

(indistinct singing)

- Our Lord has said that, all those who come unto him he will not cast out. "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." For rest renewal and recreation we come. Let us confess our sins in the company of one another and before God, let us pray. Almighty God we confess unto you that we have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed. We have neglected opportunities of good. We have sought the things which are temporal and have forgotten the things which are eternal. Therefore we besiege you to have mercy upon us. From the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life good Lord deliver us. Strengthen us by the power of the Holy Spirit to fight the good fight of faith, to endure hardness as good followers of Jesus Christ, to rule our bodies by temperance and our spirits by meekness, and to glorify you alike with our bodies and our spirits which belong to you. Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and will forgive the sins of all who are penitent, create and making us new and contrived hearts that we worthy lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain from you the God of all mercy perfect remission and forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his own self sacrifice has saved and redeemed us and all humanity by the victory of the cross, the hope of peace and the gift of eternal life are ours. Beloved by the grace of God you are forgiven for Christ's sake, Amen. (indistinct singing)

- The Old Testament lesson this morning is from the book of Genesis, the 32nd chapter versus 22 through 30 and the 33rd chapter versus one through four. Hear the word of God. "The same night Jacob arose and took his two wives, his two maids and his 11 children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream and likewise, everything that he had. And Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob he touched the hollow of his thigh and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, let me go for the day is breaking. But Jacob said, I will not let you go unless you bless me. And he said to him, what is your name? And he said, Jacob. Then he said, your name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel, for you have driven with God and with men and have prevailed. Then Jacob asked him, tell me I pray your name. But he said, why is it that you asked my name? And there, he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel saying, for I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved. The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel limping because of his thigh. And therefore to this day, the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip, which is upon the hollow of the thigh because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip. And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, Esau was coming and 400 men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. He put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them bowing himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him and they wept." The New Testament lesson is from the Gospel according to John, the first chapter, the 41st and 42nd verse. Please stand for the reading of the Gospel. "He first found his brother Simon and said to him, we have found the Messiah, which means Christ. He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, so you are Simon the son of John? You shall be

called Cephas, which means Peter." Here ends the reading of God's holy word, may it be entrusted unto our hearts and minds. (indistinct singing)

- With one voice, let us affirm our faith. We are not alone, we live in God's world. 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 through the spirit. We trust God who calls us to be the church, to celebrate life and 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, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us, we are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you. Let us pray. Oh God, in these moments we come to give thanks, to remember others, to seek for more in life for us and for all your children. We recall with continued gratitude, Oh God, your goodness to us. We give thanks for the rest of the night, for the light of a new day and the hope of fullness of life which lies ahead. We thank you for our senses, by which we can see the splendor of the flowers and the trees, can hear the winds of spring and songs of joy and can smell the freshness of this a new spring. We remember, Oh loving God, the life and conditions of others. There are those we love who have shared death and loneliness with loved ones and who now seek new ways to meaning. There are those we love who have been injured or ravaged by accidents or tragedies and who now suffer pain. Those for whom the present is fleeting moment and the future and unsure way. Many in our own community have suffered the past few days or have waited beside those in pain, Oh God strengthen, give peace and heal. We pray in the name of Christ. Oh God, you know the duties and the tests which lie ahead for each of us, the dangers that confront us and the weaknesses which we possess. In the spirit of Jesus the Christ our living love being Lord. We dedicate to you our studies, our work, our friendships, our family relationships, our recreation, our decisions, our very future, so that in thought and word and indeed we may glorify your name. And then Oh God, may in some way know that abundant life which Jesus came to give. May we leave this place today alive with new confidence and with new hope through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us as his disciples to pray praying. 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 thy is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, Amen. On this the third Sunday in the holy season of Lent, let me welcome you to this service of worship. Welcome some of you back after a few days rest and relaxation. Not as much as you would've wanted I'm sure, but I hope enough to give you strength and peace and energy to go on to endure, at least until the end of the semester. This is a very special day for us. For three years now, we have had the privilege of inviting a student currently enrolled in the university to serve as the preacher for a service of worship in the chapel. When this idea was first discussed among the chapel worship committee members a few years ago, it seemed unanimous consent that it was most fitting and most appropriate that on at least one occasion, one member of the student body would give us the proclamation of the Word of God in our university service of worship. This morning, Ms. Jean Horseman will give us the message. She impressed our committee this year and impressed this minister to the university in a very rich and lively and impressive way. So it will be our privilege to hear her proclaim the Word of God in just a moment. I have one further word. Many of you carry with a New Testament, including the Psalms and the Proverbs, which is distributed to you and to many many other persons by the Gideons. This morning as you leave the service of worship you will be given the privilege of making a contribution to Gideon's International, so that they might purchase more books like this and other copies of the New Testament or copies of the Bible, to distribute

them to people and places where they may be used meaningfully. So I invite you not only to worship God during the service of worship by the giving of your gifts but as you leave also to remember this important work. I invite you also to remember the other services of worship which we will have in the chapel this week, as we celebrate together this season of Lent. And so for you, for all of us who worship God here this day may I now present Ms. Jean Horseman and welcome her to the pulpit of her chapel, your chapel this day. Jean?

- Good morning. Much of the necessity I feel for sharing these words and ideas with you, comes from my relationship with many people, especially Bob McLaren the pastor of Watts Street Baptist Church and David May the former Baptist chaplain at Duke. These men have enabled me to see a God of incredible grace. If a sermon may be dedicated to anything or anyone besides God, then I dedicate it to the love that these people and these two men have shared with me. Jacob at the Jabbok. A man who was grappling with his God, himself and his relationship to his brother. Fleeing from his stepfather, awaiting the arrival of the brother whose birthright and blessing he'd stolen. Jacob was forced through a relationship and an encounter with God to come face to face with the substance and quality of his life. Whether Jacob's struggle was with a physical or a mental messenger is less important than the fact that in some form or another Jacob violently fought with God. He fought God with the degree of ferocity, with which one might face an enemy or the most despised of foes. As the dawn broke on the side of battle Jacob had physical control of God's messenger and in accordance with Hebrew custom demanded of him some form of blessing. Now the blessing Jacob sought was not a new tent or strengthened battle or a few more wives. What he sought was a portion of God's vitality, some degree of superhuman power, quite frankly Jacob wished to become a type of demigod. It is here that God slipped in one of the many grace notes in this struggle. Instead of striking out an anger destroying Jacob for so preposterous request, God through his messenger asked Jacob a simple yet penetrating question. What is your name? To understand just how threatening that question God asked was, you must understand what a person's name meant to the Hebrews. To our spiritual ancestors a name revealed some essence of the person's personality and character. Before God would bestow any degree of blessing on him Jacob was forced to deal with his definition of his own personhood, and truly that is terrifying and frightful. Do any of us willingly and joyfully approach an honest attempt at self examination? Do we gleefully approach time with ourselves, all the mistakes and all the fears we have had? Or as I think, do we approach God's question with the hesitancy of a boy asking out his first date, a mixture of expectancy and dread? And replied to God's question, naturally enough. Jacob replied, Jacob. A name burdened with the meaning of liar, thief, supplanter, all around sneak a name offering little or no challenge, no call for self-improvement, no sense of expectation. Yet God did not condemn Jacob to this situation for all his life. It is at this time that he performed his second miracle. He rejected Jacob's answer and renamed him, no longer the liar, no longer the thief, now one who had struggled with God and men and lived, now one called Israel. God did not, in renaming Jacob recreate him, rather he offered him the structure on which to rebuild his life. Jacob did not become Israel, rather he received the ability to become Israel. If Jacob had feared God's knowledge of the evil within his life, he had even more reason to fear God now. Merl James and Dorothy Yogovols, described Jacob's predicament in this way. To discover the worst is to face the decision of whether or not to continue in the same patterns. To learn the best is to face the decision of whether or not to live up to it. Either decision may involve change and is therefore anxiety provoking. In his night long struggle Jacob at first saw the worst within him, the old self. However in the dawn, God showed him his possible self. Try to imagine the pain and the fear that Jacob must have encountered all in one night. The

experience must have been like going through a house of mirrors. One mirror reveals all the evil, all the bad in your life and another accentuates all the positive, all the good. We are torn between two definitions of self. The evil side of our nature or the goodness that is within our possible selves. That part that is still becoming. In renaming Jacob, God blessed him with the revelation of his humanity, the reality that he could become the good and responsible person that God had from the very beginning, created him to be. Are there many of us that are willing to look into the mirror of God's love and view our own potential? Are we able to realize as Jacob was forced to do, that we have good and evil within us? That along with this evil there is much that is exceedingly good and that it is this good that we are created to fulfill. Can we see that while we are the scum of the earth, we are also the glory of the earth, the crowning touch of creation? And viewing and realizing our potential we could no longer limp through life whimpering, Oh pity me, I'm so incapable, so helpless. Because the possibility of change and improvement is ours, there is no excuse for remaining in our old patterns. We see the face of God's love and we leave with the joyous responsibility of sharing with the world and with ourselves the truth we have had revealed to us. In our creation God smuggled them some small part of his spirit, allowing us to be shaped in his image. It is this that Jacob feared facing. It is also this divine essence that we are called to fulfill. However, instead of viewing ourselves honestly we like Jacob or more likely to reverse the question and ask God who he is, what is his name, then to attend to his question, to behold his revelation and presence in our lives. We each at some time in our lives enter interim midnight struggle with God. We try to rest ourselves from his love or to seek some superhuman degree of power, instead of fulfilling his plan of servanthood. Jacob did not leave his encounter with God as a ruler or a high keen or the president of General Motors, but as a man resolved to meet his brother and to accept responsibility for his past, he approached Esau and humbleness, in the one the way one might approach his master, but to surprise he was met and embraced and kissed as a loving brother. Accepting responsibility for his actions Jacob did not leave the Jabbok able to defeat his brother, but as a person moving with humility towards the man from whom he'd stolen so much. He came as servant and Esau welcomed him as brother. We come to God as servant only to be surprisingly welcomed as children of God. Our struggle like Jacobs, may come as we run from one brother or sister to conflict with another. Or win for one time we are truly alone, feeling the deep penetrating piercing loneliness of limited humanity. Or when our expectations of ourselves are so low, we refuse or unable to accept God's definition of our personhood. Wherever the encounter occurs we all at some time will struggle with God. Ourselves and our responsibility to our brother and sisters, our logical conclusion and extensions of that struggle. The dawn will find us fortified and able to responsibly face life and the mistakes we've made or still running from one Jabbok to another, unable to face the truth of how God sees us and dreams of us becoming. You may ask why the struggle with God and even more, you may ask why the acceptance of the new name, of the new position as children of God. Why? Because like Jacob, we are all inwardly seeking order, some meaning to the chaos within and surrounding our lives. We are able to suffer and to suffer quite gallantly if only some is evident in that suffering. Jacob's life was woven of violence, deceit and powerlessness. He was tricked into working 14 years instead of seven for his wife Rebecca. And all his life he ran in some form another from Esau and a deceitful relationship with his brother. There was no time for deciding who he was, much less what he was created to become. We also are surrounded by chaos, papers to write, books to finish, weary day in and day out patterns we allow ourselves to be trapped in. We are further beset by a group of questions about our past, our present and our future. What am I to do with my life? How much am myself am I going to dare to risk with the rest of humanity? What is my responsibility for what I know from my

pursuit of knowledge? Who am I? Or perhaps more importantly, what am I becoming? We seek for answers to questions that lead only to more questions, we are burdened by a search for order and meaning in a life that is in flux. In the "Testament of Devotion," Thomas Kelly a Quaker theologian, affirms the Jabbok experience as the source of renewal and stability. He says, "No one may face God and live in the same old patterns." And looking on God, we recognize that part of him that is within us. A basic and change demanding aspect of our humanness is revealed us. The power to realize this new potential and to risk oneself in the chaos comes from leaving our Jabbok, our midnight encounter with a knowledge of God as friend. Herein is the first step to the road to peace with ourselves and with our fellow man. The tradition of God calling us to fulfill our creation as being in his image is not a phenomenon of only the Old Testament. Jesus continued the renaming tradition and calling Simon Peter, and the spirit of God continues the tradition today, calling each of us to fulfill the potential given to us in our creation. The way is extremely difficult for we are called to redefine our mission in life, our possibility, our future. God calls us as he called Jacob to struggle with himself, our fellow humans and our personalities. As Jacob, we leave our Jabbok painfully aware of our humanity, but knowing that we will prevail because of God's love and God's grace. In a book called "Born to Win," James Aubrey creates a delightful parable that recaptures the essence of Jacob's struggle. In conclusion, I offer the parable of the Eagle. Once upon a time, walking through a forest a certain man found a young Eagle. He took it home and put it in the barnyard where it soon learned to eat chicken feed and to behave as chickens behave. Well, one day a naturalist was passing by and inquired to the owner, "Why it was that the Eagle, the king of all birds should be continued to live in a barnyard eating chicken feed?" "Since I've given it chicken feed and trained it to be a chicken it has never learned to fly," replied the owner. "It behaves as chickens behave so it is no longer an Eagle." Still insisted the naturalist. "It has the heart of an Eagle and can surely be taught to fly." After talking it over the two men agreed to find out whether or not this was possible. Gently the naturalist took the Eagle in his arms and said, "You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Spread forth your wings and fly." The Eagle however was confused and did not know who he was and seeing the chickens eating their food he jumped down to be with them again. Undismayed, the naturalist took the Eagle on the following day up on the roof of the barn and urged him again saying, "You are an Eagle stretch forth your wings and fly." But the Eagle was afraid of his unknown self and jumped down once more to eat his chicken feed. On the third day, the naturalist took the Eagle up on the high mountain and there he held the king of birds high above him and encouraged him again saying, "You are an Eagle, you belong to the sky as well as to the earth, stretch forth your wings now and fly." The Eagle looked around back towards the barnyard and up towards the sky, still he did not fly. Then the naturalist lifted him straight up towards the sun and it happened that the Eagle began to tremble, slowly stretching his wings. And last with a triumphant cry, he sorted away into the heavens. It may be that the Eagle still remembers the chickens with nostalgia, it may even be that he occasionally revisits the barnyard, but as far as anyone knows, he has never returned to lead the life of a chicken. He was an Eagle, though he had been kept captive and tamed as a chicken. We too are called to be kings and queens, but the difficult part is that we must do it in the guise of servants. God holds as high on the mountain top, he lifts us up from our own private valleys and we may take wing and fly and reached unimagined heights or we may jump down and continue eating our chicken feed, confined by our fears and inability to accept the vision of ourselves that God in love and grace and concern offers to eat of us. Amen. May we pray? Father, we thank you for your patience with our limited vision, for our tendency to seek the easy way, to accept the chicken feed instead of becoming the Eagle. We ask God that in these days to come that you will be give us the

courage and give us the love to step forward and to look and to ask who we are. And that in the process we will see what you have to give to us. We thank you father for the love to do so and for the support that you give and we ask God your blessing upon our lives. Open our eyes, reveal to us the miracles that you have smuggled in up on us that we so often forget to see, Amen. (indistinct singing)

- "Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my father in heaven." Oh God, we give these gifts now as part of our doing your will. Take us from this place to do more in love for you and for our neighbors, for the sake of Jesus Christ who loved us and give himself for us, Amen. (indistinct singing) Now will you receive this blessing? The grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you and with those whom you love and forever. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (instrumental music) (applause)