

- And on, the stories poured forth, and, suddenly, for all of us in that room, the image took on new life as it was enfolded with the person of Henry Miseroa. It was apparent to us that this shepherd knew his sheep and he was willing to be responsible for their welfare. He agonized over the nurture of his flock and he risked his own life to protect them. It was like finally seeing a whole new perspective in the kaleidoscopic images of John's gospel. Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." It is Jesus that offers the gift of this new quality of existence. For the synoptic gospels out of the eyes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we call it the Kingdom of God. For the apostle Paul, he called it salvation. For Tillich, a theologian, he called it the new being. For Bultmann, he called it authentic existence. For this evangelist, John, the other gospel, he calls it life, eternal life. Life to the full. What specific, then, does this passage offer regarding that gift of life which John considers so precious? Jesus himself did not invent the imagery of shepherding, but we see that he did turn that image to his own important use. Upon hearing Jesus talk, the first hearers already carried their own connotations of what he must have been saying. You see, they would have remembered Ezekiel's contrast between false and true shepherds out of their scriptures. They would have remembered the self-aggrandizing political leaders of the time had been branded as false prophets. The coming Messianic King out of the scriptures would be the one and only true shepherd. Jesus' use of this kind of language surely recalled these associations of the people. Immediately after his sharing them, the people demanded of him, "If you are this Messianic King, if you are the Christ, then just tell us plainly." The Synoptics remembered Jesus moved by the crowds who seemed to gather around him like shepherdless sheep. And the Synoptics also point out to us the Pharisees who are described as having very little care for these same crowds and the same outcasts. It is to their callousness that Jesus responds with a parable about a shepherd. In contrast with these, whose religion seemed to be more concerned with doctrine and rules than with needs of persons, Jesus and his movement and life of loving concern brought abundant life to those people around him. I've discovered that there are three parables packed into this kaleidoscopic passage of John. The first shows to us that there is only one way to enter the sheep fold, the way of the true shepherd, for whom that gate is opened. So, any violent Messianic pretender or even rule-bound religious leader has tried other ways to enter this state of life, and yet has done so, often, with disastrous results. The second image out of the parable comes to us reminding us of Joshua. For out of the scriptures of the Old Testament, Joshua, like the shepherd, led his people out. The strong soldier in him, Joshua, had been commissioned as the one who would lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be as sheep which have no shepherd. Jesus seemed to think of his ministry in these terms. The third parable out of John is his "I am the door" saying. The one point of this saying is that the door leads to salvation found by passing through and living in the life of Jesus. Being led by him, we are told that we can lead life to the full. Now, my question for us today is the question that Jesus asked of the original hearers. Do we, my friends, have the ears to hear this very simple message about Jesus as the door and Jesus as the shepherd? You see, the critics of Jesus' day could not hear, much less understand these words. We are told that they assume that any legitimate leader must first win the endorsement of the academic and ecclesiastical community. However, Jesus' life and ministry and words proved that truth was respecter of persons. It may well be shunned by those who are sophisticated and somehow incredibly find hospitality

among the commoners. Jesus, the good shepherd, comes to us again today with this promise. "I am come that you might have life "and have it to the full." And so we say together as a community of faith, thanks be to God for such a gift of life. And now I simply want to share with you, just for a moment, a pastoral word. It has been my privilege and joy to share in ministry with you and among you for these four years. (struggling back tears) I have more I want to say. (solemn chuckle) I am grateful for this special place called Duke University Chapel, for you have called forth from me and so many others gifts of ministry and blessed me and so many others on our way. And as I go to serve a local church, I know that I will carry you with me in my heart. Your lives, your ministry, and this place. Also, I have every confidence that the future of Duke Chapel will be great. It will keep faith with its past and it will continue to call for the very best in lives of service from everyone here and I simply want to say, for that, God's blessings be with you all. Amen and Amen. ("The King of Love My Shepherd Is") ♪ The King of love my shepherd is, ♪ ♪ Whose goodness faileth never; ♪ ♪ I nothing lack if I am his ♪ ♪ And he is mine forever. ♪ ♪ Where streams of living water flow, ♪ ♪ My ransomed soul he leadeth ♪ ♪ And, where the verdant pastures grow, ♪ ♪ With food celestial feedeth. ♪ ♪ Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, ♪ ♪ But yet in love he sought me, ♪ ♪ And on his shoulder gently laid, ♪ ♪ And home, rejoicing, brought me. ♪ ♪ In death's dark vale I fear no ill, ♪ ♪ With thee, dear Lord, beside me, ♪ ♪ Thy rod and staff my comfort still; ♪ ♪ Thy cross before to guide me. ♪ ♪ Thou spreadst a table in my sight; ♪ ♪ Thine unction grace bestoweth; ♪ ♪ And, oh, what transport of delight ♪ ♪ From thy pure chalice floweth! ♪ ♪ And so, through all the length of days, ♪ ♪ Thy goodness faileth never. ♪ ♪ Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise ♪ ♪ Within thy house forever. ♪

- 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 in its fullness, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, 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. Come, Holy Spirit, come into the prayers that we cry out for all peoples for their healing, for their redemption, for their being surprised by your presence and the laughter of your mercy. Do overcome our meager faith. Empower our words, yes, but also our silences with that love which loves without fear. Brood in us and sigh in us those grievances and sorrows, the ache and loneliness of all who need our intercession. Take us out of our obsessions with ourselves and into their need. Give us the trust that knows that beyond our asking is yourself gathering, comforting, mending, causing us to be, and giving meaning to our existence. Lord God, in a world still awaiting the justice that rolls down as waters, righteousness is a mighty stream. Where knowledge is plentiful, but wisdom's scarce. We pray for this University, its students, faculty, administrators, employees and many friends. As together our understanding increases, quicken and deepen, also, our sense of responsibility. That we become more humane and, through us, the world more

habitable. Oh, God who makes nations to rise and fall, we pray for our nation in this time of political campaigning and decision making. Deliver us from apathy, or cynicism, or neglect of opportunity. Make us mindful that a future is being created. Remembering how often we pray that your Kingdom come, your Will be done on earth as in Heaven. Do, now, enable us to examine with fresh and open minds all issues and persons. Being neither captive to past commitments, nor ensnared by narrow self-interest. May the great hopes of our faith motivate our choices. The cause of peace, of justice, of mercy for all of your children be strengthened by what we do. Oh, God, from whose first fire came the light that dispelled primeval darkness and gave creation its birth, the pillar whose fire led your captive people from slavery into freedom, whose tongues of fire burned away a confusion of tongues and left one new people the Church. Abide, we pray, with your daughter and servant, Shirley, going soon to a new place to minister among and with a different people. Grant her continued energy and courage and that sacred vision from whence all caring comes and without which our labor is in vain and which brings a joy above all joy. Accompany her and her family in their journey away from this place and to that new place that will be their home. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, in whom we are called to be both free and responsible, and whom we received this prayer that we declare together,

- 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. (footsteps) (hand bell choir playing lightly) ("Sheep May Safely Graze" by J.S. Bach) (organ slowly building) ("All Creatures of Our God and King") ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise him all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise him above, ye heav'nly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Called, oh God, to be your people, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you, our creator. Give us now those things that we need to minister and to be a faithful people. That our discipleship might be full and fruitful. In your Son's name we work and minister and pray, Amen. ("Lead On, O King Eternal!") ♪ The day of resurrection! ♪ ♪ Earth, tell it out abroad, ♪ ♪ The passover of gladness, ♪ ♪ The passover of God. ♪ ♪ From death to life eternal, ♪ ♪ From sin's dominion free, ♪ ♪ Our Christ has brought us over ♪ ♪ With hymns of victory. ♪ ♪ Let hearts be purged of evil ♪ ♪ That we may see aright ♪ ♪ The Lord in rays eternal ♪ ♪ Of resurrection light, ♪ ♪ And list'ning to his accents, ♪ ♪ May hear, so calm and plain, ♪ ♪ His own "All hail!" and hearing, ♪ ♪ May raise the victor strain. ♪ ♪ Now let the heav'ns be joyful, ♪ ♪ Let earth its song begin, ♪ ♪ Let all the world keep triumph ♪ ♪ And all that is therein. ♪ ♪ Let all things, seen and unseen, ♪ ♪ Their notes of gladness blend; ♪ ♪ For Christ the Lord has risen, ♪ ♪ Our joy that has no end! ♪

- And, now, may the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the strength which comes from the Holy Spirit be with you this day and empower you always, Amen. (organ playing slow building fugue)