

- The religion which belonged to neither a people nor a land and Zebedee was left in a boat, heartbroken. In 170 AD the great philosopher Celsus lamented that Christians would not serve as soldiers and protect the states. They would not hold public office. Another commentator said that Christians did not understand their civic duty. Tacitus said that Christians were aloof, disdainful of the ways of others. People who wall themselves off. Celsus considered it a revolt against the institutions. The customs which made society possible. For three centuries Jesus Christ broke the heart of the Roman world. Don't misunderstand. I'm glad that James and John followed Jesus. He was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and announcing in his own life, in his death and resurrection the coming of a new age which drew Jews and Greeks into a new nation. Created a nation without land. A religion beyond a particular land and beyond a particular people. Reversed the roles of rich and poor. The ancient rulership of men over women. The ancient tyranny of sin and death and ultimately Jesus Christ destroyed the terror of death itself. Demons were being driven out. The kingdom was at hand. What Jesus came preaching was tremendous. A reconceptualization of what it meant to be a human being. It was time for it. It was time for a new way, the way of God. It was the fullness of time. They were standing at the very edge of it. They were standing at the edge of the future. So why should they look back at the doctrines of the ancients? So why should they serve in the Roman legions? Why become involved in the traditional civic duties? Why should they, as Paul wrote, why should they worry about marriage? If married, stay married. If not married, stay single. They were baptized into androgyny. The distinctions between men and women were no longer important. The distinctions between slave and free, rich and poor, let the fishing go. Let the nets go, the boats. A new world was coming to birth, a radically different world, the future's world. Jesus was preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And Zebedee was left behind. I want you to see Zebedee left behind and I want you to have some sympathy for him because in the fourth century Christianity became the established religion. Now Christians were in the army. They did their civic duty. They were not aloof and disdainful. They ran things. Now Christianity became the bearer of correct doctrine of what was true, what was good and bad to be punished. The old religion against which the new prophets spoke was now Christianity. We ourselves, we ourselves become Zebedee sitting in the boat. Now as you see there are two things going on, always two things and both of them called Christian. The first century dynamism is still there. The casting of nets, the fishing for men, women, and children saying follow me. The kingdom of God is at hand. There is a new way of seeing the world in which there are neither rich nor poor, male nor female, where roles are reversed. See the dawn. Have no attachment to this world. Have no attachment to anything which keeps you from seeing the dawn. But the second thing which is going on, is Christianity which is established. The Christianity which has to face the fact that the kingdom is not dawning. It is not yet here. The androgyny in which we're baptized is not yet happened. The rich are still rich. The poor are still poor. People still more attached to their own kind than to humankind. In a world which is still broken, in which valleys are still valleys. Not every tear has been wiped away in such a world. There is the task of fashioning, of reinforcing and celebrating what is possible. Celebrating compromises, adaptations, and what is obviously second best. And those who are first century Christians among us come to us mending our nets as though there were a tomorrow. And they say, follow Jesus. And maybe you are James and John and it's the time of your calling,

called to look at the dark horizon. See the first days, the rays of the kingdom dawning. See it with the eyes of faith. Sell all you have. Follow Jesus wherever he leads you, but some of us will be Zebedee and will go on mending our nets quietly mulling issues of pro and con wondering where in a broken world still dark, the kingdom can next have a partial expression. To be part of what we call main line churches, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and the like means that we are people who know that we live within this tension, this doubleness which is Christianity in the world of our time. You are now in a mainline church. You are listening to a mainline preacher. And the lesson for the day is to get out of your boat and follow Jesus to the edge of the time where the future breaks like dawn upon the darkness and to live by that light. Let go of all that holds you back, that's the message today. Live unattached to the nation-state. Don't serve in the armed forces. If married, stay married. If not, stay single, let it go. At that, break the law. Establish sanctuaries for refugees. Pray without ceasing. Be perfect. But you are also in a mainline church and I also say to you that you live in a broken world where Christians have responsibilities as established religion for whatever time is left. Responsibilities to children, for education, for preserving the best of the past, for protecting against anarchy. To be conservative. You must see Zebedee left behind and understand Celsus and Tacitus and Cicero. What do you think the builders of this chapel expected? Is it a tent which can be struck or abandoned if the kingdom come at midnight tomorrow? Follow me and leave all this behind. Restrooms and lounge, both organs. It's an established church, built to last for centuries. What do chaplains do, people will say. They pray for one thing. They pray for academic convocations. They pray for alumni affairs, official banquets, the dedication of squash courts. Of course, chapels and chaplains are established. Chaplains reach out to both sides of an academic labor dispute. They put on their boots and they walk through the barnyards of academic politics. They study reports and they write reports and they try to figure out how prophetic they can afford to be, try to decide on what issues they will cash in whatever chips, moral or political power they have. When to do it. In a broken world. In a time when the dawn is not yet, the mainline church is not afraid to survive by patch and compromise. Because it has a role to fill within these structures for whatever time is left. Touch of salt here. Bit of yeast there. And always a prayer for the forgiveness of God. But within all this, within all this, restrooms, lounge and stone, there is also always another sound as well. People not with boots, but with wings on their feet soaring high above compromise. Singing for joy that the kingdom of God is at hand. Follow me to the edge where wars are ended and peace comes, where the enmity between men and women ends, follow me to the dawn arising. Are we large-souled enough to embrace the whole of it? To embrace the doubleness of what Christianity is in our time, both established and gone after Jesus. Without the zeal, without the vision of some change is unlikely. But also, in a broken world the dreamers will destroy us if the doubters are silent. It's uncomfortable being a mainline Christian. One ear to Jesus, the other ear to the ground. One foot in heaven and the other at Duke. Actually, it's absurd and it's wonderful and it's humorous. As long as James and John who go never forget that they are the sons of Zebedee. And as long as some part of Zebedee can rejoice that his children have gone to meet the future, which by God's grace will be his future also. The peace of God be with us all. Amen.

- Let us rise and affirm our faith. I believe in God the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord who was conceived by the holy spirit. Born of the virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilot. Was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and seated at the right hand of God the father almighty. From then he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the holy spirit, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness

of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. (traditional Catholic music)

- The Lord be with you.

- And also with you.

- Let us pray. Eternal God beneath whose rule we live and in whose grace we stand. All that is within us we bless your name. Seeing in the life of your son, Jesus, all that we would yet fail to be. He hath bid us to follow him and now we follow. The one who when confronted by the demonic rebuked it, casting out evil as an offense to God. Therefore we pray for the victims of evil, sufferers from cruelty, political oppression, war, others' selfishness, our indifference. Particularly those in Afghanistan and in Central America, we pray. When face to face with pain and sickness he healed, restoring health and wholeness. Therefore we pray for those who lie upon beds of pain. Those disfigured in body or mind by illness. And those doctors, nurses, and staff who bear the burden of caring for the sick. Particularly those in Duke Hospital, we pray. When burdened by the world's demands, he withdrew to be alone with you. And so we pray for those who are burdened by too much business, overworked, over programmed, over achieving. And for those made lonely or hurt by their business. Particularly those who labor in this place of high achievement. Give us grace to recognize our limits and wisdom to see the superficiality of much that concerns us, we pray. When overwhelmed by the task before him and over burdened by the weight of human need around him, he came before you in prayer, as we do now. Hear the petitions which your people lay before you. Particularly your people who worship in this chapel. In his name we pray, amen. Now let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God. (traditional Catholic music)

- Almighty God, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life. But above all, for your immeasurable love and the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. For the means of grace and for the hope of glory. And we pray give us such an awareness of your mercies that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise. Not only with our lips, but in our lives by giving up ourselves to your service. And by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days. Through Jesus Christ our Lord to whom with you and the holy spirit be honor and glory through all ages. Amen. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, they 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 and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (traditional Catholic music)

- As you go forth caught between the demands of Jesus and the realities of life, you need God's blessing. Now may the blessing of God, father, son, and holy spirit dwell with you now and always. Amen. (traditional Catholic music) (people chattering)