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(organ music playing)

- Good morning, we'd like to welcome you to Duke Chapel. We are pleased to welcome to our pulpit today Karen Westerfield Tucker, Assistant Professor of Liturgics at Duke Divinity School. She has preached here before and we are glad to see her again this morning. This afternoon we'd like to invite you to return for the Vocal Art's Ensemble Concert directed by Dr. Rodney Wynecoop presenting "Songs of a Summer Night" at 5:00 p.m. and we hope you'll be able to return for that. I'd like to call to your attention the announcement in the Bulletin about next Sunday's service, this is a special service. As some of you may know the Olympic Torch is going to be coming through Durham and is scheduled to arrive at the Chapel 11:53. And so Bishop Carlton Minnick will be preaching, we'll have the service as normal for the first part, and then we will move outside for the passing of the Olympic Torch, and then we will complete the service with a service for unity and peace outside. We hope you'll be able to return for that. And now let us continue with the call to worship, please stand. Let us offer to God our praise and thanksgiving. (congregation responding) We will pay our vows to God.

Congregation: Praise the Lord. (organ music playing) (all signing) (organ music playing) (all singing)

- Let us pray. God of eternity, before You lips are silenced in awe and wonder. Mere words fail to praise the fullness of Your Word for us spoken in Jesus Christ. Let our lives reflect his love and so return to You all praise and glory by all we say and do. Amen. You may be seated.

- Let us pray for illumination.

All: Open our hearts and minds, oh God, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, so that as the Word is read and proclaimed, we may hear Your message with joy this day. Amen.

- Here begins the 18th chapter of the Book of Genesis. "And the Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre "as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. "He lifted up his eyes and looked, "and behold, three men stood in front of him. "When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, "and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "'My Lord, if I have found favor in Your sight, "do not pass by Your servant. "Let a little water be brought and wash your feet, "and rest yourselves under the tree "while I fetch a morsel of bread, "that you may refresh yourselves, "and after that you may pass on "since you have come to your servant.' "So they said, 'Do as you have said.' "And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "'Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal. "Knead it, and make cakes.' "And Abraham ran to the herd, "and took a calf tender and good, "and gave it to the servant who hasted to prepare it. "Then he took curds, and milk, "and the calf which he had prepared, "and set it before them, and he stood by them "under the tree while they ate. "They said to him, 'Where is Sarah your wife?' "And he said, 'She is in the tent.' "The Lord said, 'I will surely return to you "in the spring, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.' "And

Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age. "It had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "'After I have grown old and my husband is old "shall I have pleasure?' "The Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh and say, "'Shall I indeed bear a child now that I am old?' "Is anything too hard for the Lord? "At the appointed time I will return to you in the spring "and Sarah shall have a son.' "But Sarah denied saying, 'I did not laugh,' "for she was afraid. "He said, 'No, but you did laugh.'" This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- The Psalm appointed for this Sunday is number 116, verses one through four, and 12 through 19. You may find it in your hymnal on pages 837 and 838. Together let us praise God by singing the Psalm and the Gloria responsively. Please rise. (organ music playing) ♪ I love the Lord who has heard ♪ ♪ My voice and my supplications ♪ ♪ And has inclined His ear to me whenever I call ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ Then I called on the name of the Lord ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ What shall I return to the Lord ♪ ♪ For all my benefits ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ I repay my vows to the Lord ♪ ♪ in the presence of all His people ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ Oh Lord, I am Your servant ♪ ♪ I am Your servant, the child of Your hand made ♪ ♪ You have loosed my bonds ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ I will pay my vows to the Lord ♪ ♪ In the presence of all His people ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ Oh glory be to You, Creator ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ our Savior ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ As it was a time began ♪ (congregation singing) Please be seated.

- Here begins the fifth chapter of the letter sent Paul the Apostle to the Romans. "Therefore since we are justified by faith "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Through him we have obtained access "to this grace in which we stand "and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings "knowing that suffering produces endurance, "and endurance produces character, "and character produces hope, "and hope does not disappoint us "because God's love has been poured into our hearts "through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. "While we were yet helpless, at the right time, "Christ died for the ungodly "while one would hardly die for a righteous man, "though perhaps for a good man one will dare even to die. "But God shows His love for us "and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. (organ music playing) (chorus singing) (organ music playing and chorus singing continues)

- Here begins the 35th verse of the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, "teaching in their synagogues, "and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, "and healing every disease and every infirmity. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, "because they were harassed and helpless, "like sheep without a shepherd. "Then he said to his disciples, "'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. "Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest, "to send out laborers into His harvest.' "And he called to him his 12 disciples "and gave them authority over unclean spirits "to cast them out, and to heal every disease "and every infirmity. "The names of the 12 Apostles are these, "first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, "James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, "Peter and Bartholomew, "Thomas and Matthew the tax collector, "James the son of Alphaeus, and

Thaddaeus, "Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. "These 12 Jesus sent out charging them, "'Go nowhere among the Gentiles "and enter no town of the Samaritans, "but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel "and preach as you go saying, "'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' "Heal the sick, raise the dead, "cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. "You'll receive without pay, give without pay. "Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, "no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, "nor sandals, nor a staff for the laborer deserves his food. "And whatever town or village you enter, "find out who is worthy in it "and stay with him until you depart. "As you enter the house, salute it. "And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, "but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. "And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, "shake off the dust from your feet "as you leave that house or town. "Truly I say to you, it shall be more tolerable "on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah "than for that town. "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. "So be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves. "Beware of men for they will deliver you "up to the councils and flog you in their synagogues. "And you will be dragged before governors and kings "for my sake to bare testimony before them and the Gentiles. "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious "how you are to speak or what you are to say, "for what you are to say will be "given to you in that hour, for it not you who speak, "but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. "Brother will deliver up brother to death, "and the father his child, "and children will rise against parents "and have them put to death. "And you will be hated by all for my name's sake, "that he who endures to the end will be saved. "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, "for truly I say to you, you will not have gone "through all the towns of Israel "before the Son of Man comes.'" This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- Now that the school year is over for many of our children attention turns to that institution of summer. No, not baseball, but summer camp. This is certainly true in my house. When my son received verification of his camp registration, he also received a list of items that are appropriate and inappropriate for camp. The most clearly marked item on that list was a warning you must carry to the campsite everything that you bring. Vehicles are not allowed to help you transport your belongings. So now the matter of packing for his trip becomes a little more complicated. What is the survival gear? What are the essential items needed for his days at camp? Toothbrush? Socks? And since it's North Carolina, insect repellent? And what is the excess baggage? Those items that are left at home. I think it is remarkable how the art of camping has changed over the years, and how our understanding of survival gear for camping has also changed. When I started camping at the age of eight it was my job to dip the matchsticks into hot paraffin to waterproof them for the rainy days we knew we'd have in the tent. If we had no usable matches we'd have no hot water, we'd have no hot food. Camping in a tent in a remote area required serious consideration of the essentials. Today most would-be campers arrive at the campsite in their air conditioned RVs furnished with microwave ovens, dishwashers and VCRs. The essentials for these campers include an electrical outlet and a place to dump sewage. When Jesus sent out the 12 disciples to preach and heal, he had a definite idea of what was survival gear and what was excess baggage. He instructed the disciples to take no money, no nap sack, no change of clothing, no shoes, not even a walking stick. Instead they were to travel light by taking with them only words and actions, God's words and actions, and proclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Now, as a minister, and as a wife of a minister, these words really bother me, especially now. My husband will begin

serving a new congregation in less than two weeks, and we are packing for the move. Should I be tempted to take Jesus' words quite literally and chuck the many boxes? Perhaps also the computer and the answering machine and show up in the new community with nothing but the clothes on my back, and the shoes on my feet? I think not. But how then should I, how then should you understand Jesus' words? And to whom are these words addressed? Certainly to the 12 disciples whom the Gospel writer identifies by name, and just as certainly to those of us, who by our baptisms, have become Jesus' disciples, his followers, and are thereby charged to make disciples of all nations. So we need to look stereoscopically at this lesson from Saint Matthew's Gospel. We need to look through two different lenses at once, for the Gospel writer would have us read this text both as Jesus' words addressed to the 12 disciples, and as Jesus' words addressed to those disciples who would come after the initial 12. In hearing Jesus' words to his disciples we are hearing Jesus' words to us. When Jesus gave his traveling restrictions to the 12 disciples, he had one purpose in mind. To demonstrate graphically the message of Good News. It was simply not enough to tell people about the Gospel, everything about the messengers had to embody the contents of the message, the urgency of the message, and the demands of the message. What was important was to communicate clearly and concisely the Good News that the Kingdom of Heaven had come near, all else was excess baggage. And so Jesus himself issued the survival gear for his disciples as he sent them forth into ministry. And what are those essential items that Jesus gives? First, Jesus provided them with the content of the work. Second, Jesus informed them of the urgency of the work. And third, Jesus prepared them for the demands and the obstacles that they would face when doing his work. First, Jesus provided them with the content of the work. Jesus was not requesting the impossible of his disciples by his imposition of travel restrictions, though it must have seemed so to the 12. Jesus was asking of his hand-picked disciples nothing more than had been asked of him. The disciples were commissioned into the ministry that had been pioneered by Jesus himself. The Gospel writer makes this clear in the verses that immediate preceded chapter 10. These verses which detailed Jesus' own job description. Saint Matthew writes, "And Jesus went about "all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, "and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, "and healing every disease and every infirmity." Matthew then goes on to say at the very beginning of chapter 10 that Jesus called the 12 and gave them authority, Jesus' own authority, to perform ministries of healing. Their work, the disciples' work, was to be an imitation of Jesus' own ministry. It was also to be more than imitation, however. Ministry was to be rendered and received as if Jesus himself was giving it. The disciples' hands were Jesus' hands, their feet his feet, as he ministered among the poor and the outcast. By their works of mercy and charity the disciples were not only to perform a service for needy persons, they were to also embody the contents of the message that God's day of promise was dawning in their midsts. They were to be living signs, their actions were to reinforce the contents of the message. But the ministry of the disciples was not just one of healing. The disciples were also called upon to mirror Jesus' preaching vocation. Care for the sick and the distressed required the accompaniment of an explanation, the sign needed words. Like Jesus, the disciples were to spread the word that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Yet on this matter of preaching, the disciples were to got beyond simply mimicking Jesus. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection it would become clear to them that Jesus himself was to be the subject of their preaching, for in Jesus God had acted decisively in history, reconciling the world through the life, death, and resurrection of the Son. The Good News that the Kingdom of Heaven had drawn near was realized in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore the disciples, in their imitation of Jesus, were not simply to emulate his work, they were to bear his likeness, his image. As it was for the 12, so it is for us who would be Jesus'

disciples. Jesus calls us to act out the message of God's Good News by being agents of healing and caretakers of the distressed. Jesus calls us to proclaim the message, to be the message, so to live that Jesus himself is reflected in our lives. To be a follower of Jesus Christ means more than to show up in church on Sunday morning, means more than to read the Bible once or twice a week. It means to be Christ's representative, to represent Christ for the world. The second item of survival gear given to the disciples, Jesus instructed them about the urgency of the work. The work of discipleship was to be anything but causal. Jesus' packing list did not include folding chairs and beach umbrellas. Rather, Jesus told the disciples to take nothing with them, for to travel around with one's possessions, even money, was to convey an attitude that was counter to the message that was to be preached. The Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and the in-bringing of the Kingdom required that persons act quickly, both preachers and hearers. The disciples were to trust the message they were to proclaim, so much so that they were to embody the message, that urgency, by taking nothing with them. True discipleship, as Jesus defined it, required that those who would be disciples trust in God to provide everything for their everyday needs. Just as Jesus himself was poor in material things, the disciples too were to be dependent on the riches given from God. Their work, their words, even their very lives were to be regarded as gifts from God. For this reason the disciples were not to receive compensation or any benefit beyond minimal subsistence for their words and their work. Instead they were to bless those who had received God's Word, and those who had in turn received the disciples into their homes. As it was for the 12, so it is for us who would be Jesus' faithful disciples. But today how do we measure Jesus' instruction about the urgency of spreading the Word concerning the nearness of God's Kingdom? So many centuries have passed, so many faithful Christians have died, and the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus proclaimed seems more remote than near. Is there the same urgency that there was for those first disciples? Yes, for how will we know when the time has come for the Kingdom of Heaven to be fulfilled in our midsts? We are to live as if that new day will dawn tomorrow. We are to be ever watchful as faithful bridesmaids who await the bridegroom, who will come to the marriage feast, but who's arrival has yet to be announced. Yes, there is still an urgency in witnessing to the Gospel. That urgency is present among some new Christians I recently visited in Southeast Asia. One man I met, a practicing physician who also has teaching responsibilities in a local university, has made it his ministry to proclaim the urgency of the message in cyberspace. He is convinced that to be a true disciple he must give testimony to the Gospel and his medium is email and the world-wide web. Now to many of us here he might seem to be a fanatic, but it seems that many Christians in the United States, in North Carolina, in Durham, even here in Duke Chapel have become rather complacent about the message that was entrusted to us when we were baptized. There is a casualness rather than an urgency about spreading the Good News of God's Kingdom. Our Christianity has become more of an institution, a label instead of a calling. Jesus gives us the survival gear, but we are slowed by all the excess baggage we carry around with us. Such items as the fear of appearing to be a religious zealot, the concern that we might offend someone, and perhaps even disbelief that God's Word is true. This excess baggage inhibits or prohibits us from the work of discipleship. Jesus' instructions to the first disciples in chapter 10 comes to us then as a startling reminder of the tasks present day disciples are to undertake, and the responsibilities we are to assume. And now the third item of survival gear given to the disciples. Jesus prepared them for the demands and obstacles that they would face in doing his work. The picture that is painted for the disciples is not a pleasant one. They will be like sheep attacked by ravenous wolves. Hatred, persecution, family division, all these are to be the lot of the persistent disciple who is willing to be vulnerable, who is willing to face danger,

who is willing to be clothed in nothing but the armor of God. In this they will share the same fate as Jesus, they will be treated as he was treated. For this reason the disciples are advised to be both subtle and uncorrupt in their work. They are to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. But the disciples are also assured that they will not be abandoned in their work for Jesus' sake. They should not be afraid, for God will be with them. Even if their tongues are speechless, God will provide the words. And though faithfulness to the message is its own reward, God promises to save those who endure to the end. As it was for the 12, so it is for us even today. The kind of persecution described in chapter 10 is probably foreign to most of us, and what might that say about our faithfulness to the message we are to deliver? Not that anyone should look for trouble, but are we willing to give testimony, to profess our faith, to witness to the Good News no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the cost? Persecution and family division for the sake of the Gospel might seem a thing of a bygone age. Perhaps that is true in the North American context but that certainly is not true for first generation Christians of Chinese descent living in Asia, as I recently discovered. Several times I heard stories from persons, particularly the eldest sons in Chinese families, who were disowned when they professed faith in Jesus Christ. By becoming Christians they had to give up the Chinese religion in which one's parents are virtually worshiped as gods. Because they had abandoned the traditional family structure, they were regarded as non-existent or dead by their families of origin. In the case of one man I met, he had not seen, spoken to, or corresponded with any member of his immediate or extended family in the 20 years since he had become a Christian. How seriously are we willing to take our tasks as disciples of Jesus Christ? Are we willing to pay the price for our faith knowing that we need not fear, for God is with us? Jesus calls to us just as he called to the 12 disciples so long ago. He bids us to take up our cross, to be his disciples, and to make disciples of others. He gives us the survival gear, everything we need for the journey of faith. He charges us to proclaim the Good News and to care for others in his name. He compels us to recognize the urgency of the work that must be done. And he warns us that discipleship may be difficult, but he promises to be with us throughout any ordeal. These are the essentials of discipleship, this is all we need. All else is excess baggage. Are you willing to make the journey? (organ music playing) (all singing)

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

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Almighty God who hears our voices and answers prayer accept our praise this day. You have blessed us, your servants, with freedom, freedom to serve You and freedom to turn away. We pray that You would help us to see that serving You in freedom and love is the way to peace, justice and abundant life, for You desire to bless us in surprising and unexpected ways. Like Sarah, we may laugh at the impossibilities You lay before us, but help us to trust You in spite of our misgivings. For You are the God who makes a way out of no way, You are the God who makes the impossible, possible. For this and all Your mercies we give You thanks.

All: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

- God of the harvest, equip us for our labors in Your Kingdom. Help us discern what is essential for life, and

what is excess baggage that gets in the way of our service in Your Kingdom. Remind us that we are not dependent upon our own powers, but Your power, for You both prepare the way and undergird us with Your strength and blessings so we might embody the way of Your salvation. Grant us eyes and ears attuned to Your compassion and to Your children's needs. May we discern in the distressed and helpless an opportunity for discipleship. May we reach out in love and compassion so that in us they may glimpse Your love and compassion revealed in Christ our Lord.

All: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

- You have taught us to pray for and to serve one another, You have invited us to trust You when we face difficulties, so we lift up to You in silence our needs and the needs of those who are dear to us. We pray for those who suffer trauma in body or mind, that they may be healed. For those who's livelihood is insecure, the overworked, the unemployed, those burdened by debt, that they may know security of body and mind. For little children who's surroundings hide from them Your love and beauty, that they may be valued as Your own beloved children. For those who have to bear their burdens alone, that they may know Christian fellowship and a communion of Your spirit. For those who have lost loved ones, that they may be comforted and know the hope of eternal life. For those who are in doubt and anguish of soul, that they may find peace.

All: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

- Come among us, Lord, come that we might be filled with Your Spirit and bound with Your love. Like Sarah, give us laughter as we glimpse the power of Your grace to remove impossible barriers. Give us courage to follow, even when it is costly to do so knowing that You go with us every step of the way. Transform our lives from barrenness to fullness, that we might bear fruit as Your people and Your servants for a hurting world, and send us forth as Your disciples, that we might share Your love and grace with all the world so that people everywhere might know the glory of Your salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Let us offer ourselves and our gifts in thanksgiving to the Lord. (organ music playing) (chorus singing) (organ music playing) (chorus singing) Let us pray. Holy God, we praise You. Let the heavens be joyful and the Earth be glad. We bless You for creating the whole world, for Your promises to Your people, Israel, and for the life we know in Jesus Christ Your son. Born of Mary, he shares our life. Eating with sinners, he welcomes us. Leading his followers, he guides us. Dying on the cross, he rescues us. Risen from the dead, he gives new life. Send us Your Holy Spirit, that Your people may become one. Unite us in faith, inspire us to love, encourage us with hope that being made one with Christ we may be one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world until Christ comes in final victory. We praise You, Almighty Father, through Christ Your son in the Holy Spirit 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, and the power, "and the glory forever. "Amen." (organ music playing) (all singing) And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you and keep you always. ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (organ music playing)