

- Duke University Chapel, Service of Worship. Second Sunday after Epiphany Day, January 16th, 1977.  
(instrumental liturgical music) (instrumental liturgical music) (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music) (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music)

- When we gather to praise God, we remember that we are the people of God who have preferred our wills to the Divine will. Accepting the power God offers to us to become new persons in Christ, let us confess our sin before God and one another, let us pray. Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you, in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved you with all our heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We pray you of your mercy. Forgive what we have been. Amend what we are. Direct what we shall be. That we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. Hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That is God's own proof of his love toward us in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. (congregation responds)

- Amen.

- Let us pray. Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the scriptures are read and the word proclaimed, we might hear with joy what you say to us today, amen. The scripture lessons this morning are taken from the New Testament, from three chapters of the book of Matthew. Please rise for the reading of the gospel. From the 13th chapter of Matthew verses 53 through 58. "When he had finished these parables, Jesus left that place and came to his hometown where he taught the people in their synagogue. In amazement they ask, "Where does he get this wisdom from? And these miraculous powers? Is he not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? And are not all his sisters here with us? Where then has he got all the from?" So they fell foul of him. And this led him to say, "A prophet will always be held in honor, except in his or her hometown and in his or her own family." And he did not work many miracles there, such was their want of faith." From the 21st chapter of Matthew verses 1 through 11. "They were now nearing Jerusalem. And when they reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions, "Go to the village opposite, where you will at once find a donkey tethered with her foal beside her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone speaks to you say, "Our master needs them." And he or she will let you take them at once." This was to fulfill the prophecy, which says, "Tell the daughter of Zion, here is your king, who comes to you in gentleness, riding on an ass, riding on the foal of a beast of burden." The disciples went and did as Jesus has directed and brought the donkey and her foal. They laid their cloaks on them and Jesus mounted. Crowds of people carpeted the road with their cloaks and some cut branches from the trees, and spread in his path. Then the crowd that went ahead and the others that came behind, raised the shout, "Hosanna to the son of David, blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the heavens." When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city went wild with excitement, "Who is this?" People asked. And the crowd replied, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee." And from the 26th Chapter of Matthew, verses 26 through 29. "During supper, Jesus took bread, and having said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the

disciples with the words, "Take this and eat. This is my body." Then he took a cup and having offered thanks to God, He gave it to them with the words, "Drink from it all of you, for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, never again shall I drink from the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my father." May God grant that these words might become alive in each one of us. Amen. (liturgical music)

- "Who is this Jesus?" They ask in Nazareth. "Who is this Jesus?" They ask, as he rode into Jerusalem. "Who is this Jesus?" They ask in the lifetime of our Lord, "Who is this Jesus? We ask even today. Who is this Jesus who has even the winds and the seas to obey, who forgives sins when only God can forgive sin, who confounds the intellectuals, who teaches as one with authority, who eats with sinners and converses with whores, who heals paralytics, stops hemophiliacs from bleeding, makes the dumb to talk and the blind to see, the paralyzed whole, and the fevered well, who causes the dead to rise? Who is this Jesus who breaks the laws of the Sabbath by eating and healing on the Sabbath? Who is this Jesus who walks on water? Who is this Jesus who is transfigured with the spirits of Moses and Elijah, who sends for someone else's donkey to ride upon, who drove out those who bought and sold in the temple, who talked of the kingdom of God as if he had some control over it, who called the scribes and the Pharisees, the religion just spoke of his day, hypocrites, who would not even answer Pilate's charges, who forgave those who looked on, who was crucified, died, and was raised? Who is this Jesus who says, "Come, follow me?" And makes it sound very simple and very easy. Who is this Jesus who says greater things than I do even you will be able to do? Who makes it sound so very simple and easy. Who is this Jesus who says, "If anyone would come after me let him or her deny himself or herself and take up his cross and follow me," who makes it sound very difficult and very demanding? Who is this Jesus who says, "Greater love has no one than this that one should lay down one's life or one's friend," who makes it all sound very difficult and very demanding? Who is this Jesus who asks his disciples, particularly those who wanted to be one on the right and one on the left, "Are you ready to drink of the same cup of which I must drink?" Who is this Jesus who says, "Whoever is ashamed of me in this adulterous and sinful generation, of that person the son of man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory." Yes. You have to be careful about this Jesus. Because he is not who we think he is, for he is who he is. He is not who we want him to be, he is who we need him to be. He is not who we expect him to be, he is one eternal serendipity, one eternal surprise. He comes on straight and simple, clear and commanding, deliberate and demanding, awesome and assuring. Yes, you have to be careful about this Jesus, for he demands our all, "Come follow me." He gives his all for he says, "No one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord." And then he gives. He returns all to us. "For those who believe in me shall never die." One day, Jesus was explaining some of the parables about the kingdom of heaven to his disciples. Finally, old Peter, who always said those things which he felt, and often spoke before he thought, but he spoke honestly, finally Peter burst out with the question that was on the minds of all of the disciples and often is on our own minds. He said to him, "Jesus, Lord, Master. We believe in you. We have come after you. We have followed you. We have left everything and followed you. We have left our nets, our businesses, our wives, our families, our children, our brothers and sisters. We have left everyone and followed you. And here we are. What is there in it for us? What has it all brought us? What do you Jesus have for us?" Jesus replied, "Peter, let me tell you something. No one. None of you. And no one else now or later, who has left home, or mother, or father, or brother, or sister, or children, or lands, or jobs of any kind for my sake and for the sake of the gospel, there is no one who has done any of this who will not receive 100 fold in return now in this

age, and in the age to come, life eternal." You have to be careful about this Jesus. He invites you and me to follow him. And you better believe that he will take every bit that we give him because he wants all that he can get. But whatever it is that we are willing and able to give to him, whether it is of ourselves or whether it is of our possessions, he says, "I will return it to you 100 fold in this life and even more gloriously in the age to come, you will have life eternal." This Jesus who said, "This is my body broken for you. This is my blood shed for you." You have to be careful about this Jesus because he wants all, but he gives all. Amen.

- Let us pray. Let us pray that the world may live in peace, and that the church may achieve unity fulfilling its service here and everywhere. (congregation responds) That those who suffer disease, or poverty, or loneliness, or grief, may be healed and comforted. That those who are oppressed or persecuted may be strengthened and delivered. (congregation responds) That those whom we have known and loved, who have died in the faith may be a glorious memory to us and a source of renewed fellowship with all the saints. (congregation responds) Please stand. Christ, our Lord, invites to this table all who love him and who desire to live in peace with one another. May the peace of the Lord be with you always.

- And also with you.

- Please be seated. As forgiven and reconciled people, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

(instrumental liturgical music) ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ His words (indistinct) ♪ By His grace (indistinct) ♪ He has exalted us ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ His words (indistinct) ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ His words (indistinct) ♪ By His grace (indistinct) ♪ He has exalted us ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪ By His grace (indistinct) ♪ He has exalted us ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ Praise the Lord ♪ His words (indistinct) ♪ By His grace (indistinct) ♪ He has exalted us ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪ By His grace (indistinct) ♪ He has exalted us ♪  
(instrumental liturgical music)

- The Lord is with you.

- With you also.

- Lift up your hearts.

- We lift them up to the Lord.

- Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

- It is right to give God thanks and praise.

- Oh God, it is right that we should always and everywhere, give you thanks and praise. We thank you Holy God that you love the world so much, you sent your only son to be our savior. We remember that on the night in which he gave himself up for us, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving you thanks He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you." When the supper

was over, he broke the bread. And again, he returned thanks to you, gave the cup to his disciples and said, "Drink from this all of you. This is the cup of the new covenant in my blood poured out for you and many for the forgiveness of sins." When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we experience a new, the presence of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and look forward to his coming and final victory. Help us to know, and the breaking of this bread, the presence of Christ, who gave his body and blood for all people. Make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one and the service to all people.

- Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

- Because there is one loaf, we many as we are, are one body, for it is one loaf of which we all partake. When we break the bread, is it not a means of sharing in the body of Christ? When we give thanks over the cup is it not a means of sharing in the blood of Christ?

- Body of Christ broken for you. The blood of Christ (indistinct).

- The body of Christ broken for you. And the blood Christ shed for you. (instrumental liturgical music)

- We ask the choir to come first and while they come, I shall remind you that the ushers will direct you to the table to two large circles. I would ask you to be alert to forming the inner circle after the outer circle is complete. You may commune by drinking from the cup, or by dipping the bread into the cup. After all at each table have communed, there will be a prayer of dismissal. After all have communed at the table, two of the celebrants, will come into the congregation, to bring the elements to those who are unable to come to the table. We ask at that time that those who wish to commune in the pew, simply raise their hands that they may be identified by the celebrants. (instrumental liturgical music) Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger. And the person who believes in me shall never thirst." Go from this place having eaten of our Lord, Jesus Christ, partaken of his heavenly food, that we may bear the good news to the brother and sister, and share that abundant life which he has given to us. Amen. (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music)

- Beloved in Christ, go now with the assurance that God's love will be with you and will encompass you wherever you go. Amen and amen. (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music)

- Jesus said, "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture." Go in the comfort, that we have not only been shown the way, but that there is one who travels with us, and never leaves us. Amen (liturgical music) (instrumental liturgical music)

- Beloved in Christ, go with the confident assurance that you can become a part of God's new creation, amen, and amen. (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music)

- Our Lord said, "I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Go in peace and may the light of the world shine on your pathway, and in your heart and life, forever. Amen. (instrumental liturgical music) The celebrants are now bringing the elements to

those in the congregation who have not been able to come to the table. If you would please raise your hand that they may identify you. (instrumental liturgical music) Let us bow for the prayer of commitment. You have given yourself to us, oh Lord.

- You have given yourself to us.

- Your love has made us a new people.

- As a people of God, we'll serve you fully.

- Your glory has filled our hearts.

- Calls to glorify you in all things, amen.

- We have come from many places and with many different personal histories that we come under the power of one name and in the presence of one who shares his table with us. Therefore, let us arise and greet each other in the name of our Lord and extend to the neighbor, the blessing of peace. (congregation murmurs) (instrumental liturgical music) (liturgical music) Please be seated. Go out in peace to serve God and your neighbor in all that you do. (congregation responds) The blessings of Almighty God, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, is with you always. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (instrumental liturgical music)