, whether it be Freud, whether it be Marx, the mainstream of the Protestant tradition and the Anglican tradition has been this, not being willing to close our mind in the fundamentalism of scripture or doctrine or even in the fundamentalism of morality, because we reject any kind of infallibility, we reject any kind of total fundamentalism because it is intellectually dishonest, and God gave us our mind. We reject any kind of puritan legalism, which brings us back to the closed Old Testament law which Christ died to free us from. Therefore, as I say, we can look at Darwin, we can look at Freud, we can look at Marx, we can look at biblical criticism knowing and having faith, and here's the important thing, having faith in the mind that God gave us, that if we use that mind with discipline and integrity, we'll go deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper into that new truth, that new intellectual truth, and we'll find there what? Find there the truth of Almighty God we never knew before, and it will coincide with the truth we learned in Revelation. So the Darwin makes more glorious and rich the doctrine of creation, Freud makes more glorious and mysterious the depths of our unconscious, out of which our love of God comes as well as our sexual love one for another. And the spiritual life can be much better understood and more deeply entered into because of the discoveries of that Jewish, atheist, strange, and biblical criticism certainly makes us know more fully how the word of God came to be in the Bible. And you see it's so exciting to be open, open to other persons of different kinds and one's self, open to new ideas and not being afraid to look at them, and open, open in your very life, 'cause you never know what's gonna happen next. And instead of being afraid of it and pulling back in the corner, and hiding yourself under the skirts of Jesus, rather, you are open as He is to whatever is coming next, to respond with your whole being, your mind and your body and your heart. With the great courage that He showed us upon the cross with His open heart, and there comes together, there coincides openness and passion, because there is a price to this openness of mind and heart and life, and that price may be the price Jesus Himself was willing to pay. If the church only will look like Him, if the church only will nail open her arms, then the chances are she will look more like Him because she will begin to be scarred with the whips and lashes and nails of those who killed Him. Then perhaps we can bear with Him in pride these scars and wounds of conflict, perhaps the years that are just ahead with all the danger we see coming upon us will be a time when the church will be asked to once more bear the scars of loving. So how much better, how much better to be loving and to be

wounded than to be afraid and to be guarded and to be careful and to be clean? How much better? How much more thrilling? And how much closer to understanding what life is really all about? Throwing yourself with passion as Christ did, the word passion, meaning suffering and love, loving with enough passion to be willing to be passionate in your suffering, how much better to throw yourself into this? And in doing so, exploring the depths of the pain of Christ until you know the depths of the love of Christ, and getting far enough down into the darkness, into the fear, into the loneliness, and the hurt and the pain, getting far enough down to understand the depths of His suffering so that with Him you will be able to come up in the glory of Easter, because that glory is not easily won, it is no cheap grace, it comes only after we dare go down with Him that He will bring us up with Him. And we go down with Him, as it were, with open arms, opening our arms in love, our minds in truth, to share the openness of Jesus Christ. This is how our church must be if our church is to be His body. And then... then there may be... a touch of real glory upon us. A touch of real glory, and we will be lifting His cross up so high that all persons will see it and will be drawn as by a magnet of love to His image of openness, compassion, peace, and glory. Let us pray. We kneel, O Lord, before your cross in wonder at those open arms. Withdraw us to your love, give us courage to open our arms in love, our minds to truth, our lives to courage, that we may dare to stand with you as you share our pain. And grant, O Lord, that we may dare to go down into the darkness with you so that you may raise us on Easter day to the glory of the risen life of your kingdom, amen. (organ music) (choir singing)

- Having heard the word sung, read, and proclaimed, let us now one voice affirm what we believe. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in the truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the spirit. We trust God who calls us to be the church, to celebrate life and its fullness, 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 Lord be with you.

- And also with you.

- Let us pray. O Lord our God, on this day, we worship you in wonder and in love. Our minds cannot contain all we know and believe about you, nor can our words express you, O Lord. Yet in Christ we see your glory and hear your word and know your love. Open our eyes to see you now, open our ears to hear your command, open our hearts to love you and our neighbor more through Jesus Christ our Lord. For all your goodness and grace, we thank you, O God, for life and health, for family and friends, for all the good gifts of your love by which we are sustained from day to day, for every pure and lovely joy, even the purity of cold and wind and snow and all its raw beauty, for every true joy and every good gift we give thanks to you, O God. We bring to you now in our prayer the needs of your children everywhere. We pray for all those millions of persons, strangers, perhaps to us, but known, surely, and loved, surely, by you, all those who this day hurt and starve while we and others waste our bread. O God, let not our consciences rest at peace until the good harvest of this earth is freely shared with every person in need. We pray for those whose lives are shadowed by sorrow, those whose sickness knows no cure, those whose sadness knows no comfort, those whose loneliness cannot be filled, those who in bitterness will not forget, bind up their wounds, O Lord, and lift their hearts for healing to your presence. We pray, O Lord, for your church throughout the world, make it truly open in the name and spirit of Christ our Lord. Where it is strong, make it gentle, where it is weak, make

it strong, where it is honored, make it humble, where it is persecuted, lift up its head, where it is wrong, overrule it, where it is right, make it stand. Give us strength for this day, and for this life, but give us life not for this world alone, but through Christ bring us to that new age, and new life with you. Hear us in these words and through these prayers, and hear us as we pray together now as our Lord has taught us, saying 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 and the power and the glory forever, amen. (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing)

- We pray, O Lord our God, that you will accept this offering which we make in your holy name. And as we make this offering, send down your Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, to bless and consecrate our bodies, minds, and spirit, that we may give ourselves to you as a living daily sacrifice, a reasonable and desirable gift to offer through your Son, our Savior, even Jesus the Christ, amen. (organ music)

- Now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you and with those whom you love this day and forevermore. (choir singing) (organ music)