

(bright organ music) (classical organ music) (classical organ music) (classical organ music) (slow tempo organ music) (slow classical organ music) (slow classical organ music) (mid tempo classical organ music) (bright classical organ music) (bright classical organ music) (bright classical organ music)

- Welcome this morning to Duke Chapel. We're particularly delighted to see so many visitors. Our preacher this morning is the Reverend Doctor Dennis M Campbell who is Dean of our Divinity School and a leader in theological education in this country, and we welcome him again to our pulpit. Our music this morning will be lead by the Alamance Chorale who are visiting with us today. They've been here since early morning preparing to lead us in worship and we welcome them again to the Chapel. If you're a regular worshiper with us we remind you of the Duke Chapel forums which are being held every Sunday morning at 9:30 in the room in the Divinity School on various topics of contemporary interest and all of you are invited. Let us continue our worship. (classical organ music) (choir singing in distance) (choir singing religious music in distance) (classical organ music) (religious singing in distance) When we gather to worship, we remember that we are God's people, but we are also brought face to face with the fact that we are people who often prefer our wills to God's will. Therefore let us begin our worship by confessing our sins. (light talking in distance) Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your name. Amen. Here, the good news, Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. This is God's own proof of his love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

- In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination. Open our hearts and minds oh God, by the power of your holy spirit. So that its word is read and proclaimed we might hear with joy what you say to us this day. Amen.

- The first lesson is taken from Genesis. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, but the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, "and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? "Have you eaten of the tree of "which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, "she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me and I ate." The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle "and above all wild animals. "Upon your belly you shall go, "and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, "and between your seed and her seed. "He shall bruise

your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing. "In pain you shall bring forth children "yet your desire shall be for your husband, "and he shall rule over you." And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened "to the voice of your wife, "and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "you shall not eat of it. "Cursed is the ground because of you. "In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. "Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you, "and you shall eat the plants of the field. "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread "til you return to the ground, "for out of it you were taken. "You are dust and to dust you shall return." This ends the reading of the first lesson. (light organ music begins) (choir sings religious hymn) (choir singing religious hymn) (choir singing religious hymn) (dramatic organ music) (choir singing religious hymn) (choir singing lightly) (choir singing lightly) (classical organ music) (choir singing religious hymn) The second lesson is taken from the letter to the Hebrews. Therefore while the promise of entering his rest remains, let us fear lest any of you be judged to have failed to reach it, for good news came to us just as to them, but the message which they heard did not benefit them because it did not meet with faith in the hearers. For we who have believed in of that rest as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, they shall never enter my rest." Although his words were finished from the foundation of the world, so then there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever enters God's rest also ceases from his labors as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, that no one fall by the same sort of disobedience, for the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edge sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and before him, no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. This ends the reading of the second lesson. (classical organ music) (choir singing lightly) (choir singing religious hymn) (choir singing religious hymn) (choir singing brightly)

- Gospel lesson for this day is taken from the book of Saint Mark in the 10th chapter beginning with the 17th verse. And as he was setting out on his journey a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? "No one is good, but God alone. "You know the commandments, do not kill, "do not commit adultery, do not steal, "do not bear false witness, "do not defraud, honor your father and mother." And he said to him, "Teacher, "all these I have observed from my youth." And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, "You lack one thing. "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, "and you will have treasure in heaven, "and then come, follow me." At that saying his countenance fell and he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. And Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have riches "to enter the kingdom of God." And the disciples were amazed at his words, but Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle "than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And they were exceedingly astonished and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With men, it is impossible, "but not with God." Thus endeth the lesson from the Holy Gospel for this day. May God's grace be with us all that we may rightly hear and understand his holy word. Amen. You see he was very rich and he was moral and he was good. He came up to Jesus as he was setting out on his journey and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus quotes him the commandments and the young man replies that he has done them from his youth. Jesus then tells him to go sell all that he has and give to the poor and then come and follow him. Hearing that, the young rich man went away sorrowfully. Jesus then turns to his disciples who heard the conversation and offers the commentary you just heard, on the problems of the rich. It's going to be hard for

the rich. Indeed it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God. Well, this passage makes us uncomfortable doesn't it? We discussed this passage in our house this week. The reaction was swift. We don't like Jesus' answer. It's too difficult. He asked him to give up everything. It's impossible. One of my favorite modern novelists is the English writer Barbara Pym. In her novel *An Unsuitable Attachment* there is a scene which takes place in the home of the rector of one of London's most fashionable churches. The rector, his wife, and niece are having dinner after Sunday service, such as this. They are discussing the problems of getting the wealthy parishioners to observe lent. "My dear, this is a fashionable London parish so called," said the rector. He carved the saddle of mut and savagely as if he were rending his parishioners. What hope is there for them this lent? I suppose they can give up drinking cocktails. Bertha, the Minister's wife protested. "Somebody has got to minister to the rich." She was often thankful that her husband had not felt the call to serve in a slum parish, or on a new housing estate. Life in a Mayfair rectory suited her very well and she had private means. It had always seemed so hard that saying about the rich man and the kingdom of heaven. The rector observed, "My particular cross "is to be a fashionable preacher, as they say. "Bertha is quite right when she says "that somebody must minister to the rich. And indeed it is so that somebody must minister to the rich just as somebody must minister in Duke Chapel, Will. And of course, somebody must be Dean of the Divinity School. And we could go on until we found the rationalization that each of you uses to get around this saying of Jesus. The fact of the matter is that on any comparative scale with most people in this country and certainly with most people in this world, almost all of us in this Chapel this morning are rich. It is clear from these words of Jesus that we have a problem. Our reaction is not however the same of the rich young man. We have not gone away. We're here this morning and so while we may be uneasy with the story because we can identify with the young man, nevertheless, I think our presence probably indicates that we want and hope to stay with Jesus. We have not and, really, cannot give up everything yet we say Lord, we would be Christians. This Gospel passage forces us to come to terms with the difficult question, in what way or to what degree is Christ relevant to the situation in which we must live? This has been a problem for the Church from the earliest days of Christianity. It has to do with the relationship between Christian faith and culture. How do we live in the world and yet live a Christian life? Perhaps it is worthwhile noting that this is not a problem for Christianity alone. It certainly is a problem for all of the monotheistic faiths that is the religions which profess the reality of one sovereign god. Some of you perhaps will have seen in the last three issues of *New Yorker Magazine*, the remarkable and absorbing three very long articles by Lis Harris about the Lubavitcher movement within Hasidic Judaism. And there she tells the story of this very interesting group who seek to live within culture yet marginal to it and denying secular culture, or we could think of contemporary problems for Islam and many of the problems in the middle east today can be understood only if we understand that for many within Islam, the confrontation between that religion and the modern secular culture of the west, is profoundly troubling. Indeed one state department official once observed to me a couple of years ago that he is convinced that part of the serious problems the United States had and even understanding the downfall of the Shah of Iran was because few if any in the state department or the higher levels of our government really believed that religious motivation could be so determinative in the modern world. Faith and culture is a problem, not just for Christians, but this problem is particularly great for Christians because in fact, a great many of Jesus' teachings concern what we are to do with our possessions. Now there's an extensive literature in the Christian tradition on this problem. Paul, Augustan, Aquinas, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, all address it. H Richard Niebuhr in our own time has addressed it in a classic manner. Some

Christians have simply tried to reject culture altogether, and there are those who want to take Jesus' words literally. One thinks for instance of Roman Catholic ArchBishop Oscar Romero of Latin America and his observation about God's preferential option for the poor. Or one can think of the hermit tradition, the monastic movements but also groups such as the Amish, this summer my family and I visited an Amish--