

- Sunday, February 10th, 1957. Preacher, the reverend professor James T. Cleland, dean of the chapel.  
(choral praise music) (organ music) (choral praise music)

- Let us offer unto God our unison prayer of confession. Have mercy upon us oh God, according to thy loving kindness. According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wipe us thoroughly from our inequities and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, oh God. And renew a right spirit within us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen. And now as our savior Christ has taught us, let us humbly pray, Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, they 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 and ever. Amen. (organ music) (choral praise music)

- Let us hear the word of God as 'tis contained in the scriptures of the New Testament. In the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. The eleventh chapter at the 22nd verse. Let me say a word about the setting of this chapter. Some people have challenged Paul's apostolic credentials. And he is justifying himself. Beginning of this passage, he's indignant. But Christian love overcomes him before the end. This chapter is from that section of the Corinthian correspondence which is known as the angry letter. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool. I am more in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods. Once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck. A night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeys often. In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea. In perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness in watchings often, in hunger and thirst in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, beside those things that are without. That which cometh upon me daily. The care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak. Who is offended, and I burn not. If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knoweth that I lie not. Amen. And my God bless unto us the reading of His holy word. (organ music) (choral praise music)

- The Lord be with you.

- And with thy spirit.

- Let us pray. Oh thou most holy God, who inhabitest eternity, whose greatness no mortal can comprehend, yet who hath granted unto men a vision of thy glory in Jesus Christ, thrill us anew with thy revelation for our salvation. Grant us here again such a living awareness of thy being and thy nature that our hearts may bow before thee in true reverence. Graciously purify the motives which have brought us to this sanctuary we pray

thee. Lift us from self satisfaction and all selfish preoccupations to the praise of thee and of thy great glory. We thank thee our Father for all the experiences of our lives. The good and the ill. Whereby we are brought to acknowledge that we are thine. We praise thee for those times when thou hast taken from us our idols, our wrongheaded notions of reality, and of our place in the scheme of things. For those revealing moments when our false and inadequate conceptions have not been able to contain thee or explain thee, and we have been led to behold in awe some fuller measure of thy glory and goodness. Thou art supremely worthy of our love and loyalty. In thy service we find our true freedom; to live in thy presence is to know true blessedness forevermore. By thy mercies, restrain those temptations in us to inordinate pride, to false securities in our success. Let not our minds succumb to specious reasonings of the impious. Hold us firmly to the truth, when the drab and prosaic moments of our days drain from us our faith, our courage, and our hope. Oh God who hath prepared for those who love and trust thee such good things as surpass understanding, continue we beseech thee to surprise us with thy favors and companionship, that we may come to love thee above all things and may obtain those promises which exceed all that we deserve or can desire through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Oh God who in thy son revealeth thy love for all mankind, yet who careth for each as though there were but one to love, we offer thee our intercessions for all persons whose needs are like unto those who knew the compassion of Christ. For all little children, especially the offended ones. For all persons who are sick and afflicted in mind or in body, especially the seemingly incurable. For all social outcasts and victims of race prejudice and other depraving inhumanities, for all conscious stricken penitents, who finding not the forgiveness of men have become embittered. For all lonely discouraged and bereaved folk. Especially those of our near acquaintance. For all who are wretchedly poor, especially those who by reason of age or ill health are unable to provide for themselves proper food, clothing, and shelter from the winter's cold. Deliver us oh merciful Lord, from contempt of any person less fortunate than ourselves, supposing that such people as Jesus befriended are no concern of our own. Forbid that in callousness to the needs of others we should reject thee and deny to anyone the blessings of this life or of that eternal hope which is ours to share. As we have prayed here that thou wouldst continue to favor us with enlarging revelations of thyself and of the meaning of our lives, so now we pray for a broadening sympathy for our fellow men, for an increase in ourselves of Christ like compassion for the needs of others. By thy spirit teach us that we must love thee in our neighbors, and our neighbors in thee. And so make us aware that we are bound together in the bundle of life, environed by thy love in good providence that we may live for thy glory who liveth and reigneth with the son and the holy spirit, one God, world without end, Amen. (organ music) (choral praise music) (organ music) (choral praise music) Oh God, our creator and redeemer, no labor or gift of our hands can repay thee for thy great goodness, yet in thy grace receive these offerings as representing the gift of our lives for the sake of the love of Christ, Amen. (organ music)

- Let us pray. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight. Oh Lord, our strength and our redeemer, Amen. One of the wonderful consequences of having friends is that they introduce you to someone or something or some experience which has meant much to them and which they want you to share. A faculty member and his wife did just that for me at Christmas. They gave me a copy of Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night," first published in 1956. I have read it twice. And I long to see the play. Because you are my friends in God, I am going to share my reading experience with you. "Long Day's Journey Into Night" is located through all four acts in the living room of a summer home in New London, Connecticut, from the beginning until the close of an August day in 1912. It is one long day's

journey into night, with its four acts timed at 8:30, 12:45, 6:30, and midnight. The playwright thus preserves two of the Aristotelian unities; place and time. One set, one day. In that living room, a father and a mother and two sons, the Tyrones, talk and talk, and talk. About themselves. Each about himself. Each about the others. Their relationship to one another. Their loving hatred of one another. Their angry affection for one another. There is no action in the play, but there is talk. Three and a half hours of it. Bitterness is succeeded by regret, which in turn leads to renewed bitterness and subsequent real, but ineffective apologies. Lies are told that deceive no one. Lies that are spoken in a mixture of family love and self-justification. The play is a four handed game of confessional solitaire, in which there is neither expiation nor atonement. The characters cannot be painted in black or white. If you were to chose a color, it would be battleship gray with purple patches. If I were to use adjectives to describe that day's life with the Tyrones, I would have to use adjectives in three different categories. First, vivid, repetitive, unforgettable, haunting, intense. Again, bitter, twisted, harrowing, impotent, pessimistic. Third, compassionate, understanding, appealing, pitiful, pathetic. It is a poetic drama where moods clash and change because no character understands himself as a whole person. And it is set in an atmosphere of fuddled garrulousness and drug addiction. When the play ends, all is quiet. But no one is saved. The curtain is rung down on the drunken, drugged sleep of the damned. The members of the family know one another a little better, but tomorrow is going to be another day just like yesterday. And so the audience goes home forgiving, but frustrated. There is some pity for the Tyrones, but little admiration. There is no classical catharsis, none. Now it isn't enough to say, "Don't worry, this is typically Irish and the Tyrones, like O'Neill, are Irish." Yes, brethren, but we are all Irish to some extent, because we are mortal men and women. This play is the old Irish epitaph come to life. An Irishman doesn't know what he wants, and he won't be content till he gets it. Therefore he lives ineffectually, and he is some of us. So let us look at the four characters, one by one, and try to find out what is driving them to Hell, here and hereafter. Let me thumbnail sketch them for you. James Tyrone, the father, is 65 years old, an actor who gave up the chance to be a great actor by accepting one popular and perennial role which brought him money and more money. Remembering the poverty stricken days of his childhood, he has become a penny pincher, and is now a petty, mean, bullying, inebriated miser. And yet there are undertones of loyalty and humility, and remorse. His wife, Mary, aged 54, was reared in a convent school and expected to become a nun before she married. She has lost one child through her own neglect, so she blames herself. And has become a drug addict because of careless medical prescription in the illness following the birth of her third child. She loves her man and her boys, but looks back with regret on the years of cheap hotel living as she followed her husband's company around the country. Jimmy, the elder son, age 38, is an embittered drunkard, and a dissatisfied Libertine, who is shot through with a jealousy which caused him to effect the death of one brother and makes him long for the destruction of the other. He loathes the life which has him under its spell, and he detests himself. That is, he detests himself when he's drunk enough to be honest about himself. In vino veritas. Edmund, the younger child, age 23, is a drinking consumptive with a doubting desire to write. He's on the surface, like Jimmy, an alcoholic and a ruey, but inside there are yearnings for beauty and for peace. A servant girl, also Irish, completes the cast. Now there are four main characters, and yet as soon as one has said that, one knows that is not true. There are eight main characters. because each has what the Germans call a doppelganger, a second self. And the conversation is permeated and penetrated with this everlasting duality, blame and pity, rage and apathy, failure and yearning. There's a double self constantly before us, the what is, and the what might have been. And in the mother's case, what was. It must be an exhausting encounter to sit through this play. I don't recommend it for academic

relaxation. Now is it possible to get behind the symptoms to causes? What is trying to express itself in all this money grabbing, and drug addiction, and unhappy drinking, and unsatisfactory lechery? One can point causally to the death of the second child in which all four were involved. The father caused it by insisting that his wife be with him on the road, though the child needed her. Mary caused it by choosing to be a wife, rather than a mother. Jimmy caused it in typical seven year old fashion. He caused the baby to catch the measles which he had, so that the child died. And the unborn Edmund is also involved, because he was brought into the world to replace the dead baby. And he made his mother so ill at his birth, that an unskilled doctor prescribed morphine and started her on the way to be a dope addict. There's the cause, and yet is it? We know families which have wept and worked and prayed through similar calamities and emerged bloody but unbowed. Oh, other causal factors are involved. James Tyrone's fear of poverty and his longing to be a great actor rather than a stage idol. Mary's yearning for a home and her pathetic return to the childhood dream of being a nun. Jimmy's guilt, not nearly because he deliberately gave the baby measles, but because of his constant efforts to ruin Edmund morally, he hates his brother. Edmund's terror at the thought of tuberculosis, and his desire to write, and to write well instead of the stammering stuff he produces. Even then, the real causes are not here. Each character seeks to escape himself. And none of them can find a dominating larger self to which each may give himself. They have no internal infallible center of loyalty. They have no invisible means of support. Now if a man is not self sufficient, and few of us are, then God or Satan, the spiritual or the demonic, will take over the direction of that person's life. God is peripheral in this play. Spiritual values are prominent by their absence. The demonic is enthusiastically present in the persistent love of money, the false satisfaction of drugs, the unhappy dependence on alcohol, and the unrewarding bed of the prostitute. This play is a little saga of the effectively damned. It's the day, it's one day in the life of a family on the brink of oblivion. Because in nary a one is there any basic, personal security. Then is there no cure, no balm in Gilead? There is none in the play. It ends with the mother recalling in a sad, wakeful dream, her days in the convent, with the father staring in his chair where he slouches drunk with Jimmy and Edmund motionless. Curtain. And yet, if you read the play carefully, there are hints, hints, that's all, hints at the possibility of healing given by each of the characters except Jimmy. Mary says to her husband, "James, we've loved each other. We always will. Let's remember only that. And not try to understand what we cannot understand, or help things that cannot be helped, the things life has done to us that we can neither excuse nor explain. She says to him again, "I know you love me, James, in spite of everything." He answers, "As God is my judge, always and forever, Mary." And she replies, "And I love you, dear, in spite of everything." She says to Edmund, "You must try to understand" and forgive your father, and not feel contempt." The father says to Edmund, "When you deny God, you deny hope. When you deny God, you deny sanity. And Edmund says to his father, "You have to make allowances in this damned family or go nuts." That's Christian love. He talks again in an amazing monologue of belonging to something greater than my own life, or the life of man, to life itself, to God if you wanna put it that way. He refers to peace, the end of the quest, the last harbor, the joy of belonging to a fulfillment beyond men's lousy, pitiful, greedy fears and hopes and dreams. Like a saint's vision of beatitude. Love and God. Forgiveness and peace. Belonging and beatitude. Haven't you heard it all before? Isn't it the refrain of the Bible from beginning to end? Isn't God the invisible means of support who quickens love in us so that on Earth we may have peace? Peace, lack of worry at the heart. The peace which creates blessedness. Let me recall it to you. 23rd Psalm. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the lord forever." The prophet Hosea. "When Israel was a child, I loved him. And out of Egypt I called my son. It was I

who taught Ephraim to walk. I took them up in my arms. I led them with cords of compassion, with the bands of love, and I became to them as one who eases the yolk on their jaws. And I bent down to them and fed them." "Lord Jesus, if you then who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?" Or the first epistle of John, perhaps the loveliest book in the New Testament. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. And he who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this is love, not that we love God but that he loved us and sent his son. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God, but if we loved one another God abides in us. And his love is perfected in us. Let's see Paul interpret all this for us. "Paul, you certainly went through hell and high water on Earth, judging from your autobiography. How'd you do it?" Can you hear his answer? "I discovered that God loved me before I became aware of it. That did something to me. I yielded myself to that almost unbelievable fact, that the great God loves me. And wants me as his companion on Earth. Now, I just have to love others as he loved me and nothing can stop it. Hell or high water, as you put it. I go through these afflictions because he loves me, and in consequence, I love my fellows. Love and God. Love which according to John, is God. Not only God is love, love is God. Love through which we know God. God, who is the groundwork of our life. That's what the Tyrones were groping for. In that is their hope of salvation, that is their hope of health. Health, spiritual health. This is the invisible means of support which the demonic obviously does not supply. This is the remedy. The committing of self to the more than self which doesn't observe the self, but which reestablishes it by giving it the dignity of son, daughter of God. And then seeks to work in love through that self. That's how a person is given back his soul, redeemed, made perfect by the exercise of love. If you don't believe this, how do you account for Paul, and Augustine, and Wesley, and Kaddalah, and Schweitzer, and for the people you yourselves know who live like this? If you do believe, how are you going to set about giving the Tyrones and your father, and your students, and your roommate, the capacity to see it? Granted that this is the remedy, what is the mode of treatment? Well let's be honest. To begin with, the Tyrones don't need us, they need a psychiatrist. Because what is obvious to the Tyrones under the influence of drink or drugs had better become obvious and accepted when they are cold sober, and it'll take the skill of an expert to make them cold sober. Now during that treatment and after it they must be steadily loved. They must be loved not because they're lovely, but because they need love. Now the psychiatrist may do that, it depends on his world view. But then we come in as Christians and we must do it, and oh brethren we do it not to make the Tyrones Christian, you can't make anybody Christian. Only God can do that, that's the truth behind the doctrine of election. Only God can make a person Christian. We don't do it to make them Christian, we don't do it to make them lovely, we don't do it to influence them and make them our friends, oh God forbid. We do it because they need love. They need the love which we received from God when we were unlovely. And still receive from his disciples when we are still unlovely. They'll need to know humble understanding. Numerous Christians, who go out to them in perpetual good will despite their misunderstanding, their self assertion, their impotence, their backslidings, their hostility. That will probably call for more than one Christian. And that's where the church comes in. And that's where people come in who understand, who can answer questions, because those Tyrones will ask questions. Don't go as a naive Christian, for God's sake, as well as theirs. It means knowledge. It means the capacity to expound. It means understanding. And it ultimately requires that the Tyrones try this. Action, interpretation, incitement to action, that's the Christian procedure. And you say to me, yes you're very naive, Dr. Cleland, this well senior on a pulpit in the coward's box. This doesn't work in life. Strangely enough, it did work, with one of

the Tyrones. Long day's journey into night is autobiographical. Eugene O'Neill was the youngest Tyrone, Edmund. He wrote the play in 1941, 15 years before it was published and dedicated it to his wife on their twelfth wedding anniversary. Do you know why? Because she loved him into life and into light. She exorcized the demon. She washed away his guilt. Even his suffering, she gave him dignity, and peace, and exhilaration. If I were producing this play, I would read the dedication after the fall of the final curtain. Or is that bad theater, even if it is homiletically sound? Well, let me try again. I would print the dedication in the program. Why? Because it explains the reason for the play and it offers the catharsis. The purifying and elevating of the emotions which the play, per se, does not give. Let me read it to you. For Carlotta, on our twelfth wedding anniversary. Dearest, I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness, which gave me the faith in love. That enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play. Write it with deep pity and understanding, and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones. These twelve years, Beloved One, have been a journey into light, into love. You know my gratitude and my love. That is within the Christian world view because it understood the catharsis and the impelling force of love. It was a long day's journey. A long day's journey. But it ended in light. Let us pray. Oh God, who art love, and who dost work continually in love, grant us to know that thou art love, and grant us to live in love, that thy saving health may be known, and thy love lived by us through Jesus Christ, thy love incarnate. Thy son, and our lord. And may the blessing of the lord come upon you abundantly. May it keep you strong and tranquil in the truth of his promises through Jesus Christ our lord. (choral praise music)