

Making an Altar of One's Work: Thoughts from Venerable Tomás Morales on Labor Day. By: John M. Grondelski

Work is a prominent theme in the writings of [Jesuit Father Tomás Morales](#) (1908-1994), who lived and worked in Venezuela and Spain. The Vatican confirmed the Servant of God's heroic virtues by decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints Nov. 9, 2017.

Work is a prominent theme in Father Morales' writings. Like his better-known but slightly older contemporary, St. Josemaría Escrivá, the founder of Opus Dei, both emphasize the importance of work in the life of the contemporary Christian. Both priests developed a theology and spirituality of work; after all, work is one of the main places where most Christians work out their salvation.

"Holiness is divinized daily life, disappearing into Nazareth": Anticipating Vatican II and, in keeping with the best insights of Catholic theology, Father Morales insists that sanctity is not the preserve of some but the vocation of all. But his emphasis on "disappearing into Nazareth" reminds us that, for most of his life, Jesus' work was work: the labors of a carpenter's son. "Work, in the hands of Jesus — work similar to what millions of others around the world do — is changed into something divine, a redemptive labor," the priest wrote.

While we are sometimes tempted toward a certain schizophrenia that reduces work to an economic necessity, something that has to be done to put money in the bank, Father Morales wants us to avoid that thinking. Being Christian is a full-time, 24/7 job. The Christian lives that life in church on Sunday and in the workplace Monday through Friday. Getting that clear in our heads is what Father Morales (and the Church) wants to stress.

"Work is a means of bringing you closer to God, not an obstacle that impedes your access to Him," the Jesuit emphasized. Work is an opportunity to exercise virtue: responsibility, honesty, a desire to do one's best, etc. And, because work provides the occasion to practice those virtues, it does not just *make things* — products — but it *makes people*.

“The supreme reward of work is not what it allows you to gain but what it lets you to become,” the priest explained.

St. John Paul II reminded us of that dimension of doing in his great book, *The Person and Act*. Yes, acts get things done in the world: Because of what we do, things happen, and products are made. But our acts also do things in us. This “self-reflective” aspect of doing means that what we do expresses who we are, which is why conscience enters the picture — and why what we do involves rights of conscience. It’s not enough to say, “I’m only making a cake” or “I’m only following orders,” when what I do expresses, or contradicts, my deepest convictions or the most basic moral values. “Our times have lost a sense of the sacred dignity of work,” wrote Father Morales.

St. John Paul II reminded us of that sacred dignity in *Laborem Exercens*, his 1981 encyclical on work. In it, he reiterated a central principle of Catholic social thought: the priority of labor over capital. Money is a thing that exists for persons; persons do not exist for things. Yes, labor costs. But the working man is not just “another cost factor,” like steel, aluminum, nails or transport costs.

The Pope is not saying not to reckon with costs, but the recent history of American labor also shows us the “costs” we all bear when whole towns, cities and even regions are abandoned because a *laissez-faire* approach to work treats workers like nails. Even abandoned “nails” still need to eat.

“The Christian’s role is to proclaim that the purpose of work is not principally money but the exercise of virtue,” said Father Morales. That proclamation applies both to him who makes his money by labor as well as he who makes his money because of labor: Each one’s work entails not just economic but also moral values.

That said, Father Morales expected the Christian to demonstrate that dignity in his work. “Every Christian should make an altar of his work, on which he sacrifices himself in and with Christ.”

“What counts is to work well, to work while keeping one’s sight fixed on God, who has given man the honor of collaborating with Him in the perfection of the world,” he said.

“Do you want to remain faithful to your vocation? Then keep straight the furrows you plough each day, opening them by responsible work.”

Like St. Thérèse of Lisieux (who influenced Father Morales’ thought), doing one’s best work — even if it’s sweeping the floor — is an act of love of God.

But Father Morales did not want people to think of work as just a yoke or a burden. Happiness and joy are key points in his spirituality. (It’s not by accident that most of his pictures show a broad smile.) “Responsibility at work floods one with creative joy” — no surprise, since work is co-creation with God, and, in Genesis, God smiled at every day as “good.”

“Work with happiness. Show everybody that, if done with love, work is not a burden but a rest, not a chain but freedom, not a right but a duty,” he wrote.

“To work with love and out of love is to be fulfilled.”

[Wisdom 9:13-18b, Psalm 90; Philemon 9-10, 12-17; Luke 14:25-33]

Do you have what it takes to be a disciple? Don't panic: You don't have to "hate" your family. Remember: the word "hate" which Jesus uses in the context of this Gospel translates as "to love less." First priority, requiring our greatest love and attention: God. How do we get to God? Through His Son, Jesus Christ. By making time and giving the effort to get to know Him, fall in love with Him and serve Him.

Second priority: your relationships. Love them less than you love God.

Frankly, it's awkward no matter when we read this teaching. I mean, how many of us really hate our families? Sure, certain family members get on our nerves once in a while. We have falling-outs from time to time for all sorts of reasons: political or religious differences, lifestyle choices, insensitive remarks made in the heat of an argument, as well as real injuries suffered at the hands of those who can hurt us deeply because we love and trust them the most.

But even when a spouse, parent, child, or other relative disappoints us terribly, the majority of the time we still don't find it in our hearts to hate them. Something in us still yearns to be reconciled and reconnected. There is no peace until the mending of bridges starts and the healing has a chance to begin. Even if it isn't possible to receive that person back into our lives again, we know we need the balm of divine forgiveness to close the wound that remains between them and us. Because, at the end of the day, no matter what that other person did or failed to do, we're still family, and that is the strongest bond in the world.

Third priority: your material and financial possessions. That means being ready to "renounce" your possessions. In classic spiritual language, it is called "detachment." You put your material possessions in proper priority.

Fourth priority: you! It's been said that we find out who we are, we learn what we are called to be, and we discover that in taking care of ourselves, in reaching out to our families and to those in need, and putting all of our financial and material possessions at the service of the Lord, we learn that God is there the whole time. Love God, love others, and love yourself.

Jesus is up against tribe-and-clan mentality, people who put blood ties ahead of any and every concern. Love, and avenge your people, and regard warily everyone else. Two thousand years later, this translates into a different language, but with the same bigotry and racism: You don't want to marry HIM; he's Italian. You don't want to date her, she's Polish. This one is for Jewish people: You're bringing home a goim, a shiksa? (a non-Jewish person).

How can you be a Republican? How can you be a Democrat? You know what they say about Muslims... What do you mean your fiancé is not Catholic?

Brothers and sisters in Christ do not have the luxury of defining their loyalties so narrowly. So, of course, love everyone as a Son or Daughter of God, or as a Brother or Sister in Christ. Consider it your starting point for the love of all people to follow. Doing all of this just might be the Holy Cross that God is challenging us to pick up and to carry with His Beloved Son.

Perhaps we might even have to die on that Holy Cross as He did. But we know that this is not the end of the story.

Jesus does not teach hate and self-loathing. Jesus is commanding us to put ourselves and our relationships all at the disposal of the will of God. What does that mean? It means: how can I bring my family members and other relationships closer to God? How do I myself draw closer to God and to God's will for me and for my family?

That is a good starting point. Every morning, when we first awake, ask ourselves while standing, sitting or kneeling in prayer, "Lord, here I am. What is it You want me to do to be closer to you? What do you want me to do and to say to bring my loved ones closer to you?" Being a disciple of Jesus is no small or easy task. It will take standing apart from family ties. It will mean denying your very self. It will mean rejecting materialism. It may mean being rejected by others. Prioritize. Persevere. Follow Him.

A reporter was interviewing the winner of a local triathlon in which contestants do a 1.5-kilometer swim, a 40K bike race, and then run a full 10K to the finish line. The winner was bent over, hands on his knees, panting, just moments after his thrilling finish when the reporter asked, "What does it take to

win a triathlon?" He looked up, sweat pouring from his face, and said, "Everything."

Jesus was making the same point about finding our way to heaven. Half measures won't work when it comes to entering into the kingdom of God. It will take everything we have -- and then some. Thankfully, once we have given all we've got, God is more than happy to supply the "and then some."

None of us serve as God's counsel, yet through wisdom, witness, and the teachings of God's own Son, divine plans are revealed to us.

Your questions for this week to reflect upon:

When have you felt the most unsure of the next best step? Have you ever felt confident that God's wisdom set your path straight?

Who are the modern-day Pauls in your life -- disciples that through example and some urging help you to do the right thing?

What relationships -- to people or things -- prevent you from putting Christ first? How could you shore up the foundation of your faith?

September 8 is traditionally observed as the Birthday of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. On the cross, Jesus entrusted His Blessed Mother to us, making us all family, all related, all sons and daughters of God. May she intercede for us. Happy Birthday, Mary! AMEN!

[Readings: Exodus 32:7-14, Psalm 51; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 5:1-32]

Imagine that you're on a foreign country, ready to return home. You arrive at the airport and reach into your bag for your passport, knowing that you'll need it to exit the country. It's not there. You look in another pocket; also not there. You panic, looking through every pocket of your bag. Finally, you remember that you put your passport in your coat, finding it just in time before the plane leaves.

When we lose something important, we begin to search for it with urgency. In the end, a passport is just a passport, replaceable through a complicated visit to an embassy. But what parent has not experienced overwhelming urgency when they can't find their child in a crowd? What goes through the child's mind when their parents are out of view? No matter how young we are or how old we are, even if we don't admit it out loud, we cry out inside for our parents, the "grown-ups" to protect us. There are so many reports that when a military person suffers a fatal injury, they cry out for the mom or dad.

We see the themes of being lost and urgency in all three Readings today. And on this Catechetical Sunday, we apply it to our own journeys of faith.

The Scriptures describe a God who responds urgently in response to potential losses. In our First Reading, God has entered a covenant with Israel, choosing them among all the nations. This God led Israel through the sea dry-shod, saving them from slavery at the hands of the Egyptians.

And yet, Israel is lost. While Moses is receiving the Law from God, they have worshipped a golden calf. They have turned away from the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

God suggests to Moses that God can start again with just him. Get rid of this people, this stiff-necked nation. Have you ever felt rejected by God? Why?

But Moses intervenes, reminding God that such losses are not acceptable. For the people who would be left behind are not just any nation, but the one chosen by God. How could God abandon his beloved?

Moses recognizes something that Israel doesn't yet. They are God's beloved, chosen from the beginning. God doesn't want to lose them, and will respond with urgency.

Much of the Old Testament deals with this urgent response of a God who loves, even when it hurts. ***The first lesson we learn today is to believe that you are never alone, and even more, that you are truly loved by God.*** And by His people, the Church.

Jesus' three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son take up this Old Testament narrative, expanding it to all the nations. The Pharisees are grumbling. Jesus dines with sinners. He meets with tax collectors. What could He be doing? Do YOU feel worthy to dine with Jesus at His altar table?

But God's urgency is different than our own. Happily, for our sake, God is not enacting vendettas against ungrateful men and women and children.

God searches. God seeks. God invites men and women and teens and children back into the covenant, the new covenant of love unto the end.

In our Second Reading, St. Paul uses the experiences of his own life to persuade others to a more faithful life in Christ. He didn't start out right. He started out arresting, jailing, bullying, persecuting and even killing those former Jews who were beginning to follow a new "Way." The Way of Christianity.

Hiding nothing, St. Paul freely admits his past, and expresses his gratitude that God chose HIM of ALL people to become one of His second-generation apostles. The lesson to learn here is that even in those circumstances in our lives that can have us hiding in shame, we can find God's grace at work. And from this insight comes a great truth: Jesus came to save people like St. Paul, people like us. Sinners can be so mired in the muck of their lives that they are hopelessly stuck and need a Savior to extract them from the mess of their own making. You and I need that Savior as much as St. Paul did. You and I are the lost people. The lost sheep. The lost coin. The Prodigal Child. ***I invite you to pray, to give to God, give to Jesus, the biggest mess, the worst pile of trash, everything that is broken in you right now.*** Jesus works best with this kind of material when He puts it all back together, and makes something beautiful out of it all!

St. Paul is saying, "Look at the shameful, immoral and sinful things I did. Yet God chose ME to bring His Good News to the nations. If God could show mercy to one like ME, why would you even question that He could be merciful to YOU?" Sometimes we even need to forgive not only ourselves, but God Himself. Terrible things happen in our human lives, and that is part of being human. But we unfortunately and unfairly blame God, spending years with unforgiveness in our hearts. As with any anger or

resentment, if we carry it around with us long enough, it only eats us up inside, even leading to heart attacks. It drags us down and destroys our peace of mind. We have to learn to be patient with God as God is patient with us.

We learn here that our God meets us where we are. God loves us where we are, but doesn't want us to stay there. God does not expect perfection, before we are lavished with God's generous forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Archdiocese of Detroit has developed a learning curriculum to be used by every parish in the Archdiocese, by every school, and by every parish faith formation program. It goes from 1st grade to Junior High and Confirmation preparation. We're going to look at it and blend it in with what we already have.

The proposed process is a simple one, but it may take a lifetime:

Encounter Christ, Grow in Christ, Witness to Christ.

This is Catechetical Sunday. We will be commissioning our catechists, and blessing our students' parents, who are called to be the first and best teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Here at the 5:00 PM Vigil Mass, we are enrolling our Confirmation candidates for this year's formation.

The call to repentance is not that we are to be perfect and sinless before God can love us. It is the realization that we are precious in God's eyes right now. We also realize that all are offered God's forgiveness, but that not all embrace it. You and I can choose to come home, or to stay in the far country. You simply have to say "Yes" to the God Who has found you, Who has brought you home and Who, through this Eucharist, gives us all new life. AMEN!

[Readings: Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-8; Luke 16:1-13]

There's an old story that you may know about a young man in Montana who bought a horse from a farmer for \$100. The farmer agreed to deliver the horse the next day. However, when the next day arrived, the farmer reneged on his promise. "I'm afraid the horse has died," he explained. The young man said, "Well, then give me my money back." The farmer said, "Can't do that. I spent it already." The young man thought for a moment and said, "Ok, then, just bring me the dead horse." The farmer asked, "What you going to do with a dead horse?" The young man said, "I'm going to raffle it off." The farmer said, "You can't raffle off a dead horse!" The young man said, "Sure I can. Watch me. I just won't tell anybody he's dead."

A month later, the farmer met up with the young man and asked, "What happened with that dead horse?" The young man said, "I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two dollars apiece and made a profit of \$998." The farmer asked, "Didn't anyone complain?" The young man said, "Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two dollars back." There's an enterprising man!

We might even call him something of a con man. There's something about a con man that captures the imagination. A favorite film of mine is called "The Flim-Flam Man" starring George C. Scott. Indeed, Amos says the same thing about his world 2,900 years ago. He judges the political and religious leaders of his day and warns of the collapse of the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of inward corruption and outward military attack. He condemns them for enjoying a wealthy and comfortable life at the expense of the general public and for the neglect and abuse of the poor.

Jesus tells a parable today about a man with that kind of wily disposition. He, too, was something of a con man. This guy's ethics were certainly out of whack, but his sense of survival was kicking in at full speed. He used his privileged position to buy himself some friends so that he would have somewhere to turn when he was out of a job. He was taking a risk, of course the risk that his boss would have him thrown in jail. That's what could have happened. But the amount he cut off on the debtor's bills was HIS commission, not his boss's!

Jesus thinks outside the box. Listen to how Jesus ended this little tale: "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world," said Jesus, "are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than

are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” Did we hear right?

In most of Jesus’ parables, the manager represents God. What does this mean? Does God like con men? That would be outrageous. We glamorize con men, but the truth is they take advantage of weak and unsuspecting people. I suspect God despises the attitudes and actions of con men and con women. Jesus wants us to stretch our minds and our spirits. This is how we grow.

There are some possible reasons why the master commended the dishonest manager in Jesus’ story. There are at least three points. *Jesus likes people of action, people who are **trustworthy**, and people who **serve**.*

There are times that call for immediate action. God wants us to pray when we are in a difficult situation, but God also wants us to act. Pick up the phone. Enlist the help of family or a friend. Learn some new skills. Don’t sit there passively and expect someone else to rescue you.

We have a phrase that’s not heard much anymore. Have you ever heard someone say, “He worked like the dickens”? The “dickens” is not a reference to Charles Dickens. It is another name for Satan. In fact, you may hear someone say, “He worked like the devil to get it done.” Some even say that they work like hell, the place where Satan lives. The implication is that the devil is always busy seeking to achieve his wicked ends. He never misses an opportunity to tempt, to discourage, to embitter. I guarantee you that if you hit a rough patch in the road, and you sit around feeling sorry for yourself, the tempter will move in quickly and work like the dickens to cause you to quit trying.

Jesus says that we Christians don’t have that same tenacity toward the things of God. The devil works harder than you and I do to get the job done!

Jesus says, use worldly wealth to gain earthly friends so that in eternal dwellings you’ll find a heavenly home. What does this mean? It means that if we can be trusted with things of this world, then we can be trusted with things of eternity. We are not to increase our standard of *living*; we are to increase our standard of *giving*. Why?

We come to our second point, trustworthiness. When all our money is gone, when we have left our possessions to others, how we have used our resources HERE will determine our welcome up THERE. Do you know that one of the wisest things you can do with your money is give it away? I’ll be happy to take your money now for St. Martin de Porres Parish.

Why? Because, and this may sound a bit strange, Jesus says that gaining friends through generous gifts means you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. In a word, if you give HERE you'll be welcomed THERE.

Let me be clear – we do NOT buy our way into Heaven. We can get there if we have hearts full of gratitude that leads to a very generous response of stewardship.

When I was an associate pastor in Marine City, the parish school principal had this slogan above front blackboard of every classroom: "If it is to be, it is up to me."

Billy Graham said it all: "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost."

And that is why, third, we must be people of service. You will hear in today's announcements and you will read in today's bulletin the many ways you can come forward to minister, to serve, to fill the many holes that are open.

This week's reflection questions: In what ways do you feel exploited -- as a citizen, a consumer, a member of the Church? Is there any group you have exploited or feel tempted to exploit?

Have you ever used trickery to bring someone to do God's work? Have you ever been tricked into being a better person? Did you feel the ends justified the means? In what ways can you be more clever about your faith and serving God and the poor? Who's the cleverest living Christian you know? What lessons can you learn from them?

In today's Gospel, Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem, to His betrayal and death. Throughout His ministry, Jesus has "squandered" the riches of God's mercy and forgiveness on tax collectors, prostitutes, sinners and us. He takes everyone's bills and erases our debt to God trusting that the Father will indeed be generous and giving and will forgive us. Jesus has "fixed the books" and nailed our debt to His Holy Cross. Action. Trustworthiness. Service. These are the true riches and what it means to be a good steward! May we go and do the same. "If it is to be, it is up to me!" AMEN!

[Readings: Amos 6:1a. 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6:11-16; Luke 16:19-31]

One comic strip that I am particularly fond of is Garfield the Cat. There is a great humor in those sarcastic witticisms of his. I like his take on depression. It is a four-panel cartoon, which only has him resting on his arms, looking out to the viewer. In the first panel, he sighs and says, "I'm down." Second panel: "I'm really down." Third panel, "Down, down, down." Fourth panel: "Down doobie-doo down down..." (from the song "*Breaking Up is Hard to Do*").

One of the comic strips points to our Gospel today. One cold winter night, Garfield is sitting on the living room couch, looking out the window. He sees Odie the Dog peering through the window, nose pressed against the glass, scratching to get in. Garfield thinks to himself: "This is horrible. Here I am in the comfort of a warm house, well fed, and there is Odie outside begging to get in, cold and hungry. I can't stand it anymore. I just can't stand it. I've got to do something." So he goes over to the window... and closes the curtains!

Rather than dealing with the needy, some of us have simply chosen to close the curtains. All of the rich people in today's readings lose their futures not through their riches, but by the lack of concern for others less fortunate, which ultimately results in lack of concern for their own eternal fate. Where can YOU be more attentive to others, especially those most in need now, before it's too late?

"Charity begins at home," the saying goes. That's also where it ends, for folks who draw the circle of responsibility with a short radius. Some of us terminate our focus of concern on only our own. Others may extend it briefly to include elder relatives, close personal friends, or grandchildren who are in financial need. For those with a cultivated sense of community, generosity might be extended through the neighborhood, parish, village, or tribe. We reach out very generously here at St. Martin's to the poor. Thank you all for that. And for being an example to others of generous stewardship. We are not all lost!

In this regard, the rich man at his sumptuous dinner didn't owe poor Lazarus a thing. By Jewish law, it was Lazarus' own relatives who should have been seeing to the needs of this misfortunate fellow.

Lazarus was like that homeless person rattling his Styrofoam cup at us for our spare change as we pass them by or are waiting at a red light. Weren't there agencies

to which he could appeal? Or that bloated little girl in the magazine and TV photos: Her own government should do better by her, not ours.

Those refugees streaming across Africa or across our own southern border may well be victims of bad politics, warfare, economic mismanagement, or bigotry. Maybe all of the above. But how does any of that imply that their dire plight is OURS to solve? Most of us like to find ways like these to wash our hands of the suffering that lies beyond our realm of perceived responsibility.

The rich man in the story is no different. The rich man knew Lazarus by name, which makes his sin even greater as he chose to walk by him, walk over him, and ignore him as he went back and forth from home. We don't even know the name of the rich man. But we do know that his sin was complacency.

The blindness of the rich man is egregious according to the law of Israel. Almsgiving is not an optional practice for the faithful. It is a commandment.

The God who has given the world as a gift, who gave the Law as gift, who gave the land as gift, wants Israel to give gifts to the hungry, the thirsty, the lonely, the widow and the orphan. The rich man's complacency is not merely against Lazarus. It is against God, against the Law written by the hand of the Lord. The rich man didn't even have to go far to carry out his duty. Lazarus was just outside his gate. And yet the rich man is like those whom Amos castigates, "the complacent in Zion" who dine inclined upon their ivory couches, all the while enjoying pleasant music (Am 6:1). He is arrogant in life, but even more so in death as he dares to order around both Father Abraham AND Lazarus in the next world! What cheek! All too soon, the rich man will learn to his dismay that Father Abraham is the father of Lazarus as well.

The last words of Abraham in the Gospel are chilling. Jesus's parables ask us to take sides. And we tend to take the side of the good guy. We find ourselves in judgment of the rich man, almost hoping that he gets what he deserves. But then the parable turns on us. We have encountered One risen from the dead, Who preached to us a kingdom of the poor.

We have been told by the apostles, echoing His words, to share all things in common, to join in prayer. And yet, are we not the ones who are complacent? Have we not listened to the voice of Jesus?

The Church is made up of those who have been convoked by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are those who strive not for a pleasant life of relative calm – wouldn't THAT be wonderful! -- but we strive for salvation. And the work is very hard indeed!

For us Christians, complacency is the road to hell. It is the hell of contempt for the poor. It is the hellacious contempt toward God.

Unlike the rich man, there's still time for us to stop being complacent.

Start by looking outside your gate to discover there the Lazarus waiting for a morsel of food, a kind word, a love that unites rather than isolates.

How far is our love and compassion obliged to go? More to the point: How far is our obligation to *do something* about human suffering expected to go?

St. Paul writes to Timothy: pursue righteousness, patience and gentleness. Not only with the folks we know, but with the folks we don't know.

Pray: "Lord, let me see them through YOUR eyes, as You see them."

Jesus takes down our walls of bias brick by brick with teachings about loving enemies, blessing those who curse us, returning good for evil, and forgiveness for injury. When Jesus forgives His murderers from the cross, there's nowhere to hide from the truth: We can't wash our hands of anyone.

Charity may begin at home, but it can't stay there. Our humanity makes us one. Our humanity gives us dignity. Our humanity gives us the right to a voice. Together we seek the common good: closing the great chasm between Lazarus and us. Here, in this world, while we still have the time to do it before we die.

A Sunday school teacher told his class today's story about the rich man and Lazarus. He pointed out how one man went to Hell and the other man went to Heaven. He also pointed out how rich one man was and how poor the other man was. After the teacher taught his lesson he said to the class, "Now which would you rather be, the rich man or Lazarus?" One clever boy raised his hand and said, "Well, I'd like to be the rich man while I'm alive, and Lazarus when I'm dead!" Whatever decision you make today, when you die, you will live with its consequences for all eternity.

Choose wisely, choose well, and open those curtains. AMEN!