

- Sunday worship service, March 30th, 1980, Duke Chapel. (upbeat organ music)

- Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest on this blessed holy Palm Sunday. I greet you in the name and spirit of our Lord and savior Jesus the Christ. May grace and peace from the Lord be with you and be very present with us all, as we gather in this moment to praise and to worship the Lord our God. Come now, let us worship together. Let us hear the word of God as it is recorded in the gospel according to Saint Matthew chapter 21:1-11. And when they drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethpage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, go into the village opposite you and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, the Lord has need of them and he will send them immediately. This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet saying tell the daughter of Zion, behold your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass and on a colt, the foal of an ass. The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the ass and the colt and put their garments on them and he sat thereon. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road. And others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him, shouted hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying who is this? And the crowds said this is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee. The word of the Lord. ♪ Highest that ancient song we sing ♪ ♪ For Christ is our Redeemer ♪ ♪ The Lord of heaven our King ♪ ♪ Oh, may we ever praise Him ♪ ♪ With heart and life and voice ♪ ♪ And in His blissful presence ♪ ♪ Eternally rejoice ♪ (organ music) (choir singing, voices drown out by organ)

- Well, we're caught up in the frenzy and the madness of another presidential campaign. Thoughtful analysts tell us that one of the primary issues before us is that of leadership. If we could only have some sort of composite candidate. A combination of the greats of the past. Someone with the philosophical consistency and certitude of a Jefferson or a Madison, the charisma of a Jack Kennedy, the humanitarian totalitarian instincts of an Abraham Lincoln, the decisiveness of a Teddy Roosevelt, the economic pragmatism and moxie of FDR, the war making prowess of a Washington or a Jackson or an Eisenhower. If we could have all of these qualities wrapped into one, and then toss in a hefty chunk of John Wayne, my friends we'd have a president. (audience laughing) We would have a real president. We've been conditioned for that sort of thinking. Go back to our earlier history books. The history book heroes we had defined for us began with the Alexander the Greats and the Julius Caesars and moved on through the Napoleons and Bismarcks until at last we read about the Rommels and the Montgomerys and the MacArthurs and the Pattons of World War II. Warriors all, they represented the stuff that heroes, that leaders, are made of. The American people appear in this moment of time, to long for a strong man. With emphasis on each of those two words. Someone commanding. Someone majestic in bearing. Someone who would require a response of respect. Someone who would cause us to somehow offer the best that we have to that kind of leadership. The kind of person who would go bounding onto a platform and strut across the platform with all of that allon of a Ted

Kennedy in the wake of a New York Primary victory. Someone like John Connolly, except something happened on the way to that forum. With his jaw jutting out just saying now here I am, respect this presence. The Pulitzer Prize winning author, biographer, political scientist James MacGregor Burns has written a magnificent book on leadership. He has in it a chapter on heroic leadership. He talks about Moses, about Joan of Arc, about Napoleon, about Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, about an obscure Burmese politician, about Nkrumah, the late savior of Ghana. Nkrumah, smooth, handsome, responsive to the needs of people, manipulative, with a voice that could cause an entire populous to be wrapped around his little finger. Nkrumah, described by the press of Ghana as a Moses, no, as one greater than a Moses who would part the Red Sea of imperialist massacre and slaughter. That was how Nkrumah regarded himself and for one fleeting moment on the stage of history, that is how his people regarded him. A week or two ago in Saturday review, the lives of four relatively obscure Chinese persons were spelled out, one of them Yu Cheng Win, a journalist. Some years ago he heard a general speaking at a banquet. The general in passing made reference to Mao Tse-tung saying that he was the authority in the world on Marx, but then in kind of pickish fashion added, that he probably couldn't beat the ping pong champion of China. Well, there were implications in that aside. A general could say those words, but a reporter should not report them. And so when he did he was banished to Mongolia for more than five years. Some leaders take themselves very seriously. They consider their role in history a role unique. They cultivate the cult of personality and there is a dark side to the American psyche that longs for that kind of leader. Not an Nkrumah, not a Mao, but someone who appears to be a knight in shining armor, someone who appears bigger than life, in whom we can take pride. We want someone in the light of present world reality who can wield a big stick effectively. The world calls for it, doesn't it? What with the collapse of Detente, a resumption of the Cold War, with humiliation at the hands of the Ayatollah Khomeini. And so, we want a leader who can lead through these stormy days. After all we have a relatively big stick out there already. We have troops and air bases flung around the world. We have fleets and submarines churning up the waters in seven seas, we have 30,000 strategic and tactical nuclear weapons, the equivalent of a billion tons of TNT and are making three new ones every day. There are these exotic new weapon systems. The Trident submarine, the cruise missile, the MX missile system, and if projections are fulfilled, by the year 1985, we will have a military budget of \$285 billion in this country alone. And there is a dark side to our national psyche here. Public opinion polls suggest that we're mad. We're frustrated, we are fed up. Let's draft the kids and up the arms budget. Let's plant the flag and hate the foe and if need be, drop the bomb. As if a Vietnam had never occurred. And we want a winner. Whatever else the hour calls for, it calls a winner. Remember 1976? No more McGoverns. Maybe he was right, maybe he reflected an authentic idealism, maybe he was a purist. But no more losers. And so there was Jimmy Carter of the toothy grin, and the born again goodness who stood square in the middle of almost every road. He was a winner, and he won. Gerry Ford now warns that Ronald Reagan may be a loser. And the former governor of California has between now and November to prove otherwise. We like winners. Whether it's Bruce Jenner wolfing down his Wheaties, or Mean Joe Greene gurgling down his Cokes, we love winners. I do. The Olympic Winter Games have come and gone. One of the officials of those games said that in the light of current xenophobia, in the light of the politicization of the games, we should have done with the playing of national anthems there, we should have done with the hoisting of national flags there. There should be no more national teams pitted against other national teams. Let's erase those distinctions and let the games be games in which individuals compete, each against the other and against all. And I applauded that. That's great, that's what the games ought to be. And yet, I had chilly bumps raising up and down my spine

when our hockey team whipped the Soviet Union. And the gold medal was an anticlimax. We want, we demand winners, in the White House and everywhere else. Now, enough of that. This is hallelujah day. This is the day when we wave these palm fronds about. This is the day of the so-called triumphal entry. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And he government shall rest upon his shoulders. And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, ever lasting father, Prince of Peace. The child was born. He grew to manhood. There came Palm Sunday, in a sense, a test of who he was. It was a test. King of Kings, Lord or lords. Not in the light of those leadership qualities we've been talking about, and we as a people appear to respond to, you heard the narrative a moment ago. That was no block long limousine that drove him to the hill. There was no marshal music playing Hail to the Chief. There was no pomp and ceremony, not unless you consider little children running back and forth in front of a borrowed jackass throwing flowers and palm leaves down in front of that animal and that man pomp and ceremony. Not at all. It was a narrow, dirty, smelly street. A cluster of enthusiasts, a borrowed animal on which sat an unemployed carpenter. An itinerant teacher, clad in the garb of a peasant. And that is the point of it all. The kingdom of our Lord is not a kingdom of spit and polish. Not a kingdom of braids and brass. Not Not a kingdom of strutting and preening and diseased egos. It is a kingdom for the meek and the lowly. A kingdom initiated by and presided over one who because of his sensitivity and because of his knowledge ability peered into the soul of Zion and wept. Shades of Ed Muskie. One who in his teaching taught about that kingdom, upturning all of our traditional values. One who preaching about that kingdom defined certain guidelines we call beatitudes. Hear them again, they make no sense. Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are those who long for righteousness, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are you if people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely. Then again in Luke, blessed are the poor, period. Blessed are the hungry, period. No macho image there. And again, blessed are the peace makers. Blessed are the peace makers. Unto you a child is born. And hovering above that stable place there was an angel chorus and it sang peace on earth, among persons of good will. The Prince of Peace came in unconventional form, responded to human need in unconventional ways, reached out to identify with and embrace the unwashed, the diseased, the criminal, the unwanted, the sinner, people who ate too much and drank too much and played too hard and married too often. He reached into the riches of his own tradition, the magnificence of his heritage, he took all of that, capsulated it in one law and said, you shall love the Lord your God with all of your energies and your neighbor as yourself. He didn't stop there. He said, love your enemies. Do good to people who misuse you. Turn the other cheek, walk a second mile, ridiculous, absurd teaching. King of Kings? Hah! And in the final hours of his life, and he sensed that, one of his faithful drew a sword to defend him and he said put that thing down. People who live by the sword will perish by the sword. Billy Graham is coming to remarkable new insight over recent months. His voice is now heard to be crying out against the insanity of a nuclear arms race. In a recent interview he said, "I have gone back "to restudy the bible and what it says "about the responsibilities for Christians as peace makers." He said, "We are called upon to serve the human race, "not any particular race or any particular nation." And then he added as a form of confession, "I have, I supposed," he said, "confused the kingdom of God with the American way of life." Now that may be kindergarten stuff for most of us here, but when the world's most influential evangelist, a man who has been used by a succession of American presidents to defend indefensible military policies says that, there is cause for hallelujah and rejoicing. Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the children of God. His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. But the winner image? Hah, he did not have it. He was a loser. Oh,

that crown of thorns, placed upon his brow, now surrounding, humiliating, with thorns composing the crown, a king, a king with a crown of thorns? The last supper was not your traditional political victory banquet. Gethsemane was not a smoke filled room featuring power politics. And the cross, the cross which is the central symbol of our faith, is the symbol of a loser, yet in the cross of Christ, we glory. On January 20th of 1979, uniformed government police burst into a Roman Catholic retreat center in one of the suburbs of San Salvador and sprayed the interior of the center with machine gun bullets. Father Ortiz Luna and four teenagers were cut down, were slain. 30 other young people, most of them in their teens, were arrested allegedly for treason. There were no arms there, no seditious literature there. The young people had gathered for a retreat to be led by the priest and by two nuns. Though violence had become and continues to be a constant diet in that tragic land, the people were outraged. A day or two later at the National Cathedral the funeral mass was celebrated. 100 priests were there to concelebrate. Led by Archbishop Oscar Romero. 20,000 people filled the cathedral, spilled out onto the steps into the public square. And there, Archbishop Romero called the government's official account of the deaths of these five people lies from one end to the other. He said that Father Ortiz was murdered but that out of his murder would come resurrection. Those words were said as national police with helmets stood in the doorways of the cathedral. Archbishop Romero has cried out against the insane violence of both the extreme left and the right in El Salvador. He has plead for human justice. He wrote a letter to President Carter, warning him not to send further military aid to the junta in El Salvador, saying that it would not be used to secure the nation, but rather would be used to further the repression. Last Monday, Archbishop Oscar Romero was celebrating mass in a hospital chapel in El Salvador. He was shot and killed. The gunman, said to be a Cuban exile was standing 90 feet away, fired a single shot, and he was killed. Go back to that funeral sermon of Father Ortiz, when the Archbishop said, "We live in a world in which sin is enshrined "and the kingdom of God is a struggle. "Our struggle," he said, "will not feature arms and guns. "We will struggle with hymns and guitars. "We will plant a seed in the human heart, "and the world will be transformed." And now that voice has been silenced. Another apostle of non-violence has been stilled. But the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, and Archbishop Romero has planted his seed in the earth of his cruel but beloved native land. And out of that will come the promise of a new day. Black Friday is just down the road from now. But beyond that there is the dawn of Easter morn. Jesus Christ is the King of Kings. He is the Lord of Lords. His humble strength, his mighty tenderness, his willingness to identify with each and all, whatever their state, irrespective of blood or race or nation, his willingness to die upon a cross, suggests that the history of the world shows the madness of the world. And his kingdom is forever. Love will outlast hatred. Tenderness will overwhelm brute force. Life will swallow up the mystery of death. And God will speak the final word. Amen.

- As we have followed the King of Kings on his entry into Jerusalem, and have sung our songs to him, we now follow him on the road to the cross and speak the words of the crowd as he walked. Will the congregation please stand and follow in the reading of the passion. We ask the congregation to read those parts that are marked for them. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus, to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders saying,

- I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.

- What is that to us? (words obscured by echo)

- And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver said, (words obscured by echo) So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, to bury stranger's in. Therefore that field has been called the field of blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah saying,

- And they took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set, by some of the sons of Israel. And they gave them for the potter's field as the Lord directed me.

- Now, Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him,

- Are you the king of the Jews?

- You have said so.

- But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him,

- Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?

- But he gave no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor wondered greatly. Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd, any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

- Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?

- For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him.

- Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream.

- Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them,

- Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

- Barabbas.

- Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?

- Let him be crucified.

- Why? What evil has he done?

- Let him be crucified.

- So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd saying,

- I am innocent of this man's blood. See to it yourselves.

- His blood be on us and on our children.

- That he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and they gathered the whole battalion before him and they stripped him, and put a scarlet robe upon him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it on his head And put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him saying,

- Hail king of the Jews.

- And they spat upon him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. This man they compelled to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of a skull, they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, this is Jesus, the king of Jews. The two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying,

- You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the son of God, come down from the cross.

- So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him saying,

- He saved others, but cannot save himself. If he is the king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now if he wants him, for he said, I am the son of God.

- And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now for the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, (man speaking in foreign language)

- My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

- And some of the bystanders, hearing it said,

- This man is calling Elijah.

- And one of them at once ran and took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

- Wait, let us see whether Elijah comes to save him.

- And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook and the rocks were split, the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the Holy City and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said,

- Truly this was the son of God. (organ music) (choir singing, voices drown out by organ)

- The mercy of the Lord is ever lasting. In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. These statements being interpreted for our lives mean that now and in every moment, our every past is accepted, our every future is open, our every present is open to us afresh. Let us therefore accept our forgiveness and forgive one another and forgive ourselves. The Lord be with you. (audience response garbled by echo) Let us pray. Great God of power, you sent the Lord Jesus to enter our world and save us from our sins. We thank you for his presence with us, and we thank you for glad disciples who greeted him with praise and spread branches in his pathway. We thank you that he comes again to enter our lives by faith and that as his new disciples we too may shout hosanna and welcome him. The King of Love, the King of Service, the King of Kings. Jesus Christ our savior. Yet even as we lift our voices in happy shouts this day, we know that we too will deny him, oh God, and betray him, probably before this day is out, and certainly before the week is out. And that our denials will probably be more times than thrice. So today as we face the coming week with all its meaning, we pray for ourselves. Today, Mighty God, Jesus figuratively rides into the cities, towns and hamlets of this world and we pause to shout, not really knowing ourselves who he is. Help us, oh God, to find you in this our Lord who rides a donkey. Today we wave palm branches and shout loud hosannas without really knowing the significance of our doing so. Help us oh God, to find your love in this our Lord, who rides before us on a donkey. Today Mighty God, we have come to church in faith, but more probably from habit. Help us oh God to love the church of this our Lord, who rides a donkey. We know, Mighty God, that Jesus went out of his way to teach and heal and care for people while we rarely follow his example. Help us oh God to serve others in the name of this our Lord who rides a donkey. We know that Jesus faced both popularity and rejection with the surety of your purpose while popularity goes to our heads and rejection casts us into the pits of despair, and we fail to remember the hope that is ours. Help us oh God to root our lives in this our Lord, who rides a donkey. We know that the concern of our Lord was for those who were oppressed and poor in this world,

but we are frustrated that the price of egg dye and chocolate rabbits increases and Easter joy becomes lost in our frustration. Help us oh God to find the true meaning of the approaching Easter in this our Lord who rides a donkey. Take us oh God, and prepare us for holy week, for learning, for worship, for fellowship around your table, for pain, for exaltation, for love. And in our preparation may we not forget those who are sick and need our caring. Those who grieve and need our comfort, those who know oppression and bondage and need our freeing, those who are alone and need our presence. These and all prayers we offer in the name of this, our Lord who dared to ride a donkey, our Lord who teaches us to pray together, 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 and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- Jim Armstrong, Bishop of the church, and fellow pilgrim in the faith with us and all who seek to serve and love in the name of Christ, you have honored us in the past by being here to preach at Duke. We're grateful to God for the message you have brought to us this day. This afternoon at one o'clock the crop walk will begin in Wallace Wade Stadium. You are urged to share in this very special program to help raise funds to feed some of those who starve and are malnourished around the world. Registering for the walk will take place from one until two and the walk itself will begin at two o'clock. Let me remind you of a very very special occasion for all of us this afternoon. Beginning at four o'clock the chapel choir, the orchestra, the Durham Boys Choir, and six very special guest soloists all under the direction of Ben Smith will present the Passion of our Lord according to Saint Matthew by Bach. There are tickets still available. I urge you to come and share in this very very moving music experience with us as we continue the significant events of holy week. The page box office will be open immediately following the service so that you may purchase tickets as you leave. Holy week is indeed a time when in many ways, we have the privilege of worshiping together and giving thanks to Almighty God for the life and love of our Lord. Thursday night of this week, we celebrate the last supper. You are invited to that, the service is at 7:30. Good Friday at 12 noon there will be a service here from 12 until one and then from one until three, special music will be played. We invite you to share in those services. And then Easter Sunday morning, a morning like none other on the Duke University campus, as I have experienced, will begin with the Easter sunrise service in Duke gardens and then we'll continue with two services here at nine and at 10:55. We invite you and all others to come and share in these services with us this week. Friday evening we have a very special privilege. Some of you may remember that two years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King Sr. preached one of the most moving powerful sermons I think the walls of this chapel have ever heard. He will be here this Friday evening to share with us the word of God as we come together on the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. That service is scheduled to begin at 7:30. Again, I invite you to come and share in that service as we come together to remember the life and ministry of Dr. King and as we hear his father share the word with us. It promises indeed to continue to be a holy week. Let us continue to worship the Lord our God. (organ music) (choir singing, voices drown out by echo and organ)

- Grant we pray you, Almighty God, that our gifts, now being given and dedicated to you and to your service may be used for the good of your holy church and for the caring and healing of your people through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. (organ music)

- Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our creator who loves us and gives us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word. ♪ Amen ♪
Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (upbeat organ music)