

- Duke University Chapel service of worship, July 3rd, 1977. (uplifting instrumental music)

- Let us at this time bring our units and confession before almighty God. Oh, holy and merciful God, we confess that we have not always taken upon ourselves with joy, the yoke of obedience, nor been willing to seek and to do your perfect will. We have not loved you with all our heart and mind, and soul and strength. Neither have we loved our neighbors as ourselves. You have called to us to respond to the need of our brothers and sisters. And we have passed on heating on our way. In the pride of our hearts and our unwillingness to repent, we have turned away from the cross of Christ and have grieved your holy spirit. Forgive us we pray. Amen. The saying is worthy of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came and died in order to save sinners. Amen. (instruments drowning out singers voice)

- The first of our scripture lessons for the morning is found at St. Paul's epistles to the Galatians, chapter three at the 23rd verse. Saint Paul is speaking to the Galatians about the very important matter of the relationship of the law to faith. "Now before faith came we were confined under the law, "kept under restraint until faith should be revealed "so that the law was our custodian until Christ came "that we might be justified by faith. "But now that faith has come, "we are no longer under a custodian "for in Christ Jesus, "you are all children of God through faith. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ "have put on Christ, "and there is neither Jew nor Greek. "There is neither slave nor free. "There is neither male nor female "for you are all one in Christ Jesus. "And if you are Christ's, "then you are Abraham's children and heirs "according to the promise." Will the congregation please rise to hear the reading of the gospel. This morning's gospel lesson is found in Luke's gospel in the ninth chapter. "Jesus has just finished feeding the 5,000 "and has retired for prayer. "Now it happened that as he was praying alone "the disciples were with him and he asked them, "who did the people say that I am? "And they answered John the Baptist, "but others say Elijah, "and others that one of the old prophets has risen. "And he said to them, who do you say that I am? "And Peter answered, the Christ of God. "But he charged and commanded them to tell no one "saying the son of man must suffer many things, "and be rejected by the elders and chief priests "and scribes and be killed, "and on the third day be raised. "And he said to them all, if anyone would come after me, "let them deny their themselves "and take up their cross daily "and follow me for whoever would save his life will lose it "and whoever will lose his life for my sake "will surely gain it." May the Lord blessed to our hearing and our understanding these words from the scripture. ♪ Come ye thee to the Father ♪ ♪ And to the son ♪

- Let us affirm what we believe. We believe in God who has created and is created, 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 deliberate 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. Let us pray. Eternal spirit will and power of creation, redemption, and our sustenance. You who can part the waters of raging sea, or the pedals of a budding rose. You whom Jesus knew to be stern yet so loving and so close at hand that he called you Father

be near to us as we pray each with our own joys and sorrows. We come this morning in praise and adoration. Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God almighty, we are grateful for so many things, for food, clothing, and shelter, and for the gift of life and breath itself, we bring you praise and great thanks. We have brought our confession father and stand condemned just like the prodigal children, and you are so quick to forgive. You see us coming far off and run to meet us. May your name be praised everywhere. In the joy of your forgiveness, we bring our intercessions and petitions before your throne. We pray for those at home and abroad engaged in the struggle to be recognized as human, may their motives be pure, may their victory be swift, and where possible may it be bloodless. It grieves us deeply to hear reports of torture and injustice. For those who set themselves up as enemies of your peace and communion wherein all are the same, we pray your spirit to come. Lord heal your people. As we celebrate another national birthday, we pray for the leaders of our country. May their rule be just, may it be fair. We pray for those enemies of society among us, in jails and prisons, and those among us still at large, there are some alarmingly too many recently who have no respect even for our children, Father we pray for them now, and we bear their sin up to you for healing. Father bind our wounds. For those jailed unjustly at home and abroad, jailed for their faith in your kingdom and in your justice, we pray for their speedy release to us. And we pray for your church everywhere, its mission and its ministers, both lay and clergy for we are all ministers of good news in Jesus Christ. And bless us as we seek to serve you in spirit and in the deeds of truth. As we pray now the great prayer of discipleship, which even Jesus taught us to pray. 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, the power and the glory forever. Amen. On behalf of the chapel and the chapel staff, I'd like to welcome you all here if you're visiting with us this morning. I would like to lift up one announcement in particular. And that is that this is the first Sunday of the month and communion will be observed here following the service. You are all welcome to stay and partake of that. It seems a little bit strange to welcome Dr. Buffet here as a visiting preacher. For the last five years he has been a very important part of the Divinity School Community, which I'm privileged also to be a part of. And just recently this past spring, he was taken away from us, snatched you might say by the church and our loss is a distinct gain to the church. It is a great personal pleasure to welcome to the pulpit, Dr. Joseph Buffet.

- Thank you Jim for those very kind words. There was a great celebration throughout England, the captains and the Kings had come from all over the empire far-flung battle line to honor a queen. We probably caught a glimpse of what it must have been like and the celebration of a few weeks ago in the same nations capital city. But the occasion of which I speak now was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. A reign in years longer than that of any other English sovereign. The processions and the displays were planned and implemented with great care and with all the splendor and power that could be mastered by the great empire. And they didn't have to concern themselves with the possible coming of an Idi Amin to disrupt the festivities. Quite naturally so greater moment called for great portrait. So the London Times asked the of the crown poet laureate, Rudyard Kipling to write a poem suitable for Sir August on occasion. Kipling himself said of it. That poem gave me more trouble than anything I ever wrote. When it came due I had nothing that satisfied me. The Times began to want the poem badly and sent letter after letter asking for it. I made many more attempts, but no further progress. Sitting down with all my previous attempts before me, I searched through those dozens of sketches till at last I found just one line that I liked, that line was, Lord God of hosts,

be with us yet, lest we forget, lest we forget. It was around these words that "The Recessional" was written. Lest we forget, lest we forget, Lord God of hosts be with us yet. Lest we forget, lest we forget. Now when you read "The Recessional", you can begin to understand how it must have given Mr. Kipling more trouble than anything he had written. For other than the just one line that he liked, it really is not great poetry far so great on occasion. Yet that one line that he liked is a great line. It's a great line because it speaks to all ages, and nations, and conditions of people. It's a great line no less because it echos and may very well be based on a word from God which is recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, the sixth chapter and the 12th verse. It reads, "Then take heed "lest you forget the Lord who brought you "out of the land of Egypt, "out of the house of bondage". On another version of it. "Be careful not to forget "the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, "out of the land of slavery. "Lord God of hosts be with us yet. "Lest we forget, lest we forget." It's a great line because it calls us to some degree of sobriety, and our celebrations of the momentous occasions in our own nation's history. For how soon we forget. How soon we forget. How soon we forget that on July 4th, 1776, the Congress of the 13 United States of America unanimously adopted a declaration of independence, which provided that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are lies, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and to institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness, and so forth. How soon we forget. How soon do we forget our own struggles, and the oppression we have suffered when given the opportunity to oppress others. How soon we forget the price of our freedom when we can easily deny others for our own selfish, individualistic, good or aims. An oration delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, New York, on July 5th, 1852. Even 24 years before this nations celebrated the Centennial of its independence, Frederick Douglas tried to remind the nation that it was inconsistent to celebrate independence and freedom in a land that denied freedom said he, "What to the American slave is your 4th of July "a day that reveals to him more "than all other days of the year "the gross injustice and cruelty "to which he is the constant victim. "To him your celebration is a sham, "your boasted liberty, an unholy license, "your national greatness swelling vanity, "your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless, "your the nuts creation of tyrants, "brass fronted, impudence. "Your shouts of Liberty and equality, hollow mockery. "Your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgiving "with all your religious parade "and solemnity are to him mere bombast, "fraud, deception, impiety and hypocrisy. "A sin veil to cover up crimes "which would disgrace a nation of savages. "How soon we forget". Over, and over, and over again, in our domestic and international relations we have indeed forgotten the principles upon which this nation is founded. And so in this hour 201st celebration of independence, amid the parades and fireworks and rivalry of today and tomorrow, Lord, God of hosts be with us yet lest we forget, lest we forget. This is a nation of great wealth and power. And even though we are beginning to consider that our resources just may not be unlimited we still consider ourselves the people most privileged upon the face of the earth. Indeed, we have the talents, the skills and the ability to accomplish just about whatever we set ourselves to do. And the temptation is always with us to regard our wealth and our power as evidence of our innate goodness, and our own moral superiority. Look what we've done. Observe how far we've come in 201 years, and we are going on. And God if you want to be on the right side, you'd better become a naturalized citizen of these United States. But the word of God is a warning against any self deifying pride that we may have. Yes the

writer of the book of Deuteronomy was well aware of the political and military history of Israel. But for the writer and for Israel, that history had a religious dimension as well. For them Israel had been delivered from Egyptian bondage not by their own political genius or their own military power. Not these alone, Israel had been delivered by God. It was their God who had led them through the red sea and had watched over them in the wilderness. And now they are about to enter and possess the promised land, and the rules by which they are to govern their lives in this covenant relationship in this new land are impressed upon them. Above all, says the word, don't forget the Lord, love him with all your heart and soul, and mind and strength. Keep these words on your heart, teach them to your children and to their children. Talk about them in your homes and wherever you go, when you lie down and when you get up. Write these words on the doorpost of your house and upon your gates. And when you get in the promised land, living in great cities which you did not build, in houses full of good things which you did not seal, cisterns hewn out which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees eating from them, eating from them which you did not plant. When you have eaten and are full, then take heed, be aware, be careful lest you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of abundance. The achievement of success and the accomplishment of some desired goal often brings spiritual danger, the temptation to say my power, and the might of my hand have done this a universal among people and among nations. One would think that the more success and prosperity we have, the more deeply heartfelt should be our gratitude, but it just ain't so. Indeed achievement, success, prosperity tends to turn us not outward and upward as it should, but usually inward and downward toward ourselves. Thus the mere fact of achievement and success and prosperity may poison the whole system with pride and selfishness and greed. The root of all sin. And so as we move from one achievement to another, as we move from one success to another, as we move from one celebration to another, we have to take heed, we have to be aware, we have to be careful lest we forget the Lord who brought us. And so on every 4th of July and in every day of our lives, we have to pray Kipling's great line, Lord, God of hosts, be with us yet lest we forget, lest we forget. I've tried to find in the popular hymnody of the church, something there that might indicate that this nation indeed realizes the providence of God and its history. My country tears of thee doesn't have it. Oh, beautiful so spacious guys doesn't have it. But there is one stanza in the hymn, God of our fathers. And that stanza says thy love divine has led us in the past, in this free land by thee oh, Lord is cast. Be thou our ruler, guardian God, and stay, thy word our Lord, thy path our chosen way. How soon we forget the genius, the very heart of black religion is it's belief in the hand of God in history. like Israel, black people read their history 'cause it's impossible for them to read it politically or militarily, so they have to read it religiously. So in church, after church, this morning of that tradition, and then celebration after celebration they will be singing, we've come this far by faith. Not by our own power, not by our own strength, not by the might of our own hand, we've come this far by faith. Leaning on the Lord, trusting in his holy word. He's never failed us yet. And when we sing our national hymn, we will say God of our weary years, God of our silent tears. Thou who has brought us thus far on the way, thou who has that might led us into the light, keep us forever in the path we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places our God where we met thee. Lest our hearts drunk with the wine of the world we forget get thee. Shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand true to our God, true to our native land. How soon we forget, Lord God of hosts be with us yet, today, tomorrow and throughout all the days and years of our lives lest we forget, lest we forget. In the name of the father and of the son out of the holy spirit, Amen. (instruments drowning out singers voice) (instruments drowning out singers voice)

- Now may the one true and eternal God who brought again from the death our Lord Jesus Christ be gracious unto you and strengthen you in every good work into the coming of his kingdom. And this, we pray in Christ's name, and for his sake, amen. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (uplifting instrumental music)