

(pipe organ plays reverent music) (congregation murmuring) (footsteps walking)

- Good morning, and welcome to Duke University Chapel. We are pleased to welcome you here for this Duke Campus Ministry Sunday. Today, in front of the chapel, all afternoon our Duke Campus Ministry students will be conducting a faith festival, highlighting the many dimensions of religious life here at Duke, and we invite all students to join them for the faith festival. One word about the service. The music for the psalm is incorrectly printed in the bulletin. Just follow along with the response with the choir as they sing. The words are right, the music is wrong, but join with the choir in that. Call your attention to the main announcements in the bulletin, including the visit this week, sponsored by Duke Chapel, of Michael Novak, speaking on capitalism and Christianity, and the public is invited. Our guest preacher this morning is the Reverend Doctor James Laney, President of Emory University. Delighted to invite this good friend and president of our sister institution again to the chapel pulpit. Dr. Laney is a renowned speaker and leader in American higher education, and we welcome him again to the chapel. We also invite you to join us for lemonade after the service, at which time you will have the opportunity to meet Dr. and Mrs. Laney. And now let us prepare ourselves for worship. (papers shuffling) (choir singing hymn) ♪ Beautiful Savior ♪ ♪ Lord of the nations ♪ ♪ Son of God and Son of Man ♪ ♪ Glory and honor ♪ ♪ Praise, adoration ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore be thine ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore be thine ♪ (pipe organ playing stately music) (choir sings accompanied by pipe organ)

- Let us pray. Gracious God, rule over us as we meet together, and so fill us with your Spirit that in our singing and in our prayers and the reading and preaching of your holy word we may in spirit and in truth worship you, and proclaim your mighty deeds to all the world. Amen. Be seated. (congregation murmurs)

- Let us pray. Open our hearts and minds, O God, by the power (congregation joins celebrant) 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 lesson is taken from Genesis. "When the boys grew up, "Esau was a skillful hunter, "a man of the field, "while Jacob was a quiet man, "dwelling in his tents. "Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, "but Rebecca loved Jacob. "Once, when Jacob was boiling pottage, "Esau came in from the field "and he was famished. "And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red pottage for I am famished. "Therefore, his name was called Edom. "Jacob said, First sell me your birthright. "Esau said, I am about to die. "Of what use is a birthright to me? "Jacob said, Swear to me first. "So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils. "And he ate and drank and rose and went his way. "Thus Esau despised his birthright." This ends the reading of the first lesson. (congregation murmurs) (pipe organ music plays majestic music) ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪ And rejoice the heart ♪ ♪ The law of the Lord is perfect ♪ ♪ It renews the soul ♪ ♪ The rule of the Lord is sure ♪ ♪ It makes wise the simple ♪ ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪ And rejoice the heart ♪ ♪ The command of the Lord shines clear ♪ ♪ It lightens the eyes ♪ ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪ And rejoice the heart ♪ ♪ The fear of the Lord is holy ♪ ♪ Enduring forever ♪ ♪ The decrees of the Lord are true ♪ ♪ And all of them righteous ♪ ♪ They are more

precious than gold ♪ ♪ More than abundant pure gold ♪ ♪ The word of the Lord is sweeter than honey ♪ ♪
Than honey fresh from the comb ♪ ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪ And rejoice the heart ♪ ♪ By them
your servant is guided ♪ ♪ In keeping them there is great reward ♪ ♪ Who can know all my offenses ♪ ♪ Wash
me from my secret wrongdoing ♪ ♪ O Lord God keep your servant from foolish pride ♪ ♪ Let it not overwhelm
me ♪ ♪ Then shall I be whole and innocent of all my transgression ♪ ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪
And rejoice the heart ♪ ♪ Let the words of my mouth ♪ ♪ The cries of my heart ♪ ♪ Find favor before you, O
Lord ♪ ♪ My redeemer and God ♪ ♪ The statutes of the Lord are just ♪ ♪ They rejoice the heart ♪ (pipe organ
playing music) (choir singing accompanied by pipe organ) (papers shuffle) (pipe organ playing softly) (choir
singing slow ethereal music) ♪ Salvation ♪ ♪ Is made ♪ ♪ Salvation ♪ ♪ Is made ♪ ♪ In midst of ♪ ♪ Is made ♪ ♪
In midst of ♪ ♪ Is made ♪ ♪ In midst of ♪ ♪ The earth ♪ ♪ O God ♪

- The gospel lesson is taken from Matthew. "Everyone, then, who hears these words of mine "and does them, will be like a wise man "who built his house upon the rock. "And the rain fell, and the floods came, "and the winds blew and beat upon the house. "But it did not fall "because it had been founded on the rock. "And everyone who hears these words of mine "and does not do them will be like the foolish man, "who built his house upon the sand. "And the rain fell, and the floods came, "and the winds blew and beat against that house, "and it fell. "And great was the fall of it. "And when Jesus finished these sayings, "the crowds were astonished at his teaching. "For he taught them as one who had authority, "and not as their scribes." This ends the reading of the gospel.

- It's a great personal privilege for me to be in this splendid place today on such a glorious morning and to hear this magnificent choir sing an anthem that took me back to my own collegiate days when I sang in a choir. Chesnokov's "Salvation." And to sense the indwelling of the power of the presence of God that can come with the gathering of his people, and the singing of his praises, and the reading of his word. So I come before you in gratitude for this opportunity to share in this splendid morning. Every age has a dominant characteristic. A tone, a spirit that is often captured by a phrase or a term. The Victorian Age. The Gay Nineties. The Roaring Twenties. And as the darkling plains of Europe were clouded in the 30s we recall Auden's Age of Anxiety. What would be the appropriate characterization of our age? Of the 80s. Certainly the term that seems to sum up the prevailing spirit and mood of our culture and our time is the bottom line. It's an ubiquitous phrase. We hear it all the time. Some friends of ours with a precocious eight year old were sitting around dinner discussing the pros and cons of a particular issue, and finally in exasperation the eight year old looked at his parents and he said, "All right, but what is the bottom line?" (congregation murmurs) Obviously, it bespeaks the pervasiveness of business, and of the importance of efficiency. It points to the need for productivity and accountability. And it doesn't easily brook an excuse or extenuation. One only has to go abroad to many countries and stand in a long queue, waiting for some service, only to be told when we reach the counter that the person that we were to see has gone off on a long tea break, to appreciate how much the crispness of our affairs lends a certain kind of satisfaction for all of us. The bottom line cuts through irrelevance and cant and gets right to the point. The "New Yorker," as most of you know, is fond of cutting through irrelevance and cant. In the summer, in one of the end of column quotations, they quoted an advertisement for the BMW. The first paragraph was, "Turn on the ignition of your ordinary car "and the engine starts." The second paragraph of the ad went on, "Turn on the ignition of your BMW, X-X-Z-Y or whatever, and sensors tell you immediately the outside temperature and humidity, your altitude above sea

level, and if you wish will chart a vector for your next trip." The editors of the "New Yorker" wrote, "Tell us more about the one that starts." (congregation laughs) With apologies to those of you who are fond of driving the ultimate driving machine. (congregation laughs) There's a certain attractiveness in having a trenchant handle on affairs. A no nonsense approach. The competence and expertise of our age. And more and more we're finding the bottom line applied not only to business, or after dinner conversation by precocious youngsters, but also to institutions, universities, professions, medical practices, law firms. All across the spectrum of our society. We live by the bottom line. We are results oriented. And I think as long as it bespeaks a culture which doesn't reduce everything to the bottom line, which allows a certain latitude in concerns and aspirations, and virtues, this has its place. But I think all of us realize very quickly that the bottom line is really not enough. Ironically, it's not enough even in business. Corporate life itself must think of more than the immediate results, even though some people try to skim off and produce something that will make the stock more marketable for their own manipulative purposes. The people that know can appreciate how much a business is like any institution. It requires loyalty and dedication, hard work and discipline, a good idea, a sense of consistency and persistence. Last winter, in the "American Scholar," there was a fascinating essay on the rise of the department store in the United States and the revolution in marketing that it caused. How from a myriad of merchants with small stores and peddlers who would haggle over prices and for whom the motto was caveat emptor, buyer beware, to a consistent price and consistent quality of all kinds of goods under the roof of one emporium. Told about Marshall Fields. Their legendary man in Chicago. How he went to a dinner party one night, an elegant dinner party, and there on his host's table he saw this gorgeous tablecloth. One that he knew had come from his store because he had made a mental note to reprimand the department manager, saying that that was never going to sell because it was too expensive. As he saw it there on his host's table he thought, "I owe that man an apology. "He did sell it and this lady bought it." And he smiled with great satisfaction. The next morning he called in the department manager to praise him. And the manager came before the great man and Marshall Fields said, "I am really impressed with your marketing prowess. "You had something I though would never sell, but it sold because I saw it last night at Mrs. So-and-So's." The man's face fell. He said, "I wish you'd called me in yesterday afternoon. It's true it did sell, but it was returned this morning." (congregation chuckles) The customer is always right. Maybe in the short run that's not always profitable in the strict sense of the term. But it does build a great business. Some of you've read the recent book out called "The Big Time," which tells of the graduates of the famous class of 1949 at the Harvard Business School. Men who have come in an incredibly concentrated way to dominate American business and industry. And the thing that came through in this description of these leaders of business and industry was the extraordinary sense of dedication, almost idealism, that they displayed. Obviously, toward their business, but also toward their communities, their sense of civic responsibility, their willingness to invest themselves for team spirit, it was almost as though they transferred from the playing fields of Cambridge, or wherever, to their corporate life a sense of participation and collegiality and team spirit, always, of course, under real leadership. And there was a contrast made between the leaders that came out in 1949 with almost this naivete about the value of the work that they were doing and how it justified their lives, with many of the number-crunchers that are now lining up on Wall Street. Probably brighter. Certainly more clever. Able to perform an LBO, a leverage buyout over a weekend. But the point was clearly, though understated, clearly made. The bottom line is not enough. Even in business. For something to endure, to perdure, it requires integrity. In the sense of dependability. Virtues that are not always consistent with an immediate eye upon the profit and loss

margin. But if the bottom line is not enough for business in the best sense of the term, neither is it enough for a society. We need efficiency but we also need justice. We appreciate the fact that a great and good society can never be built merely on an aggregate, an aggregate of self-interest. That Adam Smith's invisible hand is not the providence of a gracious and benign God. And that Adam Smith himself also wrote a theory of moral sentiments in appreciation of the fact that society must also have sympathy, and courage, and steadfastness, the virtues that come beyond the bottom line. During the 60s, the south, as many of us in here know, was wracked with problems of race. And in Atlanta, there was deep concern that race riots and dissension would tear the city apart and render it, as it were, helpless in the years ahead. At that time a handful of business leaders and civic leaders came together in private, really in great secrecy. And they pledged themselves and their fortunes to see that there was life beyond integration where the city could in justice and fairness understand what it was as a fair metropolis. And one has only to contract my hometown of Memphis or Birmingham, where that did not happen to such a degree, to see the difference. They understood that it might not in the short run be in any sense profitable for them. And many became pariahs among their own peers because they were taking stands for justice that the others did not agree with and could not support. And one looks with longing and frustration across the ocean to another nation which is being rent with dissension because it does not have a society that is fundamentally just for all people. And one longs for a clutch of business and government leaders who would sit down in private and pledge themselves and their fortunes, that there would be life on the other side of apartheid. The bottom line helps keeps us clear-eyed and clear-headed. Knocks off the nonsense and the excessive romanticism in life, and the sentimentality. But society lives beyond that in a world not only of business and efficiency, but of hope and dreams, and longings, and aspirations, of justice, and concern, and care, and community. The bottom line, as important as it is, and as well-served as we are, is not enough for us as persons either. Life is an investment. What kind of investment are we making? What are we investing in and for? And what will be the legacy? It's hard to translate the bottom line into a legacy. Those qualities that a society and a culture admire, how do we nourish those and nurture them and see that they are upheld and enhanced, implanted in the hearts of a younger generation? I think of a young Jim Billington who graduated from Harvard a year ago. And who, having been admitted to a professional school, decided to take off for a couple of years. And through his church, it happened to be the Episcopal Church, to work in Appalachia. And was sent down there in a very small, rural community, without a supporting group, and set up housekeeping and tried to do his job, simple as it was. And when he came to see me a few months ago, he said, "You know, for four months I labored "to try to win trust and confidence and friendship. "And as much as I tried to disabuse myself "of any condescension, "I realized that they were very skeptical and suspicious." He said, "It was only when I became ill." And he said, "I really got very sick indeed. "And I needed help for groceries, "and for someone to kind of come and nurse me "and to take care of me." And he said, "It was at that point "that the Appalachian people began looking in on me, "and they became my friends because I needed them. "From that point on," he said, "it's been a rich experience." I said, "Well, what, what have you learned "from that experience?" And he said, "Well, I've learned a number of things, "not only about myself, "but about what really is important in life. "What's enduring. "What I want to invest myself in." You know, we read the gospels and it's fascinating how seldom Jesus uses the contrast between the good and the bad, or the right and the wrong. And how often he adverts to what is wise and what is foolish. Those are consistent with what a university education is about. What is wise? And what is foolish? What kinds of things over the long haul will we look back on and see had the marks of wisdom, or of commitment, or dedication, or of courage, of

things that give us a sense of self-respect and dignity? Not in self-preening way, but because they are congenial to the mind of God. Maybe a university education, in addition to its rigor, its challenge, its new disciplines, its extraordinary competencies and expertise, is also that very precious time when we can ponder things. Ponder them in their deepest sense. What they're for, and what we're about, and what, yes, what God wants of us in his wisdom. And maybe we will see that the bottom line is to do good, and avoid evil, and to care for our neighbor and to do justice. And to turn our backs upon foolishness and triviality and superficiality. And to appreciate the role of faith and hope and love of God and our neighbor. Amen. (papers rustling) (pipe organ plays sedate music)