

Announcer: Duke University double service of worship Passion Sunday, fifth Sunday in Lent, March 27th, 1977. (gentle organ music) (pensive organ music) (light airy organ music) (soft organ music) ♪ 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 ♪ (bright organ music) (choir vocalizing)

- We gathered here today to celebrate, to celebrate this holy season of Lent when the days begin to lengthen and new light dawns anew upon us all. We're here to celebrate the Word become flesh, to be reminded of God's eternal and ever present grace, to celebrate the goodness of worship with friends and family and neighbors. Let us truly celebrate in word and in spirit. Therefore in God's presence, we lift our hearts and our spirits and let us now bow our heads and join our voices to confess our sin and our need of forgiveness and new strength. Let us pray together. Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness, According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions; and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God; and renew a right spirit within us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. With these words of corporate confession and with our words of personal confession, let us hear now this word of assurance the Lord of life has said, "I have heard you. Your brokenness is made whole. Your weakness is strength." Open the door to your heart and the Lord of Life shall surely come in. By the grace of God, my friends, we are accepted. Let us open the door to our future. Let us receive now the power and love and forgiveness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (gentle organ music) (choir sings in foreign language) (choir sings in foreign language)

- Hear the Word of God from James 1:19-27. "Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing. If any one thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." Here ends the reading of the word of God. (bright organ music) (choir singing indistinctly) ♪ Amen, amen ♪

- Let us affirm what we believe. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come into 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 in 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 with your spirit.

- Let us pray. O God receive us now as children of Yours into Your presence once again. We come surely one by one, but we come also with an awareness that we do belong to one another and we do belong to You. We thank you, O God, for this holy season, when we are reminded again of Your amazing love for us and that while we were yet sinners, were and are, Christ died for us. We give thanks particularly, O God, for the beauty of springtime on the Duke campus, its flowers and trees and shrubs and grass burst forth with new life, and help us at times such as this, O God, not to take these simple beauties for granted, but to rejoice and give thanks for the fullness of life, which is ours. O God, we offer now our prayers of intercession for homes and families and friends and those who love us, for those who are lonely and forgotten, for those who suffer injustice, for those who have no work and those for whom work is boring and unfulfilling, for those who work and seek for peace and health among all peoples. Bless with your gracious presence, O God, those who are sick and sad, those who are weary and bereaved, and those who are dying. Bring fullness of life, wholeness of life to all persons who turn to You, O God, O God, God of mercy, God of peace, God of love, God of hope, God of assurance. We, Your children, ask for ourselves mercy, peace, hope, love, assurance. Give to each of us the word which our individual soul, our individual person needs this day. O almighty God, who in Jesus Christ did conquer tears by crying, pain by suffering, and death by dying. Grant that we who remember his suffering death may by Your grace receive now that life, which can and will overcome both sin and death. In You, O God, and through Jesus Christ, our Lord, may we find life, know life and live life. Hear us as we pray together now the prayer, which our Lord has taught his disciples, praying: 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. May I remind you that tonight we will have another in our series of organ concerts on the new Benjamin Duke Memorial organ. The organist for the concert this evening is Charles Krigbaum who is professor of organ and university organist at Yale University. You will find a word about him in the bulletin today and also the program for the concert this evening. Those of you in the chapel this morning, and those listening are all invited to come and share in this service tonight. Now remind you also that a week from today on Palm Sunday, with a very special service, we began the observance of Holy Week in the chapel and on the Duke campus. You are invited to that service and also to the Monday, Thursday communion service and to a service at noon on Good Friday. And then on Easter Sunday, we celebrate the Day of the Resurrection of our Lord with an Easter sunrise service, which is an hour earlier for us this year than we have been ordinarily having it. We've been taking the comfortable way and having it at seven o'clock, rather than at sunrise. We're gonna change that this year. So the service issue will begin at six o'clock in Duke gardens, and then at nine o'clock and at 11 o'clock, we will have services here in the chapel. And then that evening, Easter Sunday evening, the North Carolina symphony and the choir will present an Easter concert for us all. It's our privilege today, this weekend, to have on the Duke campus the Reverend Dr. David Hubbard, who is professor of Old Testament studies and president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Dr. Hubbard currently is serving as the president of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, that is, he is presiding over those who are deans and presidents of theological schools in the United States and Canada, a recognition of his leadership and his competency. He

is indeed well known as a writer, as a preacher, as a teacher and as an administrator. He's known to an international radio audience by the word, which he proclaims on the Joyful Sound. We are very pleased to have him at Duke, and we look forward to the word which he will share with us "Righteousness, right or wrong?" Dr. Hubbard, welcome.

- Shall we pray together? Will you speak, Lord, in the stillness while we wait on Thy? Hushed, our hearts to listen with expectancy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. The national news magazines, like Time and Newsweek, mislead us regularly. I'm not speaking of the accuracy of their news stories, which by and large in my experience are about as good or as bad as what you'd find in the major urban papers or the press, the major wire services. And it's not that their editing is more biased than other kinds of editing. It's the format itself that gives me trouble. You know what it is: you leaf through the sections of a magazine like Time, pass the letters to the editor and a few ads, some national news, which doesn't look a great deal better now that it's printed in color, on through the international affairs, some vignettes in the lives of famous people, and then through sections like lifestyle, an essay or two, more ads, a section on art, section on law, show business, you leaf through, and in this particular issue, when you get to page 81, you come to religion, a compartment in the catalog of life as spelled out in the news magazines. Now it's so happens that Ken Woodward who's religion editor for Newsweek in this particular issue with Andrew Young on the cover, found nothing of religious significance happening in the world, and so religion is bypassed. It's that compartmental model, which is the problem. It suggests that religion is a topic, an area of life along with others. Now, I don't know whether I dare say this in North Carolina, but religion is not a topic alongside of sports. Let it be heard in Chapel Hill, in Charlotte, that religion is not a category along with basketball. And if that be heresy, make the most of it. The very format of the magazines is misleading. Religious faith, if it means anything, means that it is an overarching canopy that governs and controls what we value, what we believe and how we live. Politics is important, of course. It's important for one reason, because it's one of the ways in which love and justice are to work their way out in society. And we want to know as much as we can about literature, because what are the dramas, the poems, the novels that move us except revelations of the strengths and weaknesses of the dilemmas and potentials of the human spirit. Law. What is that, but a way of regulating, of checking the ravages of human sin, as we're so prone to express that sin in society. But overarching all of those topics and giving them their shape, their style, their true information is what we believe about the ultimates of life, as God has revealed those ultimates in Jesus Christ. Now, even when we understand how our religious faith has to permeate these other categories, even when we set aside the Time or Newsweek model of life, we may have trouble knowing how best we express our religious convictions as they touch on other areas of life. The early church had that problem. In the midst of persecution, oppression, misunderstanding, and rejection, it was very easy for those first Christians to express their religious fervor in wrath and indignation toward those that were making life so difficult for them. And it's to that situation that the letter of James speaks, when he says, "be slow to speak, be quick to listen, be slow to anger." Now this is not a course 101A in interpersonal communications, where we're told, if you listen a little more, you'll understand more of what's going on in the other person's heart and spirit, and we're all prone to talk first and to listen last, and so forth. I'm not against all that stuff. And I don't think James was. but in this particular piece he's saying is be slow to speak the word of God and be quick to hear it, be slow to use the Word of God in wrathful anger or vindictiveness. The Bible gives us precedent along this line in the Psalms, doesn't it? Where the men and women of Israel deeply wounded by their enemies,

threatened at times and exile by their captors very often invoked the wrath of God upon the heads of their enemy. And it may well be that the early church was prone to reach back into that earlier expression of redemptive history and to call wrath and anger upon their enemies. It may have been that they, like Peter at times, wanted to cease the sword and cut the ear. And James says, "Back away, listen to the Word of God, be slow to speak, quick to hear." And then in that very telling summary, he says, "For the wrath of our humanity," the wrath of man, "does not work the righteousness of God." You see, one of our desires is we understand how important our biblical faith is to us is to see that biblical faith set everything right and to see it set everything right at once. And it makes us angry to see things wrong. And we find ourselves responding in anger to the outrages of life. James says, watch out for such emotions. God does better with anger than you do. God is better at final judgment than you are. And he says, one of the things that wrath does is to crowd God from the judge's bench to snatch the robe from His shoulders, to clutch the gavel from His hand, and it puts us in our broken and fallen and prejudice and weak humanity in the position of that ultimate judging. Anger makes us the judge of the other person's wrongs, and at the same time tends to obscure our own sinfulness from our eye. And so all of a sudden we're puffed up with righteousness as though the Trinity had been expanded to four members, and we had the ability and the perspective to bring judgment upon the world. Our wrath, human wrath, James says, does not work the righteousness of God, no matter how eager we are to let that wrath express itself. I didn't bring a New Yorker magazine because I didn't know if it would be proper to turn this pulpit into a magazine rack. But the New Yorker magazine is a bit wrathful, a bit angry in its very format. Now, it does it low key with a teasing and those little snippets in the bottom of the columns, where it finds all the mistakes that have been made in the last few weeks and the press, all the misprints, all the garbled sentences, all the non sequiturs and so forth. And then it tweaks everybody throughout the land with a kind of highest style of New York superciliousness looking down upon the foibles of all those people out in the flatlands that can't spell or proofread. And if we know anything from psychology, it's that behind teasing, there is hostility. And James is saying that justice, the compartmentalised model of religious faith as seen in Time and Newsweek will not pass biblical scrutiny. Neither will that expression of our Christian superiority that finds us all was angry at everyone else, as though we were the judges do it. And so neither the New Yorker nor Newsweek is the model for what we do. In fact, James says, you have to look in another book. You have to hear the Word of God. And he says, the key to the right kind of righteousness is listening with meekness. "Listen meekly," he says, "to the implanted word, which is able to make you wise unto salvation." We listen to the words of judgment upon us. We who would so in our anger liked to be judged as the expression of our religious fervor, have to look at the word and see ourselves judged. We see the word calling us broken, calling us falling, calling us idolaters, calling us greedy. The word and the power of its judgment has a way of saying, "deal with your own problems before you take that angry gavel and smash it down on the bar of history as though you were God." Listen meekly to the word, to its word of judgment, and to its word of grace. Let it tell you how God loved you while you were his enemy. Let it tell you how He sent Jesus Christ to deliver from the anger to come. Let it tell you how much He cares and how much He cares just at that point where we have done those things that make it hard for us to care for ourselves or for anyone else to care about us. At that moment, the meaning of the cross, the meaning of the comfort of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of the truth that God has loved us in Jesus Christ, will break in upon us, as we listen and look at the Word. God told Habakkuk to write a vision, so that people could read it on the run. James says, that's all right for Habakkuk, but you need to look more penetratingly at the Word of God. Don't be like the person who takes the fleeting look in the mirror and adjusts a hair or

two and rolls on. Let the Word of God hold the picture of you before yourself so that you can truly see yourself as judged by God and as loved by Him. And in that listening with meekness to the Word, which the Holy Spirit has implanted in us and insinuated into our personalities, in that listening with meekness, we have the first step of true righteousness. There's a friend of mine who was involved in the freedom riots. He told me a very interesting story the other day about being taken to jail in an encounter in a bus station during the days when they were seeking to integrate some of the facilities. A group of cabbies were outside the bus station and became angry and then began to beat on some of the people. My friend was beaten badly, taken to jail, and one of the cab drivers was taken with him. When his friends came to bail him out, he refused to accept the posting of the bond, until they went back and got money to bail out the cab driver. Here was a friend who had looked in the mirror of the Word and seen the nature of the loving judging grace of God, and who had looked at it long enough for it to penetrate his whole person. And he refused to accept his own freedom, until his friends had also secured the freedom of the person who had attacked him. Anger does not work the righteousness of God, but meek listening to the Word begins to do it. And out of that meek listening there comes loving with meaning, doing the Word is the forceful way that James puts this, not just hearing, but acting upon what has heard, believing what the Word says about our sinfulness, believing what the Word says about our weakness, about our ignorance, about our need for God, and then believing what the Word says about the grace that meets us in our lostness and captures us as part of God's people and God's family. When we listen with meekness, we're ready to love with meaning in doing the Word. And in caring for the widow and the orphan, now this statement, the true religion is undefiled is to care for the widow and the orphan in their need, and to keep oneself unstained from the world is not a trite pious platitude. It's not a flipped statement of moral cliché at all. We have to see it in a setting of a profound theological reality, that the love for the widow and the orphan is the best evidence that the listening with meekness has taken place. We have caught the story. We have caught the fact that it's a story of God loving us in our helplessness. And when that story is implanted in our lives, when the grace of forgiveness is received and experienced, then we demonstrate that we understand its meaning by the reaching out to those whose love can do us very little good, who have very little to return, except their own gratitude, whose stories do not make the headline, the care of whom is not a ladder to power or influence. And the story of love in the time of weakness and need is a story acted out in the double drama of incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection. But in the second half of that drama as well, the drama of the people of God moving out to make that love demonstrable and visible in the circumstances where we live. Keeping yourself unstained from the world, what can that mean but to summarize exactly what we've talked about? What does the world do? It does not hear the word of judgment or of grace. What does the world do? It does not listen meekly to the Word of God. It thinks it knows all the answers. And to keep oneself unstained from the world is not to wrap our skirts of separatism around us and criticize the world for its bad habits. It's to reject the essence of the world view, which is that I can take the gavel of judgment in my own hand and in anger and hostility lash out at those with whom I disagree, and in the pride of my self-righteousness assume that I do not need God's grace and help the way others do. Some of us have had to work this through this text in the last few weeks, as the headlines have come dipped in blood from east Africa. And we were ready to dislike Amin, we were ready to pray for wrath on his head early on, because we'd seen on national television two presentations of Entebbe, which gave us a kind of a caricature, a profile of what Amin may be like. And then when the news came, then when the news came that the Archbishop and some of his associates had been murdered, that the sword of persecution was being lowered on the necks of the Christians in Uganda, can

imagine the outrage with which we were filled, and I'm sure you share it. My mind went back to one of the high evenings of my life in December, 1975 at Nairobi, an evening with our Archbishop, and evening of discussion of the east African revival in the way in which the Spirit of God had been changing hearts and lives in unbroken patterns for 40 years, sitting with the Archbishop and one of his bishops, other layman from Uganda and hearing that story, hearing the Archbishop say that his great delight was to carry the gospel out to the villages and to preach the living Word and to see men and women confess Jesus Christ as Lord and savior. And then to think that that man was done in, that Christian brother, that spiritual giant. And how we want to take the gavel of judgment in our own hands and do something about it. And how the Word of God says, let me handle the ultimate judgment. You don't do that very well. But your task is to work righteousness and love and bring justice where you can, in the care of the widow and the orphan. The ultimate questions of history will be in God's hands, but in biblical language, judgment and justice are the same word. And my contribution to judgment is not the ultimate vindication on my enemies or the enemies of God. That's in a higher hands than mine. My contribution to judgment and yours is so to hear, so to listen with meekness to the implanted word, that we reach out wherever we have power, wherever we have opportunity, to make the story of the sacrificial love of God in Jesus Christ crystal clear. And it's not from the news magazines that we got our model of life. It's from the Word of God, which like a mirror, shows us how much we need and how much God has done. It's from the word of God, which like a light blazes the trail for us to go out into the world with the loving deeds of grace that show that by faith our name is written into the story. We have become part of the plot that God is bringing to its great denouement in our history. So be it in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (gentle organ music) (choir vocalizing) (soft organ music) (choir sings in foreign language) (dramatic organ music) (choir sings in foreign language) (choir sings in foreign language) (bright organ music) (choir sings in foreign language) (uplifting organ music) ♪ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him, all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- We give thanks, O God, for these gifts, which come from grateful hearts and unselfish spirits. Bless each gift with Your Spirit, that every penny given may be used to bring a more blessed life to some brother or sister of ours. May our giving be multiplied by Your power and touched by Your Spirit. And may we, O God, give not only our gifts, may we give ourselves to You through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. (bright organ music) (choir vocalizing) Without bowing your head or closing your eyes, will you receive now this benediction, this blessing, which I offer in the name of Christ. The love of God, the grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and forever. ♪ Amen ♪ (light organ music)