

(contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues)

- Duke University Chapel service, September 4th, 1977. (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues) (contemporary gospel music continues) (contemporary gospel music continues) (contemporary gospel music continues) (bright music) (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues)

- Let us bow in the presence of God, before whom all the secrets of our heart are disclosed. And in this loving and forgiving presence, make our corporate confession before God at our neighbors. Let us pray.

All: Oh Lord, at this moment, and in this place together, we confess our sin. We have done those things, which we ought not to have done. And we have left undone those things, which we ought to have done, forgive us. Forgive us oh Lord and help us to do less talking and more listening, less complaining and more exclaiming, forgive us oh Lord and help us to do no bossing now, just watching over and standing by, but not telling how. Forgive us oh Lord, and keep us from moodiness and self-pity, from the routine and repetitious set us free. Keep us in tuned with the deed of others. Let us be carefree enough to have fun and enjoy life. Forgive us oh Lord and help us not to grow bitter or cynical or out of touch with the real. Let us use our learning and living as an incentive for more giving and loving. Oh Lord, we need you now more than ever before in our lives. Forgive us, cleanse us, make us whole through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Oh Lord, hear us as we make our personal confession. Amen. Hear these words from Micah. "God will have compassion upon us, will tread our iniquitous underfoot, and cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Rejoice in this good news. Amen. (bright music) (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues) (bright music)

- The old Testament lesson is from the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, verses one through 14, "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to break down and a time to build up, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek and a time to lose, a time to keep and a time to cast away, a time to rend and a time to sew, a time to keep silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. What gain has the worker from his toil? I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in man's mind. Yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live. Also, that it is God's gift to man that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever, nothing can be added to it, nor can anything be taken from it. God has made it so, in order that men

should fear before Him." Will the congregation stand for the reading of the gospel. A reading from St. John's gospel, the 18th chapter verses 33 through 38. "Then pilot entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said unto Him, 'art, thou the king of the Jews' Jesus answered him. 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me, what hast thou done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence.' Pilate therefore said unto Him, 'Art thou a king then?' Jesus answered 'thou sayest that I am a king to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice' Pilate saith unto him 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews and saith unto them. 'I find in Him no fault at all.'" Here ends the reading from the holy scriptures. (contemporary gospel music)

- Let us affirm what we believe.

All: 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 others by the spirit. We trust God who calls us to be the church, to celebrate life at 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 and death, and life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. Oh God, we praise you for the beauty and majesty we know as we worship you. We are humbled by our awareness of your love, your justice and your mercy. We marvel that we have been created in your image, responsible for ourselves and for the whole world. So we ask that you will bless our bodies, quicken our conscience, sensitize our minds, so that we will develop up a world in which life can be whole and healthy. We pray that we will leave for those who follow bread and not stones, freedom and peace, and not oppression and war, a community of love and not hate. Hear our prayers oh God of thanksgiving and intercession for all people in this university. For those who care for our bodies and souls, those who stimulate and nourish our minds, for those who work in offices, those who have responsibility for the financial wellbeing of this institution. Those who make decisions which determine the direction and future of this university. And for those who faithfully care for this place, serve our food, ease our lives with endless daily chores. We pray that all of us, students, faculty and the entire community will be witnesses to your truth, which sets us free. That we will become a caring community, recognizing the worth and value of all persons. Grant us joy at what we do, and grace to show our thankfulness to our brothers and sisters and to you. We give you thanks oh God, for those we love, and those who help make our lives more meaning filled. We ask that through your grace, we will be enabled to extend our love. Not only to those who are easy to love, but also to those who may need this love more. Those who are lonely, those who close in on themselves. Those whose inner beauty is hidden or dwarfed behind that, which we call unattractive. Open our eyes and ears to the needs of our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts so that we may respond. Hear us

now, oh loving God as we lift before you our personal concerns, for people we know who are celebrating birth and birthdays, and marriage, and new opportunities. For those we know who are sick, who are facing difficult decisions, whose families are fractured by death, distrust, divorce. And for those who are facing death, hear us as we lift these people to your care. Use us to be instruments of your healing love. We pray in the spirit of one who taught us to pray.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom. The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

- Last year. The worship committee developed a liturgical calendar for Duke Chapel, which acknowledges the traditional church year, and also those Sundays of the university year, which are important to us as a worshipping community. This Sunday is a special time for celebration for the new year. A time when we begin, some for the first time, others again and again, and again. The process of growth, learning and worship as a Christian community. Welcome to all of you. Those who are here for the first time. Those of you who are returning. Those of you who have not been away. And a special welcome to visitors, and to the chapel choir, we miss while you were away. We wish we could extend our very warm welcome, in more symbolic terms. At the conclusion of our service of worship today, people representing the religious communities of Duke, we'll be outside of the chapel, down the steps in the Grove, to talk with you about their plans and programs for this year. On the first Sunday of each month, obediently following morning worship. We celebrate holy communion and the Memorial Chapel, which is to your left. Bring your hymn book with you. The chairs are out here for you to sit on. It is a brief service and so we will stand for the service. Beginning this Wednesday evening from 10 to 10:00 PM, there will be a service of worship here at Duke Chapel. You are invited to this time of worship each Wednesday from 10, till 10:30 PM. Persons who are willing to serve as ushers and volunteer chapel attendance. Those are people who help keep the chapel open from eight to 11:00 PM, so that you may come in for meditation, are asked to meet in this chapel at 4:30, this Tuesday. Welcome to you.

- I greet you. In the name and in the of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. May I invite you to do whatever you can to cool yourself off. That means unbuttoning a tie or taking a coat off, or pushing your neighbor out a little bit, whatever. We wish it were cooler. One of these the days I'm going to be serious when I say we'll start us an air conditioning fund. But if you would like to contribute, we'll be glad to have any and all contributions beginning today. We're delighted to have you here. This is a time of excitement, a time of new beginnings for all of us. Even those of us, as Helen said, who start over, and over, and over, and over again. So we're delighted to have you here. We pray God's blessings on you. Not only this day, but every day while you're here. We invite you to worship in this place every Sunday at 11 o'clock. Next Sunday, one of the great preachers in our nation, perhaps in the world will preach for us, Dr. Carlyle Marney. And every Sunday following we will have worship at 11, and I trust that you will come and worship with us. I invite you also to use this place, not just for worship at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning, but other times. And I'm sure you will. In the name of God who creates us, redeems us and sustains us. Amen. Someone has calculated, that by the time a man reaches middle age, whatever middle age may be, if he has lived a fairly normal life in these

United States, he will have drunk some 2000 gallons of coffee, and will have eaten some 2000 steaks. Also, so the word goes, he probably has worn out some 90 pairs of shoes, and some 50 suits of clothes. I dare not give an estimate as to what it would be for a middle aged woman. But now this morning, the question for us to consider is this, is it for this cause that a person comes into the world? To be a consumer, to provide work for the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker. No, there is more to life than that. All of us would agree that there is more, but how much more. Often we are most unwilling to do some of the very important things of life. One of these is that rarely are we willing to face? What I think is an inescapable question, namely, to what end was I born? For what cause have I come into this world? Or to what end were you born my friend? Or for what cause do you think you have come into the world? Jesus whole life and ministry revealed the more that there can be to life. On one occasion, Jesus asked "is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" It amazed Him that, "what should we eat? And what should we wear?" Were more important questions than, how should we live or what shall we live for? What is life? Surely more than food or clothing. Surely much more than many of us, maybe even most of us, but at least a lot of us have found so far. Walker Percy writes in his book, *The Message in the Bottle*, and I paraphrase him slightly. Why he writes, "are we Americans so sad in the 20th century? Why do we feel so bad in the very age? When more than in any other age, we have succeeded in satisfying our needs. Why do we feel bad in good environments, and good and bad environments? Why have more people been killed in the 20th century than in all others put together? Why do people driving around on beautiful Sunday afternoons like to see bloody automobile wrecks? Why do young people look so sad? The very young people who have sought a new life of joy and freedom." End of quote, why? to what end, for what course? We may not want to ask that question, but writers, poets, playwrights, artists all around us today are urging us to ask it. But we may be like little Pebbles in the *Flintstones* comic strip. In a recent comic strip she's seen crawling into the living room where her mom and dad are watching TV. She sits there on the floor and watches for a few minutes and she sees advertisements one after another coming up on the television screen. And after a while, she probably has seen all she can take and she crawls away and the bubbles over her head have her say to herself "who." What's so great about growing up. All I got to look forward to is nagging back aches, dandruff, sinus, headaches, and bad breath. But we are being called to grow up, to find our end and our cause. (indistinct) passages tells, I guess this probably is the experience which triggered her writing this particular book, because she tells about how she is standing beside a young boy in Northern Ireland, talking with him one minute, and then seeing his head blown to pieces right in front of her very eyes the next minute. And later she reflects on this and writes, "take stock, half of your life has been spent. What about the side of you that wants to contribute to the world?" Or as Ramesses the son of Pharaoh asks his father in Christopher Fry's *first born*. "Is there nowhere? Where I can come up on my own shape? where I am to look for life? To what end, for what cause?" Two things about Jesus life in this regard stand out. I think one, His primary end and cause was to bear witness to the truth. He bore witness to the truth, the truth about God, the truth about himself, the truth about authentic living. His life revealed that truth indeed will set you free, but it also revealed that truth and living the truth may cost you your life. Second, there is perfect congruence in Jesus life, between the purpose of his life, and the living of it. His life in ministry, teaching healing, preaching, express the end and the cause of His coming. How many persons do you know who as was Jesus when being questioned by Pilot near the end of their lives could say, "This is the cause for which I was born. This is the end for which I have come into the world, and have it apply to the way they have lived out their lives." Not many of you, some maybe, but not many. What then can we learn from the life of Jesus, to help us know our

end and our cause? First we have to believe that life is worth something. That life is important. That life has value that there is meaning here. It's almost as if we are to go back to the creation story, to get the sense of value inherent life. You will recall that in the first creation story, after each day's act of creation, the writer tells us, "and God saw whatever it was that God had created that day. And God saw so and so, and God saw that it was good." The next day, "And God saw what God had created and God saw it and said, 'it is good.'" And the next day, "and God created and God saw it and it is good." Or to get the real value that God intends for us to see that there is to human life. That is your life, my life, everyone's life. We recall that we are created "Imago Dei" in the image of God. Therefore there is something of ultimate value in every child of God, and in all of God's creation. Or if we wanna come at it another way, we may contrast Jesus view of life with that view, which Qoheleth the writer of Ecclesiastes talks about, in passages, not read this morning, but earlier on in the book of Ecclesiastes, Qoheleth was a man with a passion for life. He tried everything and ended up totally disillusioned. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." He said. And then, which I discovered this week for the first time, Qoheleth also had something to say about academic pursuits that you may be particularly you interested in this morning. He said "of making many books, there is no end, and much study is a wariness of the flesh." Well, if you don't know that you will. (congregation laughs) And you may want that scripture reference also. Qoheleth apparently worked hard at the pursuit of pleasure and material gain, and concluded that all was vanity, and all was the striving after the win. Now the real point is this, that Jesus never felt this way about life. Life was not vanity of vanities. There was purpose, there was meaning. In life Jesus saw and emphasized what William Faulkner would later call, the old universal truths of love, honor, pity, pride, compassion, and sacrifice. So if we are to discover our end and our cause, we have to believe that life has value, with life having value and meaning, then? In the second place, we have to be willing to invest something of ourself in it. Sure, we can go through life as a consumer, only as a taker, only as one who gets or receives or uses, only as a sponge soaking up. I guess it is possible to go through life like that. I seem to be able to recall some men and women and even some young people who treat life that that way, but is that living? If we are to discover, to know and fulfill our end and cause, we will have to invest some of ourselves in life. This means that we're not to hold back, but to give, to give as the prayer puts it, to give and not to count the cost, save the cost of knowing that we do God's will. This means then, to those of you who begin, or maybe even to those of you who resume your life here at Duke this week. If Duke University is important to you. If any, or all of your classes are important to you. If that relationship with a particular young man, or a particular young woman is of real value to you. If learning a new idea or grasping a new concept, or gaining a new insight is important to you. If a better understanding of yourself is worth anything to you. if maturing in your commitment to Christ and in your response to God means anything at all to you. If these are worth something of lasting value and significance to you. To your present and your future, to our present and to our future, then you will invest some of your very best self in them. And this is a place for us to do that investing my friends. This scholar, this school. This place where persons are to be free. This is a place to learn, to invest ourselves, where we are free. We are free to hold back. We're free to pick and choose. Pick and choose carefully my friends. Where and how you're going to invest yourself. Your mind. Your body. Your spirit. Your energy. Your ideas. There are many, many options here. Choose carefully those things of lasting value. And then invest yourself. Jesus was willing to invest himself in life. In His call in His vocation, in others, in God. And we're called to do precisely the very same thing. I think Jesus willing to invest himself, however, that is to preach, to teach, to give, to serve, to love, yes and to die, was connect to His baptism. For that was where He was called, and that was where He gave His obedience to God. And that

means this morning, my friends that your baptism in Christ has a particular and peculiar significance for you. Do you remember your baptism? It was then and there that either you gave yourself or you were given, fully, totally, holy to God. Remember that, as you tried to discover your end and your cause. So we have to believe that life has value, have to be willing to invest something of ourselves. And then I think in many ways, the most important thing is that we have to learn to live life in the meantime. This is the real point, live life, live it now. I was reading just a blurb the other day about Sissy Spacek. The bright, young, talented star of Carrie and of three women. She began her acting career after her brother died from leukemia when she was a senior in high school. She says, "his loss," quote, "blew a hole in every thing for me. And it made me aware that we don't always have as much time as we think we do." Or as Rilke writes in his letters to a young point. I want to beg you as much as I can, do not seek answers which can not be given to you because you would not be able to live them. And the point he says is to live everything, live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. The point is, live everything. Is this why the writer Ecclesiastes says, "for everything there is a time and a season, live everything, live your doubts, your faith, your beliefs, your loyalties, your adventures, your fantasies, your questions, your affirmations, your hopes, your struggles, your loves, your longings. Live the God who lives in you. Now, today, tomorrow, don't wait. Do not wait until next year, or until your senior year, or until you graduate, or don't wait until you get a 4.0 average, or a date with the most popular or the best looking person on campus. Don't wait until you get in grad school, or med school or law school, or get married, or get that best job to begin to live life. No, live it now. Suppose Jesus had waited to live. He really didn't live very long, and suppose He had lived His life waiting, waiting, waiting. Live it now. For what if this now is all we have my friends. Live it now. Dr. Martin Luther king and one of his sermons has something that I'd like to close with today. He says, "I still believe that standing up for the truth of God is the greatest thing in the world." This is the end of life. The end of life he says is not to be happy. The end of life is not to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God come what may. Your end, your cause, to do the will of God for your life and live it now. And in doing and living the will of God, we can sing, "rejoice the Lord is king, your Lord and king adore, rejoice give thanks and sing and triumph evermore, rejoice the Lord is king. (bright music) (drums beating) ♪ ♪ Rejoice, the Lord is King ♪ ♪ Your Lord and King adore ♪ ♪ Rejoice, give thanks and sing ♪ ♪ And triumph evermore ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice ♪ ♪ Jesus, the Savior, reigns ♪ ♪ The God of truth and love ♪ ♪ When He has purged our stains ♪ ♪ He took his seat above ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice ♪ (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues) (bright music) (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues) (contemporary gospel music continues)

- Oh, loving God. Send your Holy Spirit to cleanse our hearts. Hallow these gifts, and perfect the offering of ourselves to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (contemporary gospel music) (contemporary gospel music continues) (contemporary gospel music continues) With the assurance that God's truth is (mumbles) Let us join on this prayer for our university.

All: Oh God, help us acknowledge those things which divide us, and come to know your love which unite. Let us be slow to criticize, and quick to appreciate, slow to justify ourselves, and quick to excuse one another. When we disagree or misunderstand, let us listen to each other, and make out your truth together. When we fail, let us not live in our self pity, but grasp us in our every pain so that we may take up our failure and walk.

In grief, let us put our arms around each other. In joy, let us sing and laugh and dance together. In life let us celebrate our health and goodness, In death, let us celebrate our hope. In the year ahead, oh God. We give ourselves to you and one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Go out in hope and peace, serve the Lord. And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you from this day ever more. (contemporary gospel music)