

(congregation speaking softly) (solemn organ music)

- Praise and peace to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We welcome you to this service of worship at Duke University Chapel on this fifth Sunday after Pentecost. It's our privilege to welcome many of you from around the country at this time of year to visit our campus. Especially, we are delighted to welcome participants in the various camps which take place at Duke during the summer, including the athletic camps, computer camp, talent identification program, and others of which I'm not even aware. We hope that you will have other occasions to visit us here at the chapel. We also send our prayers and best wishes with members of the Duke Africa Initiative, who leave town this week for travel to Africa where they will participate in hunger relief projects for the remainder of the summer. This is a student initiated project which is supported through private donations including the Duke Student Foreign Mission Fund. One of our chapel endowments. If you have an interest in this project or any other chapel endowments, please contact any member of the chapel staff. And I would ask you to please note the other announcements as they are printed in your bulletin. Remember, this is the day that the Lord have made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

♪ Praise ye the Lord of hosts ♪ ♪ Sing His salvation ♪ ♪ Bless His name ♪ ♪ Show forth His praise in His holy house ♪ ♪ Praise ye the Lord of hosts ♪ ♪ Sing His salvation, bless His name ♪ ♪ Show forth His praise in His holy house ♪ ♪ Thou shall be named, all men shall be joyful ♪ ♪ Blessed is the name of the Lord ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪  
(bright organ music) (organ obscuring lyrics) (organ obscuring lyrics)

- Of our lives to examine the shape of our days. And when we are truly honest with ourselves, we recognize that we have failed in our obligations to God and to one another. Let us now offer God our confession with humble and penitent hearts. We give thanks merciful God that in Christ, you seek to unite all things in heaven and in earth. And to reconcile all people to one another and to you. We confess that the new creation is not yet complete in us. And that we feel everywhere the barriers that separate human kind. Forgive us. And fill us with your spirit of oneness. Reveal to us those places where pride and selfishness rebuild the walls once torn down in Christ. Through the power of your spirit, amen. Hear the good news. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That is God's own truth of his love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

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- Let us pray. Open our hearts and minds oh God. By the power of your holy spirit. So that His word is read and proclaimed. We might hear with joy what you say to us this day. Amen. The first lesson is taken from the first book of Kings. And there, he came to a cave and lodged there. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord. "The God of hosts. "For the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, "thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets "with the sword. "And I, even I only, am left. "And they seek my life to take it away." And he said, "Go forth and stand upon the mount." Before the Lord passed by. And a great and strong wind rent the mountains and broken pieces, the rock before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind,

an earthquake. But the Lord was not the in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire. But the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous "for the Lord, the God of Host. "For the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, "thrown down thy altars and slain thy prophets "with the sword. "And I, even I only, am left. "And they seek my life, to take it away." This ends the reading of the first lesson. (soft organ music) (choir singing in foreign language) ("Gloria Patri") ♪ Glory be to our Creator ♪ ♪ Praise to our Redeemer ♪ ♪ Lord Glory be to our Sustainer ♪ ♪ Ever three and ever one ♪ ♪ As it was in the beginning ♪ ♪ Ever shall be, amen ♪

- The second lesson is taken from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Now, before faith came, we were confined under the law. Kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came. That we might be justified by faith. But now, that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian. For in Christ Jesus, you are all sons of God through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring. Heirs according to promise. This ends the reading of the second lesson. The gospel according to the Saint Luke, chapter nine verses 18 through 24. Now, what happen that as he was praying alone. The disciples were with him. And they asked him, "Who did the people say that I am?" And they answered, "John the Baptist." But others say Elijah. And others that one of the old prophets has risen. And he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God." But he charged and commanded them to tell this to no one. Saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things. "And be rejected by the elders and the chief priests "and scribes and be killed. "And on the third day, be raised." And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, "let him deny himself and take up his cross daily "and follow me. "For whoever would save his life would lose it. "And whosoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." This ends the reading of the gospel.

- Just about a month ago today, I had a good fortune of worshiping at Westminster Abbey on a Sunday morning. It was Pentecost, in fact. And what a glorious occasion it was. Having stood as a house of worship since the year 1066, the Abbey emanates an overpowering aura of holiness as such places seem to do when enough people prayed there over enough years. I was thrilled over the prospect, not only of participating in the liturgy. But of hearing their outstanding cathedral choir. The anthems were to include Igor Stravinsky's Mass, And the stunning Messiaen motet, "O Sacred Feast." No sooner had I taken my seat that I realized the large number of Americans who were there. Like myself, they were including the Abbey on their holiday tour. Now, I'll admit, this often provokes a bit of anxiety in me. Will we, as uninitiated visitors to such a place, not always so well-informed about high church liturgy, know what to do during the service? Fortunately, all was well. Until time for the communion to be served. And the choir began its eloquent rendition of the Messiaen. I thought surely, I was attending the final feast itself, that sacred feast. So holy was I feeling. Just then, from the ethereal ecstasy in which I had immersed myself, a loud voice emerged. And behold, it happened to have an American accent. Rising above the mystical strains of the cathedral choir, these words rang out. "Why, it's Pentecost Sunday, and I didn't even wear red." She then proceeded to offer an unsolicited exposition on the reasons why she simply didn't have room in her suitcase for

anything red on this trip. And therefore, was completely unprepared for Pentecost. Clearly, she was not wearing red on this occasion. But I certainly was seeing it. As her inane comments completely obliterated my sense of sacred time and space and the Messiaen was destroyed. I shall always remember receiving holy communion at Westminster Abbey on Pentecost. Not because of the new heights of spiritual awareness to which I was propelled, but rather because of the new depths of annoyance in church to which I had fallen. Who was this woman anyway that she should spoil my day in church? I couldn't help thinking to myself. I'm only slightly comforted by the fact that my own tendency to want to offer an opinion about those who would sit beside me in church is not without historical precedent. As we read on today's Epistle lesson, Saint Paul is attempting to address the issue in the Galatian church of what constitutes proper membership in the church? Who belongs and who doesn't? And on what basis should they be allowed to belong? The Galatians were all in a stew over deciding if the Gentiles had to live under the law as the Jews were accustomed to doing, specifically, did they have to undergo circumcision? Resentments were beginning to divide the congregation. And so Saint Paul, in his usual forthright manner expresses his frustrations with the young church. "Oh, foolish Galatians. "Who has bewitched you?" They should've known a spirit came to them through believing the gospel message and not through keeping the law, he implied. Paul cites Abraham as the example of one who was reckoned as righteous by God because of his faith in God's promise. Not because of his good works, ritual observances or the like. He further reasoned that if Abraham were accepted by God because he believed, justification by faith is the established precedent antedating the giving of the law by more than 400 years. In the giving of the law, God had provided a guardian or custodian whose role was that of temporary caretaker for his people. But this caretaker was replaced once and for all in the coming of Christ where faith was reestablished as the final basis for justification. It is in and through Christ, Paul argues, that all who live in faith are able to become God's children and claim their rightful place in Christ's church. And so, we have it. Paul states as clearly as he knows how to do in this lesson, his vision of a new humanity. An entirely new order of existence where distinctions within the church are to be fully embraced as one family of God. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ. The form of the language suggest this verse was part of the baptismal liturgy in the early church. Baptism into Christ meant putting on Christ as one would don a new garment. And in so doing, newly baptized Christians acknowledged from the very beginning of their relationship with the church, a new world that sought to embody unity. This was not an admonition, reserved simply for the more mature or sophisticated members of the church. Rather, it constituted a part of the very definition of the church. Which every member was called to embrace. I guess the experience of the Galatians stands to remind us this is easier said than done. Try putting yourself in the shoes of a Jewish male who previously had always given thanks in traditional prayers for not being born a woman. Or of the master, accustomed to lording over the slave, or of the circumcised Jew accustomed to resenting the uncircumcised Greek. Clearly, Paul was calling for a radically new way of thinking about and acting in the world. This may be a difficult for us as enlightened church goers of the 1980s to appreciate fully. We believe in equal work for equal pay. Why, we even allow women into the pulpit. But to understand Paul's context a little more and the radical nature of his call, let us consider in more detail, one aspect of his baptismal formula. The plight of the women in biblical times. From a reading of the Old Testament, Rabbinical teachings and the writings of Jewish historians and philosophers, we can readily detect the decidedly male bias of the culture. In Deuteronomy for instance women are considered to be among the spoils of battle. "When you go forth to war against your enemies "and see among the captives, a beautiful woman "take her

for yourself as wife." It was within the family that the women in Israel gained the greatest respect. But even there, a wife was considered to be the property of the husband. Divorce was a man's prerogative and not a woman's. A bride, if challenged, must submit proof of her virginity at the time of her marriage. But not the groom. If her virginity could not be established, the town's people were to take her to her father's door and stone her to death. A male Hebrew slave was automatically freed after six years but a female came under a different set of rules. A father could even sell his own daughter as a slave. Concubinage was also acceptable under Hebrew law creating a class of women living under a virtual sexual slave-master relationship without the legal protections of marriage. As a case in point, we read in Judges 19 of a concubine who had become angry with her master, a Levite and decided to leave him to return to the home of her father. The master proceeded to retrieve her from her father, saying he wanted to speak kindly to her and the father gladly consented. On the return trip home, the master and the concubine spent the evening as guests of an old man who came upon them on the city square. Some raucous men of the city had seen them and knocked on the old man's door, demanding the Levite, that they might violate him sexually. The old man refused explaining that the Levite was his guest. He pleaded with the avengers, behold, "Here are my virgin daughter and his concubine." "Ravish them, and do with them what seems good to you "but against this man, do not do so vile a thing." The would-be assailants would not listen and insisted on the Levite. So the Levite seized his concubine, whom he had intended to speak kindly to, and put her out to the crowd of men where she was raped and tortured until morning. At dawn, the men let her go and the woman struggled to the door of the old man's house where she collapsed with her hands on the threshold. "Get up and let us be going," the master says to her. But there was no answer. Was she still alive? The text doesn't tell us. The Levite then put her upon the ass and carries her home. And as the account in Judges reads, "When he entered his house, he took the knife "and laying hold of his concubine, divided her limb by limb "into 12 pieces and sent her throughout "all the territory of Israel." This story is not told with any regularity within the church nor is it included within the lectionary readings. Too painful to hear, too dark to imagine on a bright, sunny morning in Duke Chapel, I completely agree. Yet even in such tales of horrors, sad stories may yield new beginnings according to Professor Phyllis Trible of Union Theological Seminary. "Reflections themselves neither mandate "nor manufacture change, yet by enabling insight, "they may inspire repentance," she writes in her book "Texts of Terror." She calls on Christians to use scripture to interpret scripture in order that even a story like the dismembered concubine does not paralyze us. The radical claim which Paul made to the church in today's reading establishes freedom in Christ as the final word over slavery and victimization. We therefore, need not be afraid to confront oppression within scripture itself, when we can hold fast to Paul's words, "There is neither slave nor free, "male nor female, for you are all one in Christ." Neither do we need to be afraid to confront the harsh realities of oppression in our own time. In New Bedford, Massachusetts, a woman is hoisted to a pool table where she is repeatedly raped by a group of men while others in the tavern stand watching. On college campuses, date rape grows increasingly more common. And over 50 gang rapes reported on American campuses this past year alone. Women are not the only victims in our culture, however. With North Carolina continuing to head up the list of states presently experiencing KKK activity according to klan watch. We have ample opportunity to watch at close hand the ways in which racial and religious minorities are victimized. North Carolinians against racist and religious violence based here in Durham report that in 1985, there were over 30 incidents of bigoted violence in this state including cross burnings and often in the name of white Christian supremacy. The gay community faces a similar level of societal antagonism, on a less violent scale perhaps, but on an equally intense level

of feeling it seems. Witness the reaction in our own city to the upcoming gay pride week and its accompanying library exhibit. What is the church doing in 1986 to make Saint Paul's vision a reality? To take seriously its responsibilities to be an agent of reconciliation? Are we continuing to search for new ways to affirm an inclusive Christian community? Or have we become complacent with the significant strides that have been made in recent years? Have we become so lukewarm in our identity as Christians that we would choose to play it safe rather than stepping out to take an unpopular stand? How concerned are we really about our Christian sisters and brothers whom we see suffering from discrimination even within the church? And how do our lives reflect our concern? Paul's word to us on our oneness in Christ seems an especially fitting call to--