

Narrator: Duke University Chapel service of worship. September 16th 1979. (organ music) (piano music) (light organ music) (choir sings) (organ music) (choir sings)

Female Speaker: Be seated.

- Oh creator God, your children gather once again as your church, the Body of Christ. Grant us the presence of Messiah. Bearing the gift of the suffering servant. Open our hearts to the healing and reconciling power of your presence. As we offer together our shared prayer of confession. Forgive us our sins, oh Lord.

Congregation: The sins of the present and the sins of the past. The sins of our souls and the sins of our bodies. The sins which we have done to please ourselves and the sins which we have done to please others. Forgive us our casual sins and our deliberate sins. Forgive us our sins, oh Lord. Forgive them all. In the name of Jesus the Christ, amen.

Female Speaker: And now oh thou spirit of mercy, hear our silent inner yearnings as we lift up to you, our burden of personal sins. Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "take heart my son, your sins are forgiven. Stand up, take your bed and go home. Know that this day, this moment, you are freed of the torment of the past. You are graciously forgiven and reconcile to God and your neighbor. Let us give thanks for God is good and God's love is everlasting.

Congregation: Thanks be to God, who's love creates us. Thanks be to God, who's mercy redeems us. Thanks be to God, who's grace sustains us.

Female Speaker: We welcome all of you today, to this beautiful sanctuary on this lovely day. Our preacher this morning is the Reverend Robert T. Young, minister to the university. We would like for you to remember in your prayers, Father Bruce Shepard, the former Episcopal chaplain to Duke. He has been in the hospital since late in the summer, his condition has been getting worse. We would like to remind you there will be a Duke University parish ministry retreat, this afternoon from two to five in the divinity school lounge. We urge you all to attend. Here will be an opportunity given to become part of the planning process for the coming year. You may also note that in the bulletin there is an insert where you can fill out what you are interested in taking part in for the coming year. If you would like to leave that at the back of the chapel at the hostess desk this would help us, or mail it in. There will be an organ recital tonight, here in the chapel at seven pm. John Mueller of Salem College will be performing. (shuffling noises)

Male Speaker: Let us unite our hearts in the prayer for illumination. Prepare our hearts oh Lord, to accept your word. Silence in us any voice but your own. That hearing, we may also obey your will through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. The Old Testament lesson is taken from the 50th chapter of Isaiah verses four through nine. The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught. That I may know how to

sustain with the word, him that is weary. Morning by morning, he wakens. He wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear and I was not rebellious. I turned not backward. I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard. I hid not my face from shame and spitting, for the Lord God helps me, therefore I have not been confounded. Therefore I have set my face like a flint And I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me. Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary. Let him come near to me. Behold the Lord God helps me. Who will declare me guilty. Behold all of them will wear out like a garment. The moth will eat them up. The epistle lesson is from the second chapter of James, verses 14 to 18. What does it profit my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works. Can his faith save him. If a brother or sister is ill clad and in lack of daily food and one of you says to them, go in peace be warm and filled, without giving them the things that they need for the body, what does it profit? So faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, you have faith and I have works. Show me your faith apart from your works and I by my works will show you my faith. Here ends the reading from the epistle, amen. (organ music) (choir sings)

Male Speaker: Will the congregation please stand for the reading of the gospel lesson. The gospel lesson is from the eighth chapter of Mark, verses 27 to 38. Hear the word of God. And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples who do men say that I am. And they told him, John the Baptist. And others say, Elijah. And others, one of the prophets. And he asked them, but who do you say that I am. And Peter answered him, you are the Christ. And he charged them, to tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes. And be killed. And after three days, rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, but turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter. And said, get behind me Satan, for you are not on the side of God, but of men. And he called to him, the multitude with his disciples and said to them, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life, will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels, will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life. For what can a man give in return for his life. For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in the this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the son of man also be ashamed. When he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels. Here ends the reading from the gospel, all praise and glory be to God, amen. (organ music) (choir sings)

- [Reverend Robert T. Young] It is good to be here this morning. Beautiful day indeed. As a matter of fact it's been, rather a beautiful weekend hasn't it? May I offer a word of congratulations to some outstanding young men and coaches. And to a student body who supported with enthusiasm and real joy yesterday's team and a very exciting time for all of us. A good beginning. So it's not only a good day today but it was a good time yesterday. But it's good to be here in this particular place. Last night about 10:30, I came over here for a few moments of prayer as has become my custom lately on Saturday night before I'm to preach on Sunday morning. And as I walked through the chapel, there was a young woman student here, sitting in the chapel, reading. And I spoke to her and said, "Hello, it's good to see you again." With a smile of deep satisfaction and joy on her face, she looked up and said, "It's good to be here, tonight". So it is, good to be here. Let us pray. And now may the words of my lips and thoughts of our hearts all that transpires in the moments that lie immediately ahead oh Lord, our God. Be acceptable and pleasing in thy sight. We pray in the name of

Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. We have just heard the gospel lesson for this day. Passage from the gospel of Mark Chapter 8 verses 27 through 38. A passage as familiar to us I suppose as any passage in the New Testament. After having heard those words, may I ask, who of us wants a Messiah like this? A Messiah who is to suffer, be rejected, be killed and rise again. Who wants a Messiah like this? A messiah who said then and says now, deny self take up your cross, follow him, lose your life for his sake, yes. Who wants a Messiah like this? Well it's rather obvious to me that Peter did not want a Messiah like this, at least at that particular moment, he did not. For when Jesus talked about his suffering, rejection, death and rising again, Mark records that Peter took Jesus aside and rebuked him. Began to rebuke him. There are New Testament interpreters who contend that Peter was upset in this moment and that he rebuked Jesus when he talked like that because Peter loved Jesus so very much that he didn't want anything to happen to him. Peter didn't want to see Jesus suffer and die even if Jesus did say that he would rise again. Well that may well be. Probably that is at least partly the reason Peter rebuked Jesus. But I believe however that there was another very important, very personal reason that Peter objected to what Jesus had said. I believe that Peter was afraid that if Jesus as the Messiah was going to suffer and be rejected and die, then one could logically reason that surely he and the other disciples might well face the very same fate as Jesus. In other words, as Peter heard Jesus, Jesus was not talking just about his own life and suffering and death. But I have an idea that Peter sensed that he was preparing the disciples for their own trials and tests and for the trauma that lie ahead for them. And then after Jesus put Peter in his place by using those words which all of us have spoken many times. Get thee behind me, Satan. After Jesus put Peter in his place, Jesus went on to spell out precisely what it was that Peter had been anticipating. For in so many words, Jesus then said to Peter and to the other disciples and to us, if you are going to follow me, then you must deny yourself, you must take up your cross and follow me. For if you try to save your life you will surely lose it. But if on the other hand, you are willing to lose your life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, then you will find it. Who wants a Messiah like this? Yes, who does? Surely not Peter. Evidently not any of the other disciples at this moment, any of us this morning. You, me, anyone here. Oh we and they all want a messiah, a messiah that is Christ, Christos, savior, redeemer, restorer, the anointed one, the Son of God. They and we want a Messiah who will restore the kingdom, who will bring back the territory. Who will give us power and prestige and land and health and wholeness and dignity. Integrity, prosperity, peace and security. They and we want a Messiah who will bring to us, give to us, do for us, restore us, deliver us. But a Messiah who will suffer, be rejected, die and even be raised? Who wants a Messiah like this? This is the Messiah who obeyed God. The Messiah who, from the beginning of his ministry when God's voice said, this is my beloved son and whom I am well pleased. Until moments after the crucifixion when the Roman soldier cried, surely this man was the son of God. This is the one who lived a life of total and radical obedience to the Lord our God. And who wants a Messiah like this? This is the one who said, I have come to do the will of my father who sent me. The one who said, I must go even unto Jerusalem. The one who said nevertheless oh Father, not my will but thy will be done. Why, who knows. A Messiah who obeys radically and totally like this may even expect those of us who follow him to obey that way. This is the Messiah who prayed to God. The Messiah who from the time of his temptation and testing in the wilderness, when surely he was in constant prayer and with our Lord God. From that moment until the night before his death when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the one who lived a life of constant prayer and communion with God. Jesus went apart to pray and Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. And going on a little further, Jesus began to pray and taking Peter, James and John with him on the mountain, he began to pray and when you pray he said, you are to say our Father.

Jesus prayed, about his calling, his teaching, his healing, his final commitment even unto death. About his disciples and about those who he said at that moment were not a part of his fold. Why, who knows? A Messiah who prays this often and intensely and seriously and expectantly. Why, a Messiah who prays like that may even expect those who follow him to pray also, may he not. Who wants a Messiah like this? This is the Messiah who served and suffered. The Messiah who from the very beginning of his ministry when he suffered 40 days and 40 nights of temptation in the wilderness. Until the last moment of suffering on the cross when he cried, my God, my God why has thou forsaken me? The Messiah who lived a life of constant struggle and sacrifice and suffering. Who said no one takes my life from me, I lay it down of my own. Who said he who would be master of all must be servant of all. The first should be last and the last, first. The son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Even as I have suffered, he said you too will suffer many things. Yes, Jesus suffered for a cause. He suffered for others, he suffered for his calling, he suffered even unto death. Why, who knows? A Messiah who suffers because of his calling, his conviction, his commitment. Why, a Messiah who suffers like this may even expect some of those of us who follow him to suffer also. May he not? Who wants a Messiah like this? Raising this question, who wants a Messiah like this, over the past several days, has caused me to stop and reflect and to ask myself, what kind of Messiah do I really want, anyhow? Well. Let me tell you. A Messiah who is holy, divine, and yet human and real. One who is mystery and transcendence and yet visible and present. One who knows when I want a Messiah to be far away and when I want the Messiah to be very near. A Messiah who has some characteristics like the ideal mother, some other characteristics like the ideal father and other characteristics like the ideal companion or friend. A Messiah who consoles me when I cry. Who comforts me when I hurt, who supports me when I am weary, who disturbs me just a little bit when I get comfortable. Who calls me but on my schedule. A Messiah who celebrates with me in my joys, is happy in my laughter, who feels good when I am content and satisfied. A Messiah who stimulates my mind, who warms my spirit, and keeps my hopes alive. Who guarantees me meaning in this life and the ultimate in meaning in the life to come. I want a Messiah who lets me plan my own agenda. One who will let me chart my own course. Select where I go and what I do. A Messiah who will always be nice and kind to me, who will help me when I need it, who will not ask or expect too much of me. A Messiah who will assure me of good health, a happy life, loyal friends, a comfortable home, good food, security and safety. A Messiah who will give me light in my darkness, tranquility in the midst of the storm, and food along the way. One who provides me support and strength and peace of mind. A Messiah who assures me a good education and a growing and open mind. One who gives me understanding and helpful and caring friends. A Messiah who lets me pick and choose when I will obey and when I will pray and when I will suffer. So the question comes back haunting me again, yes who among us wants a Messiah like this? Jesus -- for Jesus said, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it and whoever will lose his life for my sake in the gospel's sake will find it. For you see Jesus never minced any words, he never made any bones about the radical nature of his call to obedience, did he? He really didn't. He was clear, straightforward, direct about what being a disciple would mean. Here was and is a Messiah with startling and staggering honesty. So if you or I follow Jesus under the misconception that it is to be a life of ease and comfort, the kind of life that I was describing that I wanted, then it is our own fault and it is not the fault of Jesus or of Scripture because the call, the words of Jesus and the word in Scripture are very clear. If you obey, you will suffer. So may I suggest that if you or I fail to respond, or to heed the call of Jesus the Christ, then let's do not say that we don't understand but let's simply acknowledge our unwillingness to obey. For here is a Messiah who came not only to give but

expecting us to give. Who came not only to sacrifice but expecting us to sacrifice. Who came not only to serve but expecting us to serve. Who came not only to obey but expecting us to obey. Who himself not only prayed but expects us to pray. Who himself not only suffered but is expecting us to suffer. Who himself not only loved but expects us also to love. Here is a Messiah who offers not much security. Not much security save that which assures us that underneath are the everlasting arms. Here is a Messiah who offers not much peace, save that which hears my peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you, let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Here is a Messiah who offers not much comfort, save that of knowing. As he said, look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more worth than they? Here is a Messiah who offers not much satisfaction, save that of our knowing that whoever is faithful unto death will receive the crown of life. So I ask this morning who among us wants a Messiah like this? A Messiah who really does participate fully and totally in life as God gives it to you and to me. Even as he participated fully and totally in the life of those with whom he lived and walked. Showing us how God really has come to be a part of our life and our way. Elie Wiesel, in his book, "Night", tells of the hanging in Auschwitz one evening at dusk of two adults and a young boy. Because the two adults were heavy, the two of them died on the gallows very quickly. But the little boy whom Wiesel said the folks in the concentration camp had affectionately called the sad-eyed angel, was much lighter than the adults, and he dangled for a long time on the gallows between life and death. And the Jews in the camp in that particular moment, that particular day, were forced to march around the three of them as they were hanging on the gallows. As they marched, Wiesel heard a voice muttering from someone behind him, "Where is God? Where is God?" They marched on and around and around. Finally, Wiesel said he heard the voice cry out again, "Where is God? Where is God now?" And then from somewhere deep within his own soul, he heard some voice speaking inside him saying, "Where is God? Here he is. Hanging on the gallows." Who wants a Messiah like this? A Messiah who shows us how lovingly and deeply God participates in life as you and I know it. A Messiah who is with us in the joy and the agony, the heartbreak and the celebration. The life and death that all of us know as we live moment by moment. And then God calls us, to be and to do the same with others. This is the promise, this is the call, and this is the claim from the Messiah, our Messiah, your Messiah. But really, who wants a Messiah like this, today? Let us pray. We give you thanks, oh God. For the coming of your son, our savior, our Messiah even Jesus the Christ. Help us, oh Lord our God. To be open and responsive to the claims that Christ makes on us. To be willing to say yes, I want a Messiah who is Jesus the Christ. To say in the words of the hymn writer, have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way. Amen. Our Hymn of Consecration this morning, will be that hymn, rather than the one you find listed in the order of worship in the bulletin, will you turn to hymn number one, 54. And in a prayerful, meditative mood, let us sing together. Have thine own way Lord. Have thine own way, please stand. (organ music) ♪ Have thine own way, lord ♪ ♪ Have thine own way; ♪ ♪ Thou art the potter, ♪ ♪ I am the clay. ♪ ♪ Mould me and make me ♪ ♪ After thy will, ♪ ♪ While I am waiting, ♪ ♪ Yielded and still. ♪ ♪ Have thine own way Lord, ♪ ♪ Have thine own way; ♪ ♪ Search me and try me, ♪ ♪ Master, today. ♪ ♪ Whiter than snow, Lord, ♪ ♪ Wash me just now, ♪ ♪ As in thy presence ♪ ♪ Humbly I bow. ♪ ♪ Have thine own way, Lord, ♪ ♪ Have thine own way; ♪ ♪ Wounded and weary, ♪ ♪ Help me I pray, ♪ ♪ Power, all power, ♪ ♪ Surely is Thine, ♪ ♪ Touch me and heal me, ♪ ♪ Savior divine. ♪ ♪ Have thine own way, Lord, ♪ ♪ Have thine own way; ♪ ♪ Hold o'er my being, ♪ ♪ Absolute sway. ♪ ♪ Fill with Thy Spirit, ♪ ♪ Till all shall see, ♪ ♪ Christ only, always, ♪ ♪ Living in me. ♪ ♪ Amen. ♪

Female Speaker: Let us affirm what we believe.

Congregation: We believe in God, who has created and is creating. Who has come in the truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new. Who works in us and other by the spirit. We trust God, who calls us to be the church. To celebrate life and it's 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 and death. In life beyond death. God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Female Speaker: Will the congregation be seated. The Lord be with you.

Congregation: With your spirit.

Female Speaker: Let us pray. Oh God of the universe. Our creation, our history and of majestic silence. Accept our gratitude for the gift of this day. Here our songs of praise for the wonder of awe of your creation. Open our eyes to the marvelous complexity and beautiful simplicity of nature. Make us aware of the interconnectedness of all of existence. Of the seamless web of the world. Oh God of persons. Give us the insight and energy to grasp the opportunities and accept the limitations of ourselves and our unique situation. Help us grown into true service, to your glory through our bodies, intellect and imagination. Let us never weary in well doing. Christ has told us, anyone who wants to be a follower of mine must leave self behind, take up his cross and follow me. We pray today, oh God, to give us the strength to respond to that call to follow the messiah, not in imitation but innovation. Help us to recognize messiah in the unexpected. The gift of the radically new, breaking in like a dawn on our weary circling. Oh God of mercy, come and be with those who suffer. In the hurts of body, mind and spirit. Remember particular, your servant, Bruce Shepard. Touch with your healing power, all those who ache with the grief of losses through death and separation. Lift up the bruised and wounded who obediently suffer insult for your sake. Empower with renewed courage and burning, unquenchable hope, those who are lonely, shunned, imprisoned. Bring to them the healing knowledge that messiah comes most surely to the outcast, the victim, the oppressed, the despised and finally, oh God of life. God of death overcome. Teach us the modesty of stewardship of this fragile earth. Impress upon all your children that if we do not see this small globe as a home for all the people's of this world, we will have no home at all. Give us the wisdom to demand less of the bounty of the earth. To seek greater and greater understanding and acceptance of other people, race and cultures. Save us from the horror of nuclear holocaust by the awakening of your aroused children who must cry out, holt for the madness of nuclear arms race. All these petitions we boldly and humbly ask in the name of the messiah, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Who taught us to pray together.

Congregation: 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.

Female Speaker: Amen. (organ music) (choir sings) (choir sings) (organ plays) (organ music) (choir sings) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪

Female Speaker: We come before your presence with thanksgiving, God. Accept these tokens of our blessed life. We return to you but a small portion of whole gift of our lives. Bless and sanctify these gifts of money so that your servant church can continue to live, die and be renewed by serving the suffering world. By the power of the spirit, amen. (organ music) (choirs sings) (organ music) (choir sings)

Female Speaker: Jesus said peace is my parting gift to you. My own peace such as the world cannot give. Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears. Go forth into the world, confident in your faith. Be ready to act prayerfully as though in love and to pray in view of an act to come. An act of love, even of heroic love. In the name of the creator, the liberator and our advocate, amen. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (choir sings) (organ music) (crowd making noises in background)