

- Sunday worship service, Duke Chapel, November 18th, 1979. (light organ music) (lively organ music) (light organ music) (soft organ music) (light organ music) (lively organ music) ♪ Beautiful Savior ♪ ♪ Lord of the nations ♪ ♪ Son of God ♪ ♪ And Son of Man ♪ ♪ Glory and honor ♪ ♪ Praise, adoration ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore be thine ♪ ♪ Now and forevermore ♪ ♪ Be thine ♪ (lively organ music) (lively organ music drowning out singing)

- The Psalmist writes, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea. Though its waters roar and foam. Come, behold the works of the Lord. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations. The Lord of hosts is with us. God of Jacob is our refuge. My friends in Christ, it is our privilege to come before the presence of God, to offer our prayers of confession, to experience his mercy, and to receive his forgiveness. Let us now, with one voice, confess our sin to almighty God. Let us pray. Almighty God, Our Father, you have created us for life together. We confess that we have turned from your will. We have not loved one another, as you have commanded. We have been quick to claim our own rights and careless of the rights of others. We have taken much and given little. Forgive our disobedience, O God, and strengthen us in love, so that we may serve you as a faithful people and live together in your joy. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Let us continue with our personal confession to the Lord, our God. John writes, this is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you. God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to his will. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all our sin. Beloved, let us walk in the light with one another. Amen. Let us give thanks for God is good and God's love is everlasting. (congregation murmuring) Amen. On a beautiful November day, which feels almost like spring, may I welcome you to Duke Chapel and to this special service of worship. I pray for you a blessed Thanksgiving week. Those of you who will have some time for rest, may it be a time of rest and renewal and recreation. There will be, on Thanksgiving Day of this week, Thursday, for the first time, at least in many years, a service of worship here in Duke Chapel. The service will be at 11:00 a.m., this Thursday, Thanksgiving Day. You and others in the community are invited to come and share in that time of thanksgiving with us. I've been asked to announce that tonight at 8:15, rather than some other times which have been announced, the Collegium Musicum will present its concert. A concert of music of Heinrich Schutz. You're invited to that concert, there is no charge. The concert will begin at 8:15 p.m. here in the chapel. I'm pleased this morning to say a word of welcome to one whom you have already met in the service of worship on All Saints Day. The Reverend Ms. Juanita Wright began her service here as assistant minister to the University on November the 1st. She presided on All Saints Day and many of you saw her and shared in her leading of that service. She comes to us from nine years of service with The Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church in New York City. She's a native of Tennessee, ordained in the United Methodist Church, educated at Vanderbilt University, and Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She has had many years experience in ministry, in a variety of settings. She is a writer. She has done much

creative work in the area of worship. She has been involved in many significant issues and social causes of the church. She has done a good bit of counseling. She has been an editor for our church. So she brings a diversity of experiences and interests to Duke University and to this position. I am pleased that she is here and I know that those of you who will be meeting her and sharing in ministry with her will be pleased as well. I say a word of welcome and present to you Juanita Wright. Today is a special day for us because for five years now, at least once a year, we have selected a student to preach in Duke chapel. Shortly after I was appointed minister of the university, some students suggested that to me and I thought it was an excellent idea. We've had some outstanding sermons preached by students here at Duke. Ed Richardson, a junior in Trinity College, majoring in zoology with special interest in marine biology has been selected by the student committee and invited by the minister to university, to preach on this day. He is from College Park, Georgia and has many interests from singing with the chorale, to being involved in dramatic productions, to serving as a tutor for children who have learning disabilities. One who has had an influence on the lives of many in this community, a junior in Trinity College, Ed, we welcome you and we look forward to the word which you will share with us a little later in the service. Now, let us continue our worship of Almighty God. Let us pray. O Lord, our God, as we read and receive thy word, may we be open and accepting to the truth and the promise that thy word offers to us and to all people. Make us, O God, both receptive and responsive to the truth that thou hast for us this day. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. The Old Testament lesson is Psalms 100. Let us hear the word of God. Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord is God! It is he that made us, and we are his. We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name! For the Lord is good. His steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. Here ends the reading of the Old Testament lesson for today. Amen. (lively organ music) (choir singing in foreign language)

- Let the congregation stand for the reading of the Gospel. The Gospel lesson for this morning is from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, chapter 20, verses 20 through 28. Let us hear the word of God. Then the mother of the sons of Zeb'edee came up to him, with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Command that these two sons of mine may sit, "one at your right hand and one at your left, "in your kingdom." Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." He said to them, "You will drink my cup, "but to sit at my right hand and at my left hand "is not mine to grant, but it is for those "for whom it has been prepared by my Father." And when the 10 heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, "and their great men exercise authority over them. "It shall not be so among you, "whoever would be great among you must be your servant, "and whoever would be first among you must be your slave. "Even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, "and to give his life as a ransom for many." Here ends the reading of the Gospel lesson. All praise and glory be to God. Amen. (light organ music)

- Here is a picture. You're playing baseball, it's the bottom of the ninth, the score is tied. There are two outs and your team is at bat. You're at the plate facing the pitcher who has struck out the last four batters. He winds up, he throws. You close your eyes and swing the bat. There's a crack, as the ball is sent climbing

through the air and then disappearing beyond the left field fence. The umpire signals, home run! And your teammates rush out to greet you as the bat boy scampers under foot to find the loose bat. There are cries of hero from the screaming crowd. As the fans pour out onto the field and the scoreboard flashes the final score. Your dad in the third row is all smiles. Your mom can only say, "That's my boy." Would you like an instant replay? If you're a coach, a baseball player, a fan or a parent, you probably would say, "Yes, let's see that play again." You probably won't think my instant replay is very exciting. Because it focuses on the bat boy, not the hero. It goes like this, the boy scampers around, under foot, to find the loose bat. In fact, the only person who might appreciate my instant replay is another bat boy. But I'm convinced that this bat boy, who performs a small service for his team, illustrates a quality which each of us should display in our daily lives. It's a quality of service. Matthew's Gospel, read earlier, tells us that in order to be saved, we must be servants. So you say, what do you mean by a servant? Well, a servant is defined as a person who labors or exerts himself for the benefit of another, a master or employer. So you say, he's trying to get me to believe that I have to hire my life out to someone in order to be saved? This isn't exactly true. There's only one person who is our master. So, the logical question we must face this morning is, who is our master? In order to find an answer to this, we examine the life of Christ, whose actions served as the example for all Christians. In his life, we see the constant devotion to the will of God, his master. Even until death. Although Christ died for our sins, he died because God willed his death. He practiced a life of complete devotion to God, his master. If we understand that we should follow Christ, and Christ's master is God, then we realize that our true master is God. We can serve no other thing or person ahead of God and still maintain an intimacy with God through Christ. Yup. It seems clear, I believe, that we do not always submit ourselves constantly to God's will. We often lose sight of the fact that we are God's creatures and that we, as his creation, owe him our total devotion. Other times, our knowledge of sin takes away our courage to approach God. Our sin creates in us a fear of God. But our attitude when we approach God should not be one of fear, instead we should give ourselves completely to God's loving care. The most essential attitude we should adopt as a servant is self-denial. 'Cause only through self-denial are our powers set free to devote themselves totally to God. Christ's example is one of self-denial, in addition to humility and obedience to the cross. Well, we say, where's this freedom through Christ I've heard so much about? Why should I give up my freedom just so I can serve Christ? Either I serve him and am not set free or I choose freedom instead, and lose God's salvation through Christ. But look, through serving Christ, we are set free. Free from sin. Through God, we gain a greater victory than we could ever accomplish alone. We become capable, with God's help, to reign or rule as masters over our own faculties and powers and over the created things around us. We come to know ourselves better and begin to understand what is wrong in our own lives. We can gain, through our service to God, an intimacy and blessed communion of life and knowledge and love with God himself. Jesus asked us, "Are you a wise and faithful servant?" Blessings on you, "if I return and find you faithfully doing your work." In Revelation, we read that those who are saved and serve the Lord, will be fed by the lamb, who will be their shepherd and lead them to the springs of the water of life. And God will wipe their tears away. Look what God has promised us. More love, more compassion than we could find anywhere. And you know what? You don't even have to be a minister to be able to serve God. Service to God can be seen throughout the Christian community. There is diversity of action, but unity of purpose. We are all part of Christ's body, which has many needs and therefore many different expressions of service to meet these needs. We won't all be the hero who hits a home run, but I think all of us, regardless of our occupation, can be a servant for Christ, like the bat boy. A bat boy receives no recognition from the multitudes at the

stadium. His only comfort is the satisfaction of knowing he is helping out the team by doing an act of service. Each of us, if we adopt the outlook of the bat boy, has a similar calling in our lives. It is the calling to serve our neighbors. The calling to be a neighbor to each person we encounter. And of actively helping him when he comes across our path. Whether it be on the quad, on the athletic field, in our office, in our room, at 2:00 a.m. in the morning, or even the night before our major geology exam. In becoming servants of our neighbor, we serve God and Christ, who commands us in Galatians to be, through love, servants of one another. By serving God through serving our neighbors, we can lead them to understand God, and lead them to understand his love. So that they too, will want to express this love. I don't feel that Matthew's Gospel asks us to be on hand and knee before everyone we encounter. Certainly, you would laugh at me this morning if I told you that you should serve your family breakfast in bed everyday. Or do your secretary's typing tomorrow when you go to work. Can you imagine the heart attacks which would be reported if each one of you students here this morning went back to your room and offered to do your roommate's laundry? I know that in my own situation, I would probably be busy all afternoon. (congregation laughs) I won't mention any names. But this literal interpretation of Matthew is not emphasized in the remainder of the New Testament. Well, what then is Matthew talking about? The Living Bible paraphrases Jesus' words as follows, "Your attitude must be like my own, for I, the Messiah, "did not come to be served, but to serve, "and to give my life as a ransom for many." "We see that the very life of Christ was centered on serving God through serving man. Jesus gives us a clear example of fulfilling the role of servant in several instances of his life. His washing of the disciples' feet is perhaps the most well-known. In this act of servanthood, Jesus shows his great love for his disciples. He also charges us to find ways to express our love for one another. We begin now to realize that our obligation is one towards the needs of our friends and neighbors. But you say, I've got enough problems of my own. How can I help someone else when I don't even have control of my own life? Love. Love is the key. Love provides the main support for this mission. First Corinthians says, if you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, and always stand your ground in defending him. This is what service is all about. Loving, caring, forgetting about oneself, and being sensitive to the needs of the person who lives across the hall or across the street. I hope no one is keeping count of the number of times I've avoided an opportunity God has given me to be a servant, a friend, to my neighbor. To listen to a problem, to share a problem of my own, to comfort and to encourage my friends, rather than ignore them in favor of other important affairs. You know, it doesn't take much to be a servant. I think the most precious memories of my grandfather were the times when he would babysit for my sisters and brother and me. Of course, we often wondered who was taking care of who, for my grandfather had a slight tendency to fall asleep, and we were always checking to see if the cigar had fallen out onto the chair. But you know, my granddad was a servant because my granddad had love. Yes, you have to give of yourself to be a servant. You have to be willing to love and be willing to express your love. But don't worry, with God's love inside of you, you can never give too much of yourself. The more you give, the more you radiate the love which God has given you. Shel Silverstein's book, "The Giving Tree," is a favorite of mine. He tells the story of the relationship between a tree and a man. Of how when the man was a young boy, he loved the tree. The tree literally sacrificed itself for the worldly needs of the growing boy. Everyday, the boy would come to the tree to eat its apples, swing from its branches or slide down the trunk. The tree was happy. But as the boy grew older, he began to want more from the tree and the tree gave and gave and gave. The last pages of the poem relate how the boy, now an old and withered man, returns to the tree for the last time. After a long time, the boy came back again. "I am sorry, boy," said the tree. "But I have nothing

left to give you. "My apples are gone." "Oh, my teeth are too weak for apples," said the boy. "Well, my branches are gone," said the tree. "You cannot swing on them." "I am too old to swing on branches," said the boy. "Well, my trunk is gone," said the tree, "You cannot climb." "I am too tired to climb," said the boy. "I am sorry," said the tree. "I wish that I could give you something, "but I have nothing left. "I am just an old stump. "I am sorry." "Oh, I don't need very much now," said the boy. "Just a quiet place to sit and rest. "I am very tired." "Well," said the tree, straightening herself up as much as a stump could do, "Well, an old stump is good for sitting and resting. "Come, boy, sit down, sit down and rest." And the boy did, and the tree was happy. Do you love God? Then serve him. Commit each day to service for his will, not what you think is best. Do you love your neighbor? In First John, we read, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are children of God. Do you love your neighbor? Then care for him. Pray for him. And for everyone's sake, let him know you care. God pours comfort and strength into us, that we might pour it into others. Well, God's team is at bat, and you're at the plate. I challenge each of you to hit a home run because God's team needs some good players. I also challenge you this morning to accept the life of the servant. The bat boy on Christ's team, because we need more bat boys. Let us pray. Dear God, we thank you for all which you have given to us. Help us to share ourselves with others and show your love, which we have inside of us. In Jesus' name, Amen. (light organ music)

- 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.

- You may be seated. The Lord be with you.

- And you too.

- Let us pray. Mighty God, you are our kind and gracious creator. The hope of all who seek you and the joy of those who find you. Diverse though we are in age and outlook, we are one in our desire to voice our gratitude to you. We thank you for our time and place in history, for the vision of a better world, that even the violence we experience does not obscure. For our vision we know is born of your world and we thank you for the way in which our hearts keep finding in Jesus a vital clue to what life is all about. We thank you for dormant passages of scripture that come to life for us in crisis hours. For friends who reveal your caring love. For new truths that enter our minds to stimulate us and open us up to still greater truth. All your works, praise you in all places and we join in that chorus with glad hearts. We pray for your church this day wherever it is found. Open your people anew to the empowering winds of your spirit lest we look for sustenance to sources that were never meant to be our life. Increase our confidence in the Gospel as the word that makes us whole. Increase our belief in the power of love to conquer hate. Increase our patience to accept and work through conflict as a way of reaching peace. Increase our ability and desire to be in the world at work in your name. Teach us, who can only cry, to sing again. Teach us who are too much given to

decency and order to dance again. Teach us who have lost the first fine careless rapture of those early believing times to leap and run again. May your church be a beacon of hope and a sign of life for an age that seems to kill the things it loves. Bless your church, O God, with leaders who both think and feel, with shepherds who love their sheep, with theologians who balance faith and reason, with members whose loyalty to Jesus Christ is a total commitment of their lives for all of life. And we pray today for ourselves. We, who are gathered here, are a people who live in many different worlds, a people capable of mischief and mercy, a people who on clear days have seen forever, and in dark circumstances have struggled to see at all. O Lord, hold us close for all our false starts and broken promises we do love you more than all. We would serve you by serving others. We remember, especially today, the situation in Iran, and the captives and their captors. Guide the hands of the ones in control that matters may be settled peacefully, without injury or loss of life. May the sick know that you are God and that there is healing in your hands of the body, the mind, and the spirit. Be present through the watches of the night with those who face death and with those who mourn. Stay the impulsiveness of any who are toying with a self-destructive act. Revive us, O God, and let something of your beauty be upon us for we want to live even as we pray, to your praise alone. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who taught us to pray together 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, the power, and the glory forever.

- Amen. (soft organ music) (lively organ music) ♪ ♪ Praise ye the lord ♪ ♪ Praise ye the lord ♪ ♪ Praise ye the lord ♪ ♪ Praise God in his sanctuary ♪ ♪ Praise him in the firmament of his power ♪ ♪ Praise him for his mighty acts ♪ ♪ Praise him according to his excellent greatness ♪ ♪ Praise him with the sound of the trumpet ♪ ♪ The sound of the trumpet ♪ ♪ The sound of the trumpet ♪ ♪ Praise him with the psaltery and harp ♪ ♪ Praise him with the psaltery and harp ♪ ♪ Praise him with the timbrel and dance ♪ ♪ With the timbrel and dance ♪ ♪ Praise him with stringed instruments and organs ♪ ♪ Praise him ♪ ♪ Praise him up on the mountain ♪ ♪ Praise him ♪ (lively organ music) ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪

- Almighty God, you spared not your own Son but delivered him up for us all. Thereby giving us all things through him. And now we make these offerings to you. Receive them and enable us with all our gifts to give ourselves in body, mind, and spirit. That we may truly and freely serve you and in that service find ourselves. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives. Amen. (lively organ music)

- Grant, O Lord, that what has been said with our lips we may believe in our hearts. And that what we believe in our hearts we may practice in our lives. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God in the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (lively organ music)