

♪ Give me a clean heart ♪ ♪ And I'll follow Thee ♪ ♪ For I'm not asking for the riches of the land ♪ ♪ I'm not asking for high men to know my name ♪ ♪ Please give me Lord a clean heart ♪ ♪ That I may follow Thee ♪ ♪ Give me a clean heart ♪ ♪ And I'll follow Thee ♪ ♪ Oh, sometimes I am up ♪ ♪ And sometimes I am down ♪ ♪ Sometimes I am almost ♪ ♪ Almost level to the ground ♪ ♪ Please give me Lord a clean heart ♪ ♪ That I may follow Thee ♪ ♪ Give me a clean heart ♪ ♪ Just give me a clean heart ♪ ♪ Give me a clean heart ♪ ♪ And I'll follow Thee ♪ ♪ The blood that Jesus shed for me ♪ ♪ Oh, way back on Calvary ♪ ♪ The blood that gives me strength ♪ ♪ From day to day ♪ ♪ It will never lose its power ♪ ♪ Oh, it reaches to the highest mountain ♪ ♪ Oh, and it flows to the lowest, the lowest valley ♪ ♪ Oh, the blood that gives me strength ♪ ♪ From day to day ♪ ♪ It will never lose its power ♪ ♪ It soothes my doubts and it calms all my fears ♪ ♪ And it dries all of my tears ♪ ♪ The blood that gives me strength ♪ ♪ From day to day ♪ ♪ It will never, never lose its power ♪ ♪ Oh, thank God it reaches to the highest ♪ ♪ The highest mountain ♪ ♪ And it flows to the lowest, the lowest valley ♪ ♪ Yeah, the blood that gives me strength ♪ ♪ From day to day ♪ ♪ It will never, never, never ♪ ♪ Never lose its power ♪ ♪ And it flows to the lowest ♪ ♪ To the valleys, yeah ♪ ♪ The blood that gives me strength ♪ ♪ From day to day ♪ ♪ It will never lose its power ♪ ♪ Lord, I want to be a Christian in my heart ♪ ♪ Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart ♪ ♪ In my heart, in my heart ♪ ♪ Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart ♪ ♪ Lord I want to be like Jesus in my heart, in my heart ♪ ♪ Oh, Lord I want to be like Jesus in my heart ♪ ♪ Oh, in my heart, in my heart ♪ ♪ Lord I want, I want to be a real Christian in my heart ♪

- Good morning, and welcome to Duke Chapel. There is no doubt that the worship of God has already begun in this place, and we welcome you to share in that experience. I want to announce that next Sunday, August 2nd, the chapel will be making a special collection of canned and packaged food items, which will go to the Durham Urban Ministries. As you know, this is a very vital ministry in our community, and there will be a box in the narthex to receive contributions next Sunday morning. So, please remember that and spread that word to others who may be in attendance at that time. Our preacher today is a Reverend Dr. William M Finnin. Dr. Finnin is chaplain and preacher to the university at Southern Methodist University. He is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, received his education at Centenary College of Louisiana, and right here at Duke Divinity School, where he graduated with the highest of honors in 1972. Going on, he was awarded the Doctor of Theology degree in ethics and social sciences by the faculty of Iliff School of Theology at the University of Denver. He is an Underwood Fellow of the Danforth Foundation and has three times been awarded the Baker Fellowship of the General Board of Higher Education of the United Methodist Church. In addition to his duties as Chaplain and university preacher, Dr. Finnin, in 1986, was appointed an adjunct professor in the Edwin R Cox School of Business at SMU, and has now responsibilities for team teaching, capstone courses in ethics and corporate responsibility. He is active in a wide range of professional and community groups and programs. Dr. Finnin is married to the former Mary Laird Bingham, who currently is Director of Bereavement Services and Decedent Care at Parkland Memorial Hospital of Dallas. Mrs. Finnin is with us this morning and we welcome her. They are the parents of two sons. We welcome Dr. Finnin to this pulpit, and we will hear him gladly. May we join together in the greeting. Will you please stand? Ask and it will be given you, seek and you will find, knock and doors will be opened to you. (congregation prays)

Come to praise the responsive love of God, who meets us in our need where we are. (congregation prays)
Seek the Holy Spirit to God and protect. God will give the Spirit to those who ask. (congregation prays)
(organ music) (congregation singing) Please remain standing. Let us pray. God of mercy, we praise you for
the hunger you place in our hearts. The longing to find our lives hallowed and gilded by grace, a yearning
that impels us to seek, ask and knock, until we find our heart's true desire. Oh God, you hear our prayers of
longing, born of the hunger for all that is holy. We praise you for steadfast love. For like a friend at midnight,
you will rise to answer us when we call upon you. Amen. Please be seated.

- Let us pray together the Prayer for Illumination. Open our hearts and minds oh God, by the power of your
Holy Spirit, so that as the word is read and proclaimed, we might hear with joy what you say to us this day.
Amen. The first reading is from the Gospel According to St. Luke. Chapter 11, verses one through 13. He was
praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray
as John taught his disciples." Jesus said to them, "When you pray, "say, Father, hallowed be your name.
"Your kingdom come. "Give us each day our daily bread "and forgive us our sins, "for we ourselves forgive
everyone indebted to us. "And do not bring us to the time of trial." And he said to them, "Suppose one of
you has a friend, "and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread.
"For a friend of mine has arrived, "and I have nothing to set before him." And he answers from within, "Do
not bother me. "The door has already been locked, "And my children are with me in bed. "I cannot get up
and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his
friend, at least because of his persistence, he will get up and give him whatever he needs. So, I say to you,
ask and it will be given you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you. For
everyone who asks, receives, and everyone who searches, finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will
be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or
if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your
children, how much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? This is the
world of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please stand for the reading of this alter. Hear the words of David in
Psalm 21, a thanks giving for victory. In your strength the king rejoices, oh Lord, and in your help, how
greatly he exalts. You have given him his heart's desire and have not withheld the request of his lips. For you
meet him with rich blessings. You set a crown of fine gold on his head. He asked you for life, you gave it to
him, length of days forever and ever. His glory is great through your help, splendor and majesty you bestow
on him. You bestow on him blessings forever. You make him glad with the joy of your presence. For the king
trusts in the Lord, and through the steadfast love of the most high, he shall not be moved. (organ music)
(congregation singing) Be seated. (organ music) ♪ Shacked by a heavy burden ♪ ♪ 'Neath a load of guilt and
shame ♪ ♪ Then the hand of Jesus touched me ♪ ♪ And now I am no longer the same ♪ ♪ For He touched me,
yes, He touched me ♪ ♪ And oh the joy that floods my soul ♪ ♪ Something wonderful happened and now I
know ♪ ♪ He touched me and made me whole ♪ ♪ Since I met this blessed Savior ♪ ♪ Since He's cleansed and
made me whole ♪ ♪ I will never cease to praise Him ♪ ♪ I'll shout it while eternity rolls ♪ ♪ Oh, He touched me,
yes, He touched me ♪ ♪ And oh the joy that floods my soul ♪ ♪ That floods my soul ♪ ♪ Something wonderful
happened and now I know ♪ ♪ He touched me and made me whole ♪

- Our lesson from the Old Testament this morning, the Hebrew Scriptures, comes from the First Book of
Moses, the 32nd chapter of Genesis. Listen to a story about one of the patriarchs, Jacob. And Jacob sent

messengers before him to Esau, his brother, in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, instructing them, thus you shall say to my Lord, Esau, thus says your servant, Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now, and I have oxen and asses, fox, man servants and maid servants, and I have sent them all to my lord in order that I might find favor in your sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, "We have come to your brother, Esau, "and he is coming to meet you, "and 400 men with him." And later in that chapter, as Jacob and his tribe come to rest on the River Jabbok, we read these words. The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his 11 children, and crossed the ford at the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything he had, and Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint. Then he said, "Let me go. "The day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go until you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" "Jacob." And he said, "Your name shall be called "no more Jacob, but Israel. "For you have striven with God and man and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Tell me, I pray, your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And then he blessed him. So, Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, "and yet my life is preserved." And he arose, and as he passed Peniel, he limped, for he remembered his thigh. Imagine years, years into the future for Jacob, he's now an old man confined to his tent, and takes delight only in the scores of grandchildren who come to visit him. One day, one of his granddaughters skips into the tent and says, "Grabby, Grabby, Grabby Jacob! "I have a question for you!" Jacob turns to her and says, "Young lady. "Come up on my knee and ask my your question." And she says, "Grabby Jacob, "why do you limp sometimes and not limp other times?" And sadness falls across Jacob's face, and he says to her, "Young lady, "I haven't always been this sweet and gentle "Grabby Jacob that you know as your grandfather. "When I was a younger man I was a scoundrel. "Oh yes, the limp. "One night, long time ago, "I had a bad dream when I was coming back "to visit your uncle, Esau. "And that dream turned into a nightmare. "I wrestled with an angel of God, "and before he let me go, he set my thigh outta joint. "You know, your grandmother, Rachel, used to say "that was to make me remember that "God was God, and I was Jacob. "She used to say it served me right." Let us pray. In the name of the Triune God, who creates us, who redeems us, and who sustains us in all our living. Amen. Down in Cajun Country... Near a little town called Piapot, Louisiana, not too far from where I was raised. Teeboy Jeanson and his brother, Eber had developed a significant reputation for fishing. Their favorite adventures involved grappling for catfish, along the slews and streams that feed Bayou Pigeon, on of the bayous that runs into the Atchafalaya river basin, on the eastern border. Now, some will say that grappling for catfish has its origin in Central Mississippi. But I'm not here to debate that point. You've gotta know what grappling is. Grappling is a form of fishing where you walk along the banks of a bayou, and with your foot, feel for holes in the bank, hoping that in one of those holes you're going to find a fairly good sized catfish layin' up away from the current after a big meal, just resting. And if you do, you're feeling with you foot, and then plunge down and grab him behind the eye sockets and behind the gills and bring him to the surface. There's a certain economy to that kind of fishing. On one moonless night, Teeboy and Eber were out on the Pigeon. Teeboy in the water feeling along the bank and Eber pulling the pirogue, when Teeboy felt what he thought was a good one. Holding it with his foot, he plunged beneath the surface of the water, grabbed him behind the head, and pulled him to the surface. And it wasn't a flash of a second between the time he broke water and he realized that both he and Eber were in deep trouble, for there he stood face to face with the biggest meanest looking cottonmouth water moccasin that he had ever seen, much less grabbed. And it didn't take

much time at all for Teeboy and Eber to realize that they were in dire straits as that big water moccasin wrapped its coil of body around his right arm. Teeboy didn't know whether he had the snake or whether the snake had him. That warm summer moonless night on Bayou Pigeon was the last time the Jeanson boys went grappling for catfish. Their encounter with the unknown... transformed forever the way they foraged for food. When the unknown breaks in on our lives, we sit up and take notice. The unknown shatters our expectations. It plays havoc with our predictable patterns of living. It sets in a new perspective everything that was familiar in our lives. Everything we had taken for granted, like a proverbial thief in the night or like Teeboy's cottonmouth moccasin. The unknown redefines the way we look at the world. It transforms us, and for certain, we are never again the same. A woman by the name of Diane Berger... a homemaker, mother of three children, wife, member of her church, has written a compassionate and terrifying book. She's called it, *We Heard of Angels of Madness*. This text is a chronology of her teenage son's agonizing struggle and her family's frightening encounter with manic depressive illness. She writes that in the days before Matt's clear diagnoses and long before his final personal commitment to effective therapies, the great unknown of manic depression shook their family by their roots, distorted their relationships, and served as a demon in their midst. Fear and confusion marked their days, clouded their caring, hoping against hope that this demon would suddenly go away proved no help at all. Matt struggled with his own depression and his family's confrontation with it changed forever the way the Bergers looked at themselves, at each other, and at life itself. Never again would they be able to simply take a day for granted without thanks giving. Never again could they simply have a moment of deep quiet or watch a sunset or think about what health was without feeling grateful for Matt's return to health. I believe that you and I encounter the unknown almost daily. Now, I'm not talking about the heroic encounters that Jacob's story represents or Teeboy's grappling with that water moccasin epitomizes. No, when the unknown breaks in upon us, it calls us beyond ourselves, into the lives of others, into strange and unknown territory. Perhaps you're a parent. I see many of you are. I see many of you may have been. Do you remember the first day you left your child at preschool or kindergarten? What your child experienced and what you experienced, psychologists call separation anxiety. It certainly affects both parents and children. But no matter whether you're sending your child off to preschool, or camp, or church sponsored youth activities, or a well chaperoned band trip, or a Camp Fire girls' cookout, you know that there's more substance to your concern than simply the uneasiness of the initial separation. The unknown out there is not a necessarily benevolent reality. And we can hear as many psychologists as you could get into this chapel say we have got to turn them loose if we really love them. But not at 10 or 12. Now, up the ante, raise the stakes. As we grow into parenting through the teenage years, the unknown often take strange and bizarre forms. I speak as a parent of teenagers. What parent of nascent young adults has not spent those anxious nights, nights that have stretched into the early morning, waiting for that phone call, just one, which says, "I'm safe, I'm at Steve's house." How many of you have taken those somnambulistic walks through the house in the early morning before they get in, after going out or just hanging out? One of my friend's neighbors around the corner observed to me about two weeks ago that it was only recently that she had really come to recognize and to accept that her own son, now 19, had really begun to establish a life of his own. And it was that morning when she went out to get the paper, and as she walked in, realized that he hadn't gotten home yet. We're not talking about theory of adolescent development here, folks. We're talking blood, sweat, and tears, the agony of parenting, and the joy of love. The unknown... We find it right smack dab in the middle of our families, with those, in those, among those we know the best. On a late Thursday afternoon, have you ever gotten a call from your

physician after your annual physical, asking you to schedule just one or two more tests just to make sure, and she schedules you for Monday morning? Have a great weekend. The unknown redefines what is immediate, what is central, what is important to us now. Have you ever lost your job? Most recent reports say that in the past month, over 400,000 of our sisters and brothers around this country have experienced the unknown in that form. Perhaps you've lost it for no reason that you can account for. Perhaps precisely because of the way you performed your responsibility. But the shock, the disbelief, the anger, the loss, the suddenly constricted horizons bring you face to face with the unknown right in the middle of your life. The advent of the unknown among us pushes us to the very limits of our living. It drags us kicking and screaming to the edges of our lives and forces us to look across into the empty abyss. Before the unknown, we stand vulnerable, open, and at risk... before both its peril and its promise. Now, I think we can respond to the unknown in a number of ways. We can greet the unknown, the radically unfamiliar, the uncomfortably different, we can greet that unknown with fear and trembling, and dread, shrinking from it. But by such a response, we immobilize ourselves and paralyze our actions, and deaden our spirits. Or in good American fashion, we can simply deny the unknown. Deny its power. Deny its capacity to focus our time and our energy on things we don't want to think about. But in denial, we abandon both the promise and the peril the unknown brings to us. Still, we find ourselves doing just that more often than not. We live as if there were no surprise, no mystery, no wonderment in this life, as if everything were flat and boring. There's another way, another way we can greet the unknown. Jacob is its exemplar. In that way, we can discover the proximity of God's kingdom. Yes, we can contend with the unknown. We can struggle with it. We can wrestle with it against odds we cannot calculate. Perhaps in that encounter we discover a benevolent reality, possibly a blessing, a word of hope, an occasion for celebration. But we will never know until we contend and wrestle with that reality. The faith tradition of Jews and Christians alike call us with compelling clarity to confront the unknown right in our midst, to confront it with bold confidence and openness. Moses, you will recall, was terrified by the Burning Bush, debated his calling right there before God. Job, Job actually argued face to face with the divine reality. As people of the book, ours is a faith that holds a clear alternative to both fear on the one hand and denial on the other hand as the way to encounter the unknown in our midst. Souther Baptist theologian, Wayne Oates, recognizes that even in the face of death itself, we Christians don't just stoically endure the suffering of grief and loss. On the contrary, we are a people of adventure, a people who by faith wrestle with the loss of loved ones, whether permanently or temporarily, through death, separation, and divorce, mental illness, or any other separating power. And the struggle goes on until fresh hope, new growth, and greater potential for life is revealed to us. Even in the face of death. Jacob greets the unknown in such a fashion. In a cosmic wrestling match, to his own amazement and to ours, he discovered the partner in that match to be of God. Now, you have to realize that Jacob was a scurrilous scoundrel. He rightly feared Esau's violent response to his return. Those 400 men Esau sent out were likely not cheerleaders. Jacob had denied the covenantal relationship which had knit families together in God's grace for centuries, yay, generations across time. He had violated that. In a moment of truth that resounds through Hebrew history, Jacob ceased the unknown and wrestled it to the point where it became promise. Hope, hope for his future, even a blessing, a certification of that promise, a certification of forgiveness, of hope, of grace from the God how knows Jacob as an ungrateful jerk. A lying, stealing, cowardly, manipulating jerk at that. A brother. Like us. Jacob chose not to lie down and roll over and die, not to go willingly into that dark night of his soul. On the contrary, he chose to contend, to struggle, to wrestle the unknown. And in that choosing, was blessing. From his prison cell high in Northern Bavaria,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, wrote to generations yet unborn words of hope and promise. He was a pillar of the confessing church, an active resister against Hitler's godless rule. In that cell, Bonhoeffer wrestled with the certainty of depths unknown in his own life. And in those final moments he proclaimed that God's first and final word to us is a word of graceful freedom. You are free. You are free to choose how you're going to greet the unknown as it comes rushing, rushing towards you. Even if you cannot choose the shape, or the character, or the structure of that future, you can choose how you're going to stand before it. Daily, you and I must choose how to greet the unknown as we stand before it. We can cower in fear and trembling, become twisted personalities curved in on ourselves. Obsessively absorbed with our fears and consequently paralyzed by them. Or we can assume a macho stance. We can deny, we can reject the unknown, we can remain above the fray, disengaged and disentangled from its messiness. Denying life's mysteries, rejecting life's adventures. Or, and here's the great divide, we can contend. We can struggle with the unknown and its brash uncertainty, hoping to wrestle from it the promise of a new day, a sign of hope, the sign of the cross. But remember, if you choose to struggle, if you choose to contend, if you adopt the wrestler's stance in your living, like that scoundrel Jacob did, you will never be the same, never. You'll be changed. You'll be bruised and battered. Per chance, you'll even be transformed. Now my friends, may the new limp which is yours, a limp you will surely develop, may it be for you the blessing it was for Jacob. God's blessing in all your matches. Amen. (organ music) (congregation singing)

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Please be seated. Oh God, your spirit works without ceasing, flowing as a great river through our lives. We have felt the power of your spirit seeking us out, dredging us up from despair and lifting us on currents of grace and light. We find that we cannot stay still, but are born by your spirit to encounters long avoided, and to insights long resisted. Oh God, the struggles between dawn and dusk are hard. But perhaps the most fierce struggles occur between dusk and dawn. As Jacob crossed the river and met his adversary in solitude, we also cross over into a shadowy realm of struggle during the nocturnal hours. Give us, oh God, the wisdom to discern our enemy's nature. Are we fighting angels? Resisting love? Or are we battling our coward self at last? Routing the side of ourselves that has always taken the detours, run from encounters, and resisted growth. We praise you, oh God, for grace abundant as a mighty river. Have mercy upon us who have endured long dark nights in struggle. When the masks of self deception are slowly lifted from our hearts, on a viscerating light of truth and self judgment. Help us to remember, God, that you never abandoned us to our deception, but work in us through the dark nights. You bring us, at last, to dawn, where graced by the light of your face, we find ourselves embraced and healed. When at last the day breaks, give us your blessing. Gently turn us to face our world and our destiny with humility, and with a greater capacity, for forgiveness and love. Amen. We are invited to give because we need the discipline of giving as much as the programs we support need our help. We are expected to give because we cannot truly worship without giving some concrete expression of our gratitude to God. Let us share with joy from our abundance. (organ music) ♪ I'd rather have Jesus more than silver or gold ♪ ♪ I'd rather be His than have riches untold ♪ ♪ I'd rather, I'd rather have Jesus more than anything ♪ ♪ This world affords today ♪ ♪ Than to be the queen of a vast domain ♪ ♪ Or be held in sin's dread sway ♪ ♪ I'd rather, I'd rather have Jesus than anything ♪ ♪ This

world affords today ♪ ♪ Oh, more than anything this world affords today ♪ ♪ Than to be a queen in a vast domain ♪ ♪ Or be held in sin's dread sway ♪ ♪ Oh, I'd rather, I'd rather have Jesus ♪ ♪ More than an-anything ♪ ♪ This world affords today ♪ ♪ Oh, more than anything this world affords today ♪ ♪ This world affords today ♪ (congregation singing) Loving God, we know that your gifts to us are not to be hoarded, but are given for spending in your service. Help us in this time of offering to be able to share not only our money, but also our lives. How, Lord, would you have us to spend our selves today? Amen. May we pray together a prayer that Christ taught to his first disciples using the traditional version. 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. May the deep peace of Jesus Christ be with you. The strong arms of God sustain you. And the pow... You wrestle with the... Of your life. Amen. (organ music) (congregation singing)