

(pipe organ music) (pipe organ music) (pipe organ music) ♪ Now we praise him ♪ ♪ Heaven above ♪ ♪ Praise him indeed for his great love ♪ ♪ Wherein all creatures live and move ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪
(pipe organ music) ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ Lord God Almighty ♪ ♪ Early in the morning ♪ ♪ Our song shall rise to thee ♪ ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ Merciful and mighty ♪ ♪ God in three persons ♪ ♪ Blessed Trinity ♪ ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ All the saints adore thee ♪ ♪ Casting down their golden crowns ♪ ♪ Around the glassy sea ♪ ♪ Cherubim and seraphim ♪ ♪ Falling down before thee ♪ ♪ Which wert and art ♪ ♪ And evermore shalt be ♪ ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ Though the darkness hide thee ♪ ♪ Though the eye of sinful man ♪ ♪ Thy glory may not see ♪ ♪ Only thou art holy ♪ ♪ There is none beside thee ♪ ♪ Perfect in power ♪ ♪ In love and purity ♪ ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ Lord God Almighty ♪ ♪ All thy works shall praise thy name ♪ ♪ In earth and sky and sea ♪ ♪ Holy, holy, holy ♪ ♪ Merciful and mighty ♪ ♪ God in three persons ♪ ♪ Blessed Trinity ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Grace to you and peace from God our Creator and the Lord Jesus Christ. We welcome you to Duke University Chapel service of worship this second Sunday of Pentecost. We are glad that you have come to be with us and we pray that your spirits will be enriched in this hour together. So that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind for worship, let us now confess our sins against God and against our neighbor. Let us pray.

- Almighty God, your presence prompts us to confession. We are not embarrassed to be in the world for it is your good gift to us. But we are ashamed of the ways we let ourselves be molded by the faithfulness of our time. We have looked upon evil, and in siding with it, our vision has become blurred. Touch our eyes. We have sensed misery and despair and in turning away, our hearts have become hard. Melt our hearts. We have heard cries for help, and in stopping our ears, have become deaf to you, too. Open our ears. We have known when a word could have witnessed and encouraged, and our silence has made us dumb. Loose our tongues. We have made fists to strike with from hands meant for benediction. Forgive our violence. Beholding you through Jesus Christ prompts us to cast ourselves upon your mercy, that in the Spirit's power, we may be your people this day and always.

- Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yea, wait for the Lord. Amen. Let us give thanks for God is good and God's love is everlasting.

- Thanks be to God whose love creates us. Thanks be to God whose mercy redeems us. Thanks be to God whose grace leads us into the future.

- We are very pleased today to have as our guest preacher the Reverend Dr. Charles H. Mercer, District Superintendent of the Durham District, the United Methodist Church. Charles has been in ministry with us here at the university on many occasions. We welcome him as a colleague and as a community minister. He has served a number of churches in the North Carolina conference, has had a very active presence and voice, a prophetic voice in denominational and civic committees and boards. He has twice served the United Methodist Church as a district superintendent, coming to the Durham district in 1973. We are pleased

to have Dr. Mercer with us today and we look forward to the message that he will proclaim for us by the spoken word.

- Let us pray. Fulfill now, O Lord, we pray you, your gracious promise that your Word shall not return to you empty, but shall accomplish that which you purpose and prosper toward the end for which you have sent it, for your name's sake, amen. The Epistle lesson this morning is from Romans chapter two, verses 3 through 11. "Do you suppose, O man, that when you judge "those who do such things and yet do them yourself, "you will escape the judgment of God? "Or do you presume upon the riches of his kindness "and forbearance and patience? "Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you "to repentance? "But by your hard and impenitent heart, "you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath "when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. "For he will render to every man according to his works, "to those who by patience in well-doing "seek for glory and honor and immortality, "he will give eternal life. "But for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, "but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. "There will be tribulation and distress "for every human being who does evil, "the Jew first and also the Greek, "but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, "the Jew first and also the Greek. "For God shows no partiality." Herein is the reading from the Epistle lesson, amen. (pipe organ music) ♪ O Holy Spirit, Lord of grace ♪ ♪ Eternal source of love ♪ ♪ In flame, we pray, our inmost hearts ♪ ♪ With fire from heaven above ♪ ♪ As thou dost join in holiest hearts ♪ ♪ The Father and the Son ♪ ♪ So fill us all ♪ ♪ So fill us all ♪ ♪ With mutual love ♪ ♪ With mutual love ♪ ♪ Fill our hearts with mutual love ♪ ♪ Fill our hearts with mutual love ♪ ♪ And knit our hearts in one ♪

- Will the congregation please stand for the reading of the Gospel? The Gospel lesson is from Matthew chapter 16, verses 24 through 28. "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself "and take up his cross and follow me. "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world "and forfeits his life? "Or what shall a man give in return for his life? "For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels "in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay "every man for what he has done. "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here "who will not taste death "before the Son of Man comes in his kingdom.'" Here ends the reading from the Gospel lesson, amen. (pipe organ music) ♪ Glory be to God Redeemer ♪ (muffled choral music) ♪ Glory be to Christ the Savior ♪ (muffled choral music)

- I, too, greet you in the name of Christ. As I notice the dress style of many of you, I observe that you have better judgment, I think, than your ministers, at least in that arena. On television, they tell me that during the summertime, they often have reruns. I'm at least glad in the Duke chapel, that practice is reversed and that you don't have the reruns in the summer. I'm delighted to be here. As you were told, I am a district superintendent and I must tell you at least one little story that didn't happen to me, but I'm told it did happen to one district superintendent who was scheduled to be at a little country church one Sunday morning. He arrived and was seated in the pulpit with the young pastor of the church and noticed that the congregation was very poor, whereupon he whispered to the young pastor and said, "Did you tell the people "I was going to be here this morning?" The pastor replied, "No, but they found out about it anyway." I'm glad that you're here and I'm delighted to be here also. Our subject is, "What is the cost?" and I want to introduce it with a personal confession. Though my wife and I agree on most issues related to family living,

our likes and our dislikes are sharply focused at two points. The first is concerning all those ball games on television. She really dislikes them. Though I'm not the typical all-American outdoorsman, I do watch my share of those games on television. My wife tries to be tolerant. In fact, she's not as bad as one wife, who came in and her husband was glued to a ball game. She tried to talk to him and he responded with incoherent grunts, and in disgust, she walked out of the house, saying, "I'm going to my mother's." She arrived at her parents home to find her father, watching the same ball game, and after she asked the question the third time, "Where is mother?" he interrupted long enough to say, "She's gone to mother's." The second issue is shopping. My wife loves to shop and I know I dislike shopping more than she dislikes ball games. But occasionally, we do go shopping together. Of course, being married as long as we have, I know her habits and her style. There is something special she wants. In time, she finds the item she likes. She will look at others, but she always returns to that special one. At this point, I know I must get prepared. So I look carefully at this item, giving special attention to the price tag. Then comes the question, "Dear, which of these do you prefer?" The price tag causes me to be prejudiced. You understand that I am interested in what it's going to cost. Do you ever consider the cost? It is a factor in many decisions. I even read in the newspaper that it sometimes becomes an issue in the purchase of permits for an altar. The question, "What will it cost?" compels us to consider what we are getting as well as what we are giving. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German theologian whose works are known to many of you. He opposed Hitler and was put in the German concentration camp during World War II. In 1945, just before Germany surrendered, he was executed. His writings have had great influence. In one of his books entitled *The Cost of Discipleship*, he speaks of cheap grace and costly grace. Cheap grace, he says, is the deadly enemy of the church. What does he mean? Let me just suggest in my own words a few things. Cheap grace is grace which is made too easy. It is grace without price. It is without cost. Christ paid the price and all can have it for nothing. How many times have you heard that? It is grace only as a doctrine, a principle, a system. If you can say the right Scripture verses or know the correct doctrine, you have grace. This is cheap grace because it accounts to a denial of the living Word of God, in effect a denial of the incarnation of the Word of God. Costly grace is love, God's love. To know about God's love may be of significance, but to know God's love, that is to experience it, is essential. Cheap grace is going to church without worshiping. It is putting an offering or a gift in the offering plate without putting your life on the altar. It is saying our Father without any intention of including certain people as our brothers or sisters. These people may be different in lifestyle, dress style, or color style. In fact, if we looked up from prayer and saw them in our congregation, we would be unhappy, and the incarnate Christ might not be reflected in our thoughts. I agree with Bonhoeffer when he said, "The only man who has the right to say "he is justified by grace alone is the man who has left all "to follow Christ." Discipleship is the life which springs from grace. Jesus made very clear the fact that if anyone chooses to follow him, that is to be his disciple, it will cost, and he must be willing to pay the price. Said he, "If any man would come after me, "he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." First, he said, we must deny ourselves. We are like Peter in the courtyard the night Jesus was taken into custody. He had to deny self or deny Christ. The pressure was too great and he denied Christ. You and I have the same choice. We disregard ourselves or we disregard Christ. The great struggle is to determine if our life will be self-centered or God-centered. One theologian described the basic conflict in a rather simple manner. Man's situation is much like a group of people gathered around a campfire at night. They turn their backs to the fire and as you can imagine, they see their shadows. Not understanding the shadows, they are frightened and begin to move. the more they move, the more those shadows move, so they become more and more frantic. The solution is

to turn to the light, which, of course, represents for us the light of Christ. Being self-centered, it is difficult for us to turn to Christ, which means for us self-surrender. A Western rancher, newly arrived from the East, noticed trout in the stream which flowed through his farm. He was not only new, but also ignorant of the nature of fish. He hit upon the idea of placing fine mesh wire across the stream at both the upper and the lower property lines. He just wanted to be sure to have his fish and his fishing. Since trout go upstream to spawn, none could enter from below. Also, none could escape upstream to increase the trout population. So his fish became fewer and fewer in number. We go on building our fences that we may know the comfort and security of those who are good and righteous like we are. Yes, we will pay or pray for those out yonder, but our fences are adequate to keep them out so we won't have the unpleasant experience of really becoming involved. A poor family on welfare with several small children got the attention of a church member. It was indeed a pathetic and tragic situation. In time, the children began to attend the church of which I was pastor. A fine and lovely lady, in fact, the vice president of United Methodist Women, came to my office early one Monday morning and said, "Mr. Mercer, don't you think those children "would be more comfortable in that little town "on the north side, "in that little church on the north side of town?" My answer was, "I think the children are very comfortable here. "Would you be more comfortable if those children attended "that little church on the north side of town?" She was a fine Christian woman and got the implication and became a great supporter of those little children. The denial, the disregard, the leaving of self behind has a purpose. It is like the purpose of the merchant, who found the pearl of great price and went promptly and sold his entire stock of pearls to buy it. It is like the man who found the hidden treasure in a field and with great excitement, he sold all that he owned in order to buy that field. The cost of discipleship is the disregarding of self. The price is paid that Christ may live in us, and that his will be done through us. Now a second factor and a second part of the cost, if you will, we could say the second installment, is taking up our cross. At this point, we need to clarify our concept of our cross. Jesus said take up your cross. He didn't say to you and me at this point, take up my cross, but take up your cross. A very devout man was incapacitated with a severe arthritic condition. At times, the pain seemed unbearable. One day he said to me, "I don't understand why God "has put this cross upon me." This is not the concept of a cross, as projected by Jesus when he said take up your cross. We may be conscripted to carry a burden, but we must volunteer to carry a cross. Surely we know God will support and sustain the man burdened with arthritis, but he did not volunteer to carry it, so it could not be his cross. Jeremiah was one of the most exciting of the prophets. His call as described in the first chapter of the book which bears his name was very clear and his response exacting. But his prophecy wasn't pleasing to the leaders of his day and got him in a great deal of trouble. On one occasion, the Lord told him to go out to the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and gather with him some people and to take a potter's earthen vessel. And then he said, "Proclaim what I tell you to say." And then God told him to say, "I am bringing such evil upon this place "that the ears of everyone who hears it will tangle." And then he continues to prophecy slaughter and famine and the most horrible things you can imagine. In fact, it's so horrible that it makes me shudder even to read it in Scripture. And then Jeremiah broke the flask in the presence of those men and said, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, "so will I break the people in this city "as one breaks a potter's vessel." Then you remember Jeremiah went back to the temple and there he continued to prophecy the destruction of Judea. Pashhur, who was the chief officer in the temple, beat Jeremiah and had him put in the stocks. In anguish, Jeremiah cried out, "Why did I come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow "and spend my days in shame?" However, he was faithful to his calling and a loyal disciple. In the Christian perspective, this was his cross. He responded to God's calling

without counting the cost though it was great. On Friday, one of our daily newspapers carried the story of an event which happened in Chicago. A young 18-year-old girl was waiting for her sister when a young man, a person she knew, came along with his friend. They invited her to go with them and she responded. They went into the hall of an apartment house and then the person she knew said, "If you don't submit to us, my friend here will kill you, "and he is a killer." In fright, the young girl began to run up the hall and beat upon the doors of that apartment. Finally, one door opened and a woman stood there, and the young girl, in fright, said, "Two people are trying to rape me." Whereupon the woman closed the door in her face and the girl was raped. It is our cross and we don't have to carry it. We can close the door, but God help us. The final cost of discipleship as described by Jesus and our text is to follow me. In the beginning of his ministry as he walked by the Sea of Galilee one day, Jesus saw Peter and Andrew and said, "Follow me." Immediately, they left what they were doing and followed him. As disciples, you and I are called to follow the trail our Lord has pioneered. This requires us to know his path, to become acquainted with his teachings, to examine our attitudes in the light of his love. When Lord Macaulay went to India as an official of the British government, he had never seen paganism. The sight made a difference in what had been his narrow churchmanship. He was shocked. He asked, "What is the use of talking about closed communion "to a man who has been in the habit of worshiping a cow?" We must beware lest we become sidetracked on a dead end trail of little significance and miss completely the main line of great Christian concern. To follow Christ is costly grace, made possible by his love, which claims us and redeems us. Some time ago, my daughter was given a bedroom suit which belonged to her great, great grandmother. It had been stored for years. Old paint had peeled, showing yet older paint. Recently, that furniture has been refinished and it is truly beautiful. God's grace can change a life, which on the surface appears to be worthless, and he can make the life beautiful. That love is available for each of us, but to receive it in the end is costly. If we are to be disciples of Christ, we must deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow him. Let's do it now. And if you had been struggling to do it, let's do it now with more zeal and enthusiasm and God be praised, amen. (pipe organ music) ♪ Take up thy cross, the Savior said ♪ ♪ If thou wouldst my disciple be ♪ ♪ Deny thyself, the world forsake ♪ ♪ And humbly follow after me ♪ ♪ Take up thy cross ♪ ♪ Let not its weight ♪ ♪ Fill thy weak spirit with alarm ♪ ♪ His strength shall bear thy spirit up ♪ ♪ And brace thy heart ♪ ♪ And nerve thine arm ♪ ♪ Take up thy cross ♪ ♪ Nor heed the shame ♪ ♪ Nor let thy foolish pride rebel ♪ ♪ Thy Lord for thee the cross endured ♪ ♪ To save thy soul from death and hell ♪ ♪ Take up thy cross ♪ ♪ And follow Christ ♪ ♪ Nor think till death to lay it down ♪ ♪ For only he who bears the cross ♪ ♪ May hope to wear the glorious crown ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Let us affirm what we believe.

- 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 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.

- And also with you.

- Let us pray. O God, eternal Spirit, grant us grace to worship you in this hour in spirit and in truth. You have so made us that the glory of our lives is not in things below us, but in the divine above that masters us. Grant us now such an hour of spiritual wealth, made aware of eternal realities, captured by a vision of the Christ-like life, lifted out of our littleness by dedication to your abiding values and to your everlasting purpose. Cleanse us from all our evil, our ugly egotism, our indifferent apathy, our mean ambitions, our sinful lust, that we may be ready for this transforming experience. Grant us now honesty in confronting and confessing our sins, sincerity in making restitution where we have wronged others, humility in seeking your forgiveness, and resolution by your grace and help to amend our lives. Minister to our intimate, personal needs. O Spirit of the living God, walk through this place and be the help and comfort, be the inspiration and sustenance of our souls, in temptation, in illness, in disappointment and depression, in defeat when we are tempted to give up, and in success when we are tempted to be proud. O God, restore our souls. May we hear your voice speaking to each of us, reassuring us, challenging us, summoning us to dedicated and victorious living. O God, whom Jesus called Father, we thank you this day for the fathers that you have provided for our family units. We are grateful for our own fathers for the gift of life and for all those men in our lives that have fathered us along the way. May we be inspired to see and know our fathers as human beings who need our love and nurture in very deep ways. Hear now, O God, the unspoken prayers that rise in silence from the deeps of our hearts, and to those needs that can find no voice, save for your ear alone, come and minister according to the riches of your grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, who came, lived among us, and who taught us to pray, saying.

- "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." (pipe organ music) ♪ Great is Jehovah the Lord ♪ ♪ The heavens and the earth ♪ ♪ Proclaim his power ♪ ♪ And his might ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah ♪ ♪ The heavens and the earth proclaim his power ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah ♪ ♪ 'Tis heard in the crash of the storm ♪ ♪ In the wild torrents' loud impetuous roar ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah the Lord ♪ ♪ 'Tis heard in the crash of the storm ♪ ♪ In the wild torrents' loud impetuous roar ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah the Lord ♪ ♪ Wondrous is his power ♪ ♪ At his commandment trees put forth ♪ ♪ Their opening leaves ♪ ♪ And valleys wave bright with golden corn ♪ ♪ With lovely flowers the fields are decked ♪ ♪ And stars in splendor fill the vault of heaven ♪ ♪ In splendor fill the vault of heaven ♪ ♪ With lovely flowers the fields are decked ♪ ♪ And stars in splendor fill the vault of heaven ♪ ♪ In splendor fill the vault of heaven ♪ ♪ Heard with dread in the thunder's deep blast ♪ ♪ And seen in flames of lightning ♪ ♪ But chief in his great lovingkindness ♪ ♪ Shines forth Jehovah's boundless might ♪ ♪ In his lovingkindness ♪ ♪ Shines forth the boundless power of God ♪ ♪ The Everlasting God ♪ ♪ Raise your prayerful hearts on high ♪ ♪ And hope for mercy and trust in Him ♪ ♪ Raise your prayerful hearts on high ♪ ♪ And hope for mercy and trust in Him ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah the Lord ♪ ♪ Great is Jehovah the Lord ♪ (pipe organ music) ♪ All creatures of our God and King ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice and with us sing ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Thou burning sun with golden beam ♪ ♪ Thou silver moon with softer gleam ♪ ♪ O praise him ♪ ♪ O praise Him ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Giving us all things, will you now receive these gifts of your people? Help us to render unto you all that we

have and all that we are, that we may praise you with our whole lives, amen. (pipe organ music) (muffled congregational singing) ♪ Amen ♪

- Dismiss us now, O Lord, with your blessing, and accompany us with your grace, that from this very moment, we may continue our journey through life with love, peace, and justice, amen. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (pipe organ music) (congregation chattering) (faint speaking and laughing)