

(soft music)

Man: Beloved, if there is one thing that our common humanity means it is that we are all sinners and stand in need of grace and forgiveness. As a necessary part of achieving that great blessing, we should confess our sins before God, and in the presence of one another. Accordingly, may we join our hearts and our voices and our unison prayer of confession and for pardon. Let us pray. Holy father, we humbly confess that in kneeling, our hearts often are not humbled, and that in praying, we often have felt no burden greater than our own strength. We confess that in naming Christ, our spirits have often sought the comfort of self. We pray thee to burn our hypocrisy with the fire of thy judgment, lest we be destroyed by our own deceit. We pray thee to forgive us through thy sacrificial love. We ask this in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen. Let us hear the comforting words of scripture as they tell us concerning our Lord, He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs in his bosom and carry them. Amen. (choir singing)

Man 2: The scripture this morning is from Paul's letters to the Philippians. First chapter verses 12 through 14 and fourth chapter verses 21 through 23. Now I would have you know brothers that the things which happened to me, have turned out to the furtherance of the gospel rather than otherwise. It has even become evident, not only to all of the imperial guard, but to everyone that it is for Christ's sake that I'm in chains. And besides this, most of our brothers in the Lord have gained confidence through my chains and they now venture with far greater freedom to speak God's message fearlessly. Give my greetings to every one of the saints in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me wish to be remembered to you. All the Saints salutes you, especially those who are Caesar's household. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (choir sings)

Man: The Lord be with you. Let us pray. All mighty God, we thank thee for the heavy blanket of snow, which temporarily made a Wonderland of our grab wintry earth. For although it broke the limbs, it also watered the earth gently and softened the hard crust of the earth. We thank thee for the overwhelming experiences in our lives, for although they sometimes break our naive self-sufficiency, they can by thy grace soften the hard crust of our spirits and make us pliable and responsive to our brothers and to Jesus Christ. We thank thee for the near approach of spring. With its deathless help of flowers, of foliage, new growth, and the covering up of ugly scars by the new and the beautiful, we offer under thee our thanksgiving for the season of lent that means spring. During which we may each and all examine our hearts to see what wicked ways yet remain in us, to see how we too crucify Christ even today. We bless thee for the deathless hope we have, that through his grace new growth in the realm of the spirit, fresh flowers in the area of human relationships may spring to life and replace the ugliness of the old, the twisted and the dead. We thank thee for the keen rivalries we have, which test our grasp of truth, our dedication to fair play and our physical skill in athletics. And whether at any given moment, whether it be in an argument or in an athletic contest, we may win or lose. We thank thee for the rewarding experiences, which can come to all concerned when we earnestly strive to excel. Our heavenly Father, we offer our prayers of intercession for all thy children, both for those

who call us brother and for all who call us enemy around the world. We pray, especially for those who call us enemy. And for those whom we are attempted to reckon as enemies. Enable all of us to draw Christ's line of distinction between the sin and the sinner, realizing that we all are sinners and that our own hope of forgiveness rests upon our willingness to forgive. We pray for students who find current events confusing, that they may find the information, the sense of direction, and the tranquility needed to discover a path out of their confusion. We pray for those who find the Bible confusing, that they may by study and prayer, find the eternal word speaking to them out of the bewildering array of books and that they may supremely discover the word made flesh in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Grant we pray thee that we may all hear and see the living word in our time and here in our place. We offer, oh God our prayers for the sick, for the crippled, the chronically ill, for those about to die. We pray for the lonely, the bitter, the recalcitrant, the reactionary, the rude, the stubborn, the prejudiced, and for all who bring healing, we pray, the nurses, the physicians, the surgeons, editors, pastors, reformers, social workers, and professors. For those who bear the burdens of responsibility and the heat of the day and the wee hours of the night we pray. For maintenance man, dining hall workers, administrators, trustees, janitors, maids, carpenters, painters, electricians, plumbers, secretaries, accountants and clerks, grant, oh God that we may all, each in his own way, seek after thy will and grace and find them. Together may we grope our way through worship, through study, through argument, through action, through service and through humility to thy perfect kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has taught us when we pray to say, "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.

Preacher: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. If we ever have the power to send a person to jail and use that power, then don't let him be supplied with writing paper because anything may result and not always to our advantage. He may write the revelation of Saint John, the divine, a pep talk which put vim and vigor into a discomforted group of Christians at the end of the first century. He may write "The Pilgrim's Progress" next to the Bible, the most influential book in ordinary average Protestantism for 200 years. He may write "Mein Kampf" which too few of us still living took seriously before 1939. Or he may just write letters like Sacco and Vanzetti, the Italian anarchists in Massachusetts whose trial and execution were the major topic of impassioned conversation during my first year in America. Or like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, done to death a few days before the allied troops might have freedom from the Nazis whose correspondence is read and studied with a wondrous fascination right on this campus. Or like Martin Luther King whose one letter to the clergy from a prison in Birmingham, Alabama had the weight of a sledge hammer, no, a pile driver. Something written by any one of these criminals may fascinate the mind, inspire the heart, deflect the wheel, so the reader is never quite the same again, as the writer being dead yet speaking. Now that fact hit me as I re-read a letter from another jail bird who was foolishly given writing material, probably a papyrus. His name was Paul. He's better known as Saint Paul. It's a flat fact that the early church had a remarkable criminal record. Many of its members, and most of its leaders almost commuted to prison. Our lesson this morning was part of a letter to Paul's favorite church. The one he founded at Philippi, a Roman colony. Paul calls that little Philippian church, a colony of heaven, and three expressions in that letter was written from Caesarea or Ephesus or most probably from Rome, intrigued me as I puzzled over a sermon for this morning. Let's look at these three expressions. The first is the whole Praetorian guard, Paul's jailers

were members of the imperial lifeguard. The troops originally hand picked by Augustus and having the kind of renown that the regiments of the guards now have in great Britain. This was the (speaks in foreign language) who served for 16 years and received three times the pay of a legionnaire. Paul's attitude to them is interesting. He has no complaints, no suggestions, no criticism. He just tells them about the Christian religion. With what result? The cause of the gospel had been advanced and fellow Christians outside the prison were emboldened to speak the word of God without fear. Paul evidently cooperated with the inevitable and so continued his missionary work. The second expression is Caesar's household. Paul is here referring to the non-military personnel in the government employ, what we might call the civil service. The phrase probably has no pertinent reference to the members of the imperial family, though it may include some of the courtiers. Paul includes them in his greeting at the end of his letter. The brethren who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you, particularly those of Caesar's household. The latter group was probably not made up of Paul's converse from the Praetorian guard, but the folk who had accepted Christianity from other wandering evangelists. But it is the third phrase (indistinct) a single noun, which intrigues me most, that word just prior to Caesar's household, saints. For us a saint is an unusually consecrated, holy and godly person whose attitude is mocked by piety and whose behavior and is distinguished by genuine though unobtrusive good works. Those of us who are Protestants hardly ever use the word about anybody. And we would be embarrassed to the point of not need confusion, if anyone used it of us. Paul used the word more pedestrianly, more validly. A saint is a sinner who knows he's a sinner, but who would like to do something about it, in the eyes of God, and in the company of sinners of like-mind. A person is a member of a Pauline church, not because he is good or virtuous or angelic, but because he is aware of what he is and would like to be somewhat different. He's a Saint not because of what he is plus or minus, but because of whom he belongs to, Jesus, the Christ, the head of the church. Now, how did Paul develop such an attitude to the imperial guard, the state police of his day, who enforced the Pax Romana and to the members of Caesar's household who occupied and ran the various imperial Allen buildings scattered throughout the empire? His attitude to Caesar's household is probably formed from three ingredients. First, he believed that the empire was coming to an end shortly with the return of Jesus Christ. So why reform or destroy or even waste time on it? Secondly, he was a (speaks in foreign language) a Roman citizen and very proud of the advantageous distinction this conferred on him. Thirdly, he believed that it was the Roman government who held the world together. According to some interpreters of a passage in a letter to the Thessalonian church. Therefore in Romans 13, he warmly commends the state and its servants, Caesar's household for justice and integrity. If it hadn't been for the law and order of Rome, for roads made safe and waters swept clear of pirates, for the talisman of Roman citizenship which opened the right doors, then Paul would have been a dead duck early in his public ministry. No wonder he was delighted to find Christians in Caesar's household and join their greetings to his when he wrote to Philippi. But how does one account for Paul's friendly attitude to the Roman soldier, to the Praetorian guard and other legionaries? He is regularly grateful for their help and protection on his travels. And when finally reached Rome having appealed to Caesar, that is to the Supreme court. He was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier that guarded him. To stay by himself with the soldier that guarded him. That's probably his contact with the Praetorian guard. But other parts of the new Testament are more than tolerant of military men. There are three references to centurions, army officers, which cast a favorable light on the military men who policed the empire. The highest compliment Jesus ever paid anyone, he said of a Roman Centurion, "I have never found faith like this anywhere even in Israel." And the Centurion in charge of the crucifixion almost returned

the courtesy when he said of the dead Jesus, "This man was certainly a son of God." The first non Jewish convert to Christianity was a Roman officer by the name of Cornelius. It was Peter who brought him into the church and then had to defend his action before the Jerusalem conservatives. Integration has had a hard time in ecclesiastical circles from the very beginning. And yet neither his citizenship nor his personal experiences with army men was the real motivation for Paul's attitude and behavior toward the government and its servants. Paul had been converted, that is turned around. He'd been given a new mindset by his experience of Christ. He had joined the democratic society of sinners who know they are sinners, who know they are forgiven sinners, who know they are recurring sinners, in need of forgiveness all over again. And when one majors in that point of view, then he is for Paul a saint. Now that does things to a man. It keeps him from having a good conceit of himself. And that was rough on Paul, for he had no hereditary humility. It makes him realize that the one fundamental difference between people is that some are forgiven sinners and others are just ordinary sinners, but all are sinners, Jews, Christians, Greeks, Romans, and the rest. So he loves them all. He can't figure out any better way of rubbing shoulders with other folk in any church or in any jail, in any Jerusalem or Philippi or Rome, be it with the state police or any Caesar's household. And yet it's an irony of history that according to tradition, Caesar turned thumbs down on him. (indistinct) and some officer carried out the sentence, execution. Now what if anything does this say to us who are saints, forgiven and errant sinners in this chapel? How do we behave who have confessed the Christ as Lord of our lives at such a time as this? The campus situation is both disturbed and distraught, understandably so. We did not really believe that Allen building would be occupied nor that the police if called would behave as they did. We still do not wish to believe that we are living in a time of revolution, though we are. We've watched an intensifying of conviction on both sides, a piling of demand on demand from various quarters, a disbelief in normal processes of bargaining, a lack of knowledge of the facts. Now you can put facts in quotation marks if you like, but a lack of knowledge of the facts and therefore a growing frustration and a mounting anger. Now the sense of urgency is combated by Duke's normal unperturbed pace and deliberate speed. I experienced a minor instance of that in the last few days. The position of university organist became vacant in September, 1967, not 68, 67. And the first committee meeting to fill this vacancy was held a week ago yesterday. I know almost nothing was said about a new organist. Now my alma mater, Glasgow can match that. It used to take two years public notice on every bulletin board in the university to change the hour of a class, two years public notice. Now there was a reason for it. My own best friend came up as a freshman, sat with his advisor for 30 minutes and planned his entire academic career for a degree in arts, one in science and one in medicine in half an hour on the first day he got to the university, never saw him again. In fact, he managed to take a course in arts and one in medicine at the same time because he borrowed my notes, which I'd had the year before, and the professor gave the same lectures every year, so it was all right. Now this academic sense of eternity is hardly likely to enjoy outlining and implementing an Afro-American major in six months, including Swahili. Any black today who has a PhD in Afro-American studies has more purchasing power than if he owned gold certificates in France. And the Negro colleges have traumatic experiences about Harvard and Yale, and maybe Duke reading their faculties for teachers. More than that, we on this campus are disappointed in one another, some in Allen building, some in the Chronicle, some in the Proctor or the Kirchhoff or the Oregon committee, in the faculty, in the students, in the chapel, in the trustees, in the alumni, in Duke. We will not accept that this campus is but a true microcosm of the seething macrocosm, which the world has always been. And then we begin to single out our enemies and there is no enemy so hated as the one who is close at hand and once thought to be an ally. We tried to pit the chaplain

against the assistant chaplain to their dismay because they are friends as well as colleagues. We set older faculty with tenure over against younger faculty without tenure. And we set the administration over against everybody. We focus on symbols, Dow Chemicals, the white merchant, the cop, and soon I guess the ROTC. We sign petitions while other folk downtown work on committees for hours and in the boycott. And we, yes, we Christians develop a bewildered, bloody mindedness. One of the most gracious, gentle Christians I know, said to me on the day over the innovation of Allen building, "I hope they set fire to the police, and I hope we keep the doors locked and let them burn up inside." And that's one of the most gracious people I know. Now, this is what I mean by bewildered, bloody mindedness. It might be good for us to remember that it is unwise as well as unchristian for us to ascribe lower motives to others than we ascribe to ourselves. Let me say that again. Might be good for us to remember that it is unwise as well as unchristian for us to ascribe lower motives to others than we ascribe to ourselves. Self-righteousness is not a spiritual virtue. Smugness really suggests an openness to others. Epithets may inflame tension and provoke tear gas, and yet policemen are not pigs or piggers or piggross. They are people too. And Allen building is staffed by sinners just as the Chronicle is. But some in both places know that they are saints, in the Pauline sense. Now, for goodness sake remember that last phrase. In the Pauline sense. And it would be well for the community to find that out, because then we might have the beginning of community again. Then we could talk and not yell. We could reason about reasonable matters without either calling them demands or vetoing any appraisal of any appeal. We could become a university rather than the multiversity, which we now are. The Pauline saint is here among us. He does not pray that others be changed, he prays for himself that he forget not what he is, that he may fathom the length and breadth and height and depth of his Pauline saintliness and its responsibilities. He listens before he talks. He tries to keep lines of communication open. When reviled, he does not revile in return. He is despised and rejected of both right and left wings, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But he is resolved that come hell or high water or worse, he will continue his ministry of compassion, of reconciliation, of reasonableness, of hope. And we need more saints like that. Let us pray. Oh God, who art dependent on very ordinary people for thy work. Persuade us that thou (indistinct) us for the ministry of reconciliation, that we may have peace on our campus. Peace with justice penetrated by love. In the name of him who blessed the peacemakers, even Jesus Christ thy son, our Lord. Amen. (slow music) (choir sings)

Man: All mighty God, our heavenly father, we bring our substance and ourselves symbolically here to this altar each and every one of us to dedicate what we are and have to be. We bring thee our ignorance that it may be dispelled. We bring thee our sins that they may be washed away. We bring thee our abilities that they may be consecrated and increased. We bring thee our means that they may be distributed throughout the earth for the glory of Christ. In his name we pray.