

I want to introduce the whole of the Odyssey, the Spiritual Odyssey, and especially the second two thirds of it in terms of time, the twelve to two o'clock dimension of that, immediately after this session. But the way we want to use this hour each day, is for really the only lecture that we're going to call a proper lecture during the day. And that's probably just as well, in view of the way we have decided to turn every thing up-side-down this summer relative to spirit, and to tactics, because it would be really in the area of the spirit, the area of the spiritual, that would be sort of the last thing I would want to lecture on. You know, talk about it quietly around the edges, fine, but not lecture. And so, just as we decided not to lecture on tactics, we have decided to lecture on spirit.

I suppose that the most valuable, the most valuable of all the intellectual tools that I have any acquaintance with, the most valuable image that is in my possession, I suppose it would be the last thing that I would want to give up, is my access to the fact, that for any man in our time, that to know, to be aware of, to operate out of the consciousness, that anything important, relative to being human, is something that me and my fathers are now and have always stood in the midst of, I mean up to the arm pits. That anything important, relative to being human, I am already standing up to my arm pits in and my fathers always stood the same way. And that, therefore, when I talk about something like prayer, when I talk about something like contemplation, or I talk about something like meditation, that I'm not going to look somewhere else for it, I'm not going to try and reach some other region for it, I'm not going to try to superimpose that on life, but that the whole subject of my exercise is to discover how it is that that is mine already.

I raised the question this morning in our collegium of room cleaning, and thought that I should really add, that if anybody thinks that cleaning his room is one problem and then the fact that, by the accident of history, the other people in those other beds are some libertines and some pharisees, then he doesn't understand the problem of cleaning a room at all. That the problem of keeping your room clean is always, inextricably, tied with the fact that the people you're going to have to enlist in that job are some libertines, and some pharisees. And if you don't see that that is where you start, you've missed the whole problem. I wonder if when you and I think about Viet Nam, if we at all grasp that the problem there, that the advice that you're going to give to President Thieu, or General Abrams, or Ho Che Min's successors (I don't know who it is that you imagine you're consultant to) that unless you and I understand, that that problem there has to be addressed by the kind of style that you're going to relate to that situation with, then you don't understand the problem at all. What I', trying to say is that in Viet Nam, and in your bedroom, there is a relationship between whatever New Social Vehicle you would invent, and the New Religious Mode. And that that just sounds so practical you can't imagine us spending any time on it. But some of the people in your bedroom are going to be so unconcerned about keeping that clean and some of the others are going to think that energy spent there has one of the highest priorities, why you're going to be living there with somewhat higher density than some measurements would suggest, and that cleanliness is after all.... well you know where it ranks. And somebodies else's model. Now, you've got to add to that that you enter the scene and your analysis of that situation and your division of the libertine group and the pharisee group is going to be greatly affected by which camp you are in.

Now, how is it possible to talk about the struggle to be human in our times, save we see that there is not going to be anything done in Viet Nam, there is not going to be anything done in that bedroom of yours, unless there is a style which is adequate to deal with the real dynamics of that situation. That you and I are kidding ourselves if we go around, there is a lot of cheap talk, you know, about everybody participation, everybody needs to participate, you know, and then you run into a real problem; a broom and a room. And a ... forget it. I'm surrounded by the

dirtiest bunch of irresponsible... you know. Or, I wouldn't touch a broom if it had a golden handle and please those s.o.b.'s who think that's the most important thing we have to do here this summer.

There are.... what would you suggest about polity in Viet Nam, when you and I know that democracy is no answer. Have a vote! Have a vote? Why, I don't know how the Vietnamese people would gather, would dare to even gather together in that large a group, you know, for fear that they're presenting a target for somebody. How can you have a vote in that kind of situation? And is the answer from Hanoi adequate? I would suggest to you, it is not. That kind of bankruptcy is very serious. I don't know about you, but I regard the social fabric as very, very fragile. And it's fragility is symbolized far, far too often for me. No social fabric can exist, no social fabric can be invented, save there is a New Religious Mode. And forget those words! Save there is glue to make that vehicle operate, to enable that vehicle to operate, to give people the courage to try, not only this afternoon, but to try again tomorrow morning, when it fails this afternoon. Anybody will try something, oh, three times. There's not one single social problem I know of that's going to give way under three good tries. And so the question is, how do people get the.... and you almost have to leave that blank, because otherwise you beg the question. But how do they get X in order to build, in order to invent, in order to go on inventing, to go on building, to go on reguilding.

Well, that's... we want to talk about this end of things in this hour, and want to begin talking about something that we call the solitaries, and that's a name for three dimensions that we call meditation, contemplation, and prayer. Now that's just a lot of.... you know...our fathers gave us that baggage. And the question is whether that means anything, whether that can mean anything, whether there's anything important that we are standing up to our arm pits in that those three categories under the solitaries points to--that we have to know about.

First of all, these three categories are talking about something that's one cloth. You can't meditate and not be contemplating; you can't pray and not be contemplating; you can't pray and not be meditating; you can't contemplate---; that all of this is going on at the same time.

I was most educated in terms of these three categories, by a very small seminar I ran one time. I have a friend in Washington who is a stock broker, and we were all pressing our friends recently. He arranged for me to go out with his boss, the president of the...what ever it is... that brokerage firm, and it was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and so we were in this sort of slot that went to this nice sort of plush, dark place, and we started talking about money, and I was trying to tell him what we were all about. And, so I said that we were not going to be anything less than inclusive, we were not going to do anything less than the necessary, we were not going to be other than serious, and to try to tell him,...this man...my friend the stock broker is a methodist and his boss is a Roman Catholic...and this man, you know, he has tried to be a serious churchman, and tried to be a serious churchman, you know, as others of us might put up our hands. And, so, you know, he finally said to me, 'you say that this is something that you're interested in in terms of every man, that this is not some private club. Ok, what do you expect to be...ok, let's say you win. What do you expect to happen to the people in this place?' You know, I looked around the room and everybody was lifting various delights, and through this I was fascinated by that question. Because this man,(as I reflected on the fascination, I had another set of gears back there trying to work real fast), this man had taken me seriously. You know, 'ok, so what's going to happen to humanness, what's going to happen to civilization?' And he asked the question very practically.

Well, I would suggest to you that what is meant by this, is that everyman be the sociality that he is. That every man be in touch with all that it means to be of a society, all that it means to be human in terms of the social and that means

in terms of all of our past as well as our future. That a man be able to talk with, to have conversations with all of those people that enable him to be human, enable him to be social. That every man in the room have the possibility of being present to the Mystery in his life. That every man has mystery in his life, but what does it mean to decide to relate to that mystery? What does it mean to know that it's possible to call that mystery by name? And not rush in with the Name immediately, but to understand that the religious exercise in history--in the 20th Century you almost have to say the secular religious activity in history--has been to name that mystery. And that finally, every man in the room would be a free man; that every man in the room be his freedom. This man understood. I mean, he didn't understand. These categories were all strange to him, and he kept raising his eyebrows, but he was interested. He knew that this was--I don't know--the name on a gate, or something. And I think I learned more about what we're trying to talk here, I learned more about that that day with that man running that seminar, cause I figured he asked the best questions, I learned more about this, that day, than any time in my life.

This is what we want to talk about. Now, we are also going to talk about the journees, and about the corporated. And, what we mean by the journees, is knowing and being, and doing; and what we mean by the corporates is obedience, and chastity, and poverty (turn those around to poverty, chastity, and obedience). Now, again, we have to be able to talk about what we mean when we are relating these categories this way, and anyways, we are going to talk about it, and we are going to make it clear that when you are talking about prayer as freedom, that you are talking about that thrust that you mean by obedience; that is, there is no prayer outside of obedience. You don't pray for the local congregation save you are obedient to it. There is no way to talk about the relationship that you and I choose to take in prayer. There is no freedom outside of obedience.

Now, the way we are going to deal with these is in a difference sequence and while that is the sequence that we use in our theoretical organization, I want to spend just one second laying out the way we want to work with them. The way I want to build this chart, we are going to begin down here in the right hand bottom corner, with prayer. And that is what we're going to talk about today. And we're going to move in the weeks, then, with doing some finishing out and some review the fourth week; we are going to spend the first week looking at prayer, and then, at meditation, and then we're going to look at contemplation. That is, we are going to look at the activity that we mean by prayer. Then tomorrow we are going to look at prayer again, in terms of charts. Then on Wednesday, we will look at meditation, and the following day look at the charts, so that you can say we'll work a day on prayer, plus; we'll work a day on meditation, plus' and then on the fifth day we are going to look at contemplation as the intensification, the transmutation of these other two activities, and then come to contemplation again in the last week. It is helpful to see the way we hold this discontinuous pole here in the center. If you see that, in terms of the chart that I put up there a minute ago, that the second week we are going to go across the top of the chart, and the third we will do the intensive ones, or the ones that bear the same relation to the whole chart that contemplation does to meditation and prayer. You don't really have to follow all this, but the chart we are going to end up with, I think will be of help. So that next week, we will begin with obedience, which is the same end of the chart as prayer, and then move to poverty, and close that week with chastity, and the third week will follow the same pattern of first here, second over here on the far left and the third in the center. We will work with doing, plus; knowing, plus; and then with being. The diagram I think is helpful here is one that looks like this; that these are the intensities of each of the three that we will be talking about, and will help organize the nine in terms of what we want to do.

Now, only three or four days ago I suppose it was, did I discover that I have known all my life, that I wanted to deliver this lecture. I discovered that all my life I wanted to deliver this lecture. I discovered that all my life I wanted to deliver exactly this lecture. Now, that is really the wrong place to start, because I tell you, I wouldn't trust anybody who said he was eager to talk about prayer. That would be the last person I'd ever listen to. I remember when dear Dora in that RS-I course in Broken Hill (that's New South Wales, Aust.) said she wanted to talk about hospital visiting during the priest conversation, I was frightened to death, until she said, 'I hate hospital visiting. Then my interest really picked up. If she wanted to talk about it with that kind of introduction---- well... so I know that I have got to tell you that I consider myself the last man in the whole world to talk about prayer, because I figure nobody would dare trust anybody that was eager to move into this area.

It is something like this. How does a man who is always, always imagined, and you and I, I take it, don't need any short courses on the power of images; a man who has always imagined that he was very shallow, who always imagined that he came to the first answer, who imagined that his picture and participation of life, was that of being very, very superficial. How do you talk about discovering the category of prayer that life seems to be saying to you that you don't have to be a wall flower any more? That you can join in the dance, that you can be a full human being. That never again do you say to yourself, that this dimension of life is one that you don't participate in. This kind of reflection, when you say it out loud, seems so facile and seems so brittle and seems so automatic, but I mean to point to a matter of life and death. The sort of secret suspicion that there are some people who are really participating in life. That there are some people who feel deeply, who laugh deeply and who hurt deeply; who know and who do and who be deeply. And, you can have the crumbs from that table. Well, I would suggest that if we imagine that it's possible to do praying or to not do praying, and that's sort of one of the options in life, you know; that you can either pray or not pray and still be human, well then, we just ought to... the Lord be with you and we all ought to go home. That either what we are talking about is that which is utterly required, which is utterly human, or what we are talking about is not what prayer is, or what we know prayer to be, let's just get out of this outfit entirely, if prayer is not that without which human you are not.

Now, I want to talk, first of all, about prayer as sheer.... That prayer is action. That prayer is the action underneath action, Prayer is that action which makes action. Or, prayer is that action which makes action into a deed. That it is a happening; it's sheer happening, that's what prayer is. That it is freedom. That prayer is freedom. Now, I know that everybody goes around saying they want to be free; you know, like doubtless you've heard someone suggest that they want to express themselves. Well, you've got to be some kind of a naive romantic or the shrewdest demon available to get that kind of nonsense out. Nobody wants to be free; Maybe there are people who want to express themselves. I get a picture of what it means to want to express yourself. That's like running up and throwing a blob of something and running back, which is sort of an abstract picture of action, but that's not action. Nobody wants to be free. Nobody wants to participate in life in those irreversible processes. Oh my, we humans have always known life was irreversible. Why, we have such - all fantastic myths about deals with the devil, you know. where you make a deal with the devil, I give you this and you give me that. That's a fabulous part of our common history. And the fact always comes out, if you make a deal with the devil... well... you have to be a naive romantic to imagine that people want to be free. Or you have to be going around saying, 'we want to express ourselves', as the kind of lucid demon who knows that will get everybody all upset; a great monkeywrench to throw into things.

It's sort of like...I remember my political education in Texas began with the tidelands issue. Alan Shivers said that the Texas tidelands should belong to the school children. What he meant was, 'the oil companies that I represent figure that they can get more of that oil and pay less for it if they are dealing with the school children rather than the federal government. Well, if you think that people want to be free, you belong in either of those folds, the naive romantic or the demon that some governors are.

Now, this means that confronted with our freedom, it's just nausea. I mean, once you grasp that you are about to put all of this sort of hard-to-replace protoplasm out in such a way that you can't really take those steps back, oh, I mean it's possible to walk backwards, but that's walking backwards, that's not taking the steps you took forward, back at all. Prayer is literally creating something out of nothing. What you are doing is bringing into being, happening that otherwise would not be there; that otherwise history is without. Oh, the church is great on this. My favorite example for that is the wedding service. Oh, the church tries to make it clear that something's happening there, only about nine thousand ways. My favorite one is about having that poor, innocent, naive, green, young female come down the aisle. You know, like one foot after another she has to move from that end to the other end of the church. And so, afterwards when they say something has happened here (which being translated-I pronounce you man and wife), that she is aware that she moved, that she has pushed into that situation. That's what prayer is. It is always happening. And what has happened in that situation, which what otherwise would be walking from the back pew to the front pew, that some entirely new thing has happened in history. Irreversible! What ever happens to that family, some new thing has happened. Bringing to be what never was before, is prayer.

Secondly, prayer is deep resolve. It is confronting; it is being present to; it is choosing to remain present to the Mystery which always reveals itself as unrevealedness. Resolve. Deep resolve. That the league is only manifest in prayer. The only time you ever see the league is when it is marching. The only time that the league is manifest is when there is a happening. And that kind of happening, the choosing that there be a happening-that you and I don't have the guts to create anything except on the shoulders of the league, so that we, any man who sees himself as the league, sees himself as carrying on a work, of building on that which has been. That prayer is radical tactic, and that means that there is a chart on the wall. That is what prayer is, a chart on the wall. You put a chart on the wall, and something starts happening. People begin to start thinking that that's really the way it is. Or that, sometimes in morning office we get lots of prayers like, 'oh gee whizz, isn't that bad for those people over in Africa. I'll pray for all the Africans who are hungry this morning. Well, unless you have a tactic to go with that... Well, I just think that the kind of suspicion that we have relative to each other in the area of prayer is very, very solubrious to the whole exercise. That I want to see what kind of plans you have relative to all those poor starving Africans.

What does it mean when you and I go around with some kind of failure mentality? Like, well it seems a little unfair to talk about recruitment any more than is necessary to talk about it, but you know how it is possible to talk there... where you say, 'well we had twenty percent fewer courses fail this quarter than last, and that compares with eighteen percent that we didn't hold the quarter before last', and all that kind of stuff. Well, the man of prayer wins. There is no adequate substitute for winning. St. Thomas Aquinas even said that the church had to have a way, had to understand that it had to give permission to some revolutions against some governments. And then, of course, Aquinas was systematic. He had a set of criteria, or how the church might go about giving permission for some revolutions.

One of those criteria was that the revolution was going to succeed.

Well, you and I know what it is like sitting around beating ourselves over the head, talking about how we've been trying. How in the world did it get to be so powerful in our vocabulary and in the kind of myths we tell ourselves? You don't have to succeed, do you? All you have to do is try. Well, not for a man of prayer. The man of prayer understands that what he prays for is answered. I think that trial by fire comes out of this great deep human understanding about reality. If your prayer life is adequate, you can walk across those coals. Get Started!

The measure of your prayer life is whether you are winning, and therefore, whether you've decided to win. Ah, yes, there's a whole separate rug. Whether you've decided to stay up all night putting flesh and blood on your decision to win. I remember the first time I said to my...you know how cynicism sometimes does illuminate areas. I remember the first time I said this it was cynical. I have not said it cynically one time since. But before Robert Kennedy was sort of canonized, back in the days when he was still sort of a nasty guy; you know, the guy who really wanted to be in charge of the F.B.I.; that other guy's younger brother, period. I remember saying one time, cynically, 'well, in the past we have been able to say "what would Jesus do", I find it more helpful to say, "what would Robert Kennedy do"?'. I was never able to say that cynically again. The minute that got out of my mouth it came back and fell all over me. Do you understand that that man doesn't say---'Well we have four bus loads and there are only three buses, Send the other twenty-five percent home.' That man doesn't say 'you can't get there from here in that length of time.' That man doesn't say 'Well all the old men are on the other side in this situation.' Do you have any question but that Robert Kennedy would just not go to bed until the problem was solved? I'm sorry I was ever cynical. I've never gotten over that. I take it that that is what you mean by prayer as radical tactic. That you build a model that shows you what the timely act is. What the timely act is.

Finally, prayer is mortal combat. By mortal combat, I mean that with prayer you decide to tackle being. You decide that over against all reasons for being hesitant, over against all the safety that is possible, all the possibilities of... well, you know how it is, how you talk to yourself about your academic life in college. About how really bright you are, but you just didn't quite get started. Well, you can go on doing that for the rest of your life, you know. I just never did get started. I didn't have the right methods. Well, I would suggest that prayer is mortal combat, in the sense that it is the decision to radically tackle being. You can not be a patriarch in the Old Testament unless you've fought with God. It's simply a requirement. If you haven't fought with God, you are not a patriarch. It's as simple as that. You remember Jacob? It was dark, and he was all alone. That's what it means to tackle being. To not even know where the enemy is all the time; to fight him in the dark, and alone. Alone. Alone. Alone.

Relative to your marriage you don't even know what the issues are. Relative to your marriage, you don't know whether this is a hill you have to take because the rest of the battle depends on, or whether this is not even concerned with the issue. But deciding to tackle your marriage is a part of what it means to wrestle with being. And any man who chooses to avoid that battle has chosen to remain in hell. And women. And wrestling with God is serious. My own translation of the Jacob battle is that it ended when God kicked him in the groin. I've always understood that story since I've decided that.

That is to say, it is a real battle, and it's for the whole show---for everything. For everything. Now, one of the difficulties of deciding to wrestle

with God, one of the strange dimensions of that dynamic is that God always wins. God has never lost one time. Not even once. There are rows upon rows of all the soldiers who fought with God, and they're all lying, rotting in their graves. And He put them there. God always wins. God wins every time. Yet the man of prayer knows that what it means to be human is to decide to wrestle with being. And the fantastic thing is that sometimes it appears like you've won. And that is when God has decided to let you win, for a little while. And what's kind of unnerving,... well it is kind of unnerving. I mean, if Rommel was on the other side of the hill over there, and you discovered that he just let you win a little battle, wouldn't you be a little worried?

You know, it's like with move 222. Oh Lord, that was impossible. You just imagine. Why, there were so many of us loyally turning cranks and saying, 'this damn thing isn't going to work at all'. There were so many of us cranking cranks like that, it was a sin. And the fantastic thing was, God let us win 222. We took in over more than a quarter of a million dollars. I can barely even get all that out. And you see the problem, don't you? That means that we are able to get all our troops out on the plain now. That means we can have the Local---the Local Church. Right, right. Or like, He permits a good guy to marry an irresistible religious. That's what I call my wife when I can think of a nice name for her. That's just not the kind of pairs that go together....good guys and irresistible religiouses. But, oh I don't know, I'll whisper it, and let the news be passed along. We've only been married eight year, and we had an anniversary last year, and we were separated for four weeks before and four weeks afterwards. That was connected with some of my colleagues plans. And we were together for about thirty hours on what happened to be our eighth anniversary. And neither one of us pushed the abort button, for thirty hours. And to resist pressing that button when you know it's four weeks before and four weeks afterwards that you're separated, and that those thirty hours have to come off...

We are winning, but that means you've given back the spirit movement, and the local church, again. And so, even when God lets you win, every prayer leaves being different. It's impossible to change going. Impossible! But it leaves it different.

Also, in terms of prayer being mortal combat, it is in Jesus' name. Every prayer is in Jesus' name. That is, you and I stand on that strange historical reality. And every prayer that has been offered, every prayer that's ever uttered was in Jesus' name. That is, was up against all that is; was up against being. That's how you talk about prayer in a fox hole as being authentic. If it is in Jesus' name; if it is in the name of that final reality, and if it is in the name of the final reality; if, in that foxhole you are up against all that is, then that is an authentic prayer. You and I know what an inauthentic prayer is. That's one that's offered in the name of my personal security. You know, I gotta have this because.... and then you fill in the blank with whatever particular crisis in your own personal security is going on. Oh, you must have uttered a lot of those prayers. I remember when I was eight years old and my parents were gone, and a friend of mine and I decided to try out the boxing gloves and we decided that the best ring was in the living room because there was a nice soft rug in there. And you can't imagine the prayers that were going on in terms of my own personal security relative to having that lamp just come back together. When you and I pray, the man of prayer, when he prays, his prayers are in Jesus' name, whether he's heard the name or not.

Well, what does it mean to link the concrete, tactical charts (there's more content to that phrase now, isn't there?) to spiritual reality. Because if they're not, and Boyd tells me that the paper that they are printed on is probably less than twenty-five dollars, but they are not even worth that, if they are not

a part of spiritual reality. That they have to be the warp, and the spiritual reality, the woof, or vice versa. Who is to say whether it is the tactics that are the straight lines, and the spirit, the woven ones, or whether it is the spirit reality that's the straight lines, and that the tactics are just woven on that reality. Who's to say which is first. I would suggest to you that it's not possible to say which is first, and if I had to choose, I would suggest that it is the spirit reality. So what we are about is, ...how is it that the Local Congregation may be enabled to be for humanness. How is it possible to answer that man in Washington, D.C. who has been prepared from the beginning of time to be a churchman, and who is already waiting, saying 'what is it you want to happen to this room full of people?'; and who is a man of prayer because he makes things move; and is a man of responsibility because he knows what it means to assume responsibility for that moving; and is a man who is suffering because he hurts relative to Washington, D.C. That man is already there. You don't have to go out and invent the church.