

Children

Object: A scale model car, ship or whatever may be available drawn to scale - and a golf ball

Good morning, boys and girls. I have with me this morning a model car. Many of you might collect cars like this. This is just like your family car except it has been reduced. It is what we call a scale model. That is, if you could blow it up to the size of a real car, every part would be just the size it ought to be. I really wanted to bring with me a scale model of the universe to show our earth in relation to the nearest star. There was just one problem. Let's imagine that this golf ball represents the earth. Now let's say that we reduced the universe to a scale model. How close would we locate the nearest star? Five feet away? Farther than that. Over by that wall? Farther than that. Outside in the hall? Farther still. In fact if we wanted to reduce the earth to the size of a golf ball and make a scale model of the universe that showed the nearest star, we would still have to locate the scale model star 50,000 miles away. The universe is bigger than any of us can imagine. It is beyond our wildest dreams. God's love for each of us is much greater than any of us can imagine as well. God's love extends to every one on Earth. And it doesn't matter who we are. God doesn't play favorites. If we've been in church for seventy years, or if this is the first time we have ever been in church, God loves us just the same. Just as the universe is so big that we can never completely comprehend it, so God's love is so great, we can't comprehend it either.

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When teaching scripture, I always remind readers to look at what comes before and comes after and its placement in the big picture. Our reading today starts at the beginning of chapter 20, but chapters were a later edition, so actually this is part of Jesus' response at the end of chapter 19

One day a rich young ruler came enthusiastically running up to Jesus and asked: "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus answered: Keep the law. "This I have done from my youth up," came the reply. Yet one thing do you lack said Jesus. Go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor. Then come follow me. We are told that the young man walked away sorrowfully, for he had great wealth. Concluded the Master: It will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.

The disciples had been watching the dynamics of this happening and they were quite disturbed. Jewish tradition had always taught that God had especially blessed rich men and that is why he was rich. In their way of thinking, if a wealthy man could not receive salvation, then how could a poor man have any hope? They asked of Jesus: who then can be saved?

It reminds me of the movie Fiddler on the Roof. The poor Jewish milkman who lives in early 1900 Russia sings what he would do "if I were a rich man." His wife reminds him: money is a curse. He immediately shouts up to heaven: curse me God, curse me. Jesus has just turned away a wealthy man, and in the Jewish way of thinking it doesn't make any sense. In fact, I am not sure how many preachers would have the courage to do it.

But it was Simon Peter who drew the question even more clearly into focus for us. He asked what is on the mind of every one of us, only we are too sophisticated to ask it and too self-righteous to admit that we even think it. Peter didn't have any problem with that. He simply laid his cards out on the table. He said, "Lord, we have given up everything, riches and all, to follow you." What then shall we have?" In others words, what's in this for us Lord. How do we stand to profit? Where's the payoff?

In response to Peter's question, Jesus told a story. It was the harvest time of the year. At 7 A. M. a wealthy landowner went to the Town Square to hire laborers. Then, about noon, he came back into town and hired still others. Toward the end of the day there was still a need for more men. Perhaps this was a harvest of grapes that had to be brought in before the rains began. So, at 5 P.M. the landowner went back into town and hired more laborers.

At sunset all of the men lined up to be paid. When they got their envelopes, lo and behold, all of them had been paid the same amount. The men who had worked eleven hours had been paid the same as the men who had worked one hour. This enraged the all day workers. But the landowner replied, "Do you begrudge me my generosity?" Am I not allowed to do what I please with what belongs to me?

This parable of Jesus must have fallen like a big thud upon the ears of its listeners. Here Simon Peter had asked Jesus a serious question and in reply he gets a story that on the surface sounds quite ludicrous. A landowner that pays equal wages for men who do not work equal hours. Why, that's not the American way. That runs counter to our whole system of justice and fair play. Who would work all day if you could simply wait till the last hour and then collect a day's pay? The fact is that deep within us we have a kind of sympathy for those grumbling laborers. The story that Jesus told turns our whole economic system upside down.

Simon must have been particularly offended by the story because it is obvious who he identifies with. He sees himself as that laborer who was chosen early in the morning and worked all day. He doesn't comprehend why these Johnny-Come-Latelys should have preferential treatment. Now, don't get Simon Peter wrong. He is not opposed to favors being dispensed. He simply believes that if anyone should receive them it should be those who worked in the fields all day people just like himself.

I

By telling this story Jesus is informing Simon Peter that he will get no more reward from discipleship than anyone else. The person who comes late is just as important as the one who comes early.

A large prosperous downtown London church had three mission churches under its care that it had started. On the first Sunday of the New Year all the members of the mission churches came to the city church for a combined Communion service. In those mission churches, which were located in the slums of the city, were some outstanding cases of conversions thieves, burglars, and so on but all knelt side by side at the Communion rail.

On one such occasion the pastor saw a former burglar kneeling beside a judge of the Supreme Court of England the judge who had sent him to jail where he had served seven years. After his

release this burglar had been converted and became a Christian worker. Yet, as they knelt there, the judge and the former convict neither one seemed to be aware of the other.

After the service, the judge was walking home with the pastor and said to the pastor, "Did you notice who was kneeling beside me at the Communion rail this morning?"

The pastor replied, "Yes, but I didn't know that you noticed." The two walked along in silence for a few more moments, and then the judge said, "What a miracle of grace." The pastor nodded in agreement. "Yes, what marvelous miracle of grace." Then the judge said "But to whom do you refer?" And the pastor said, "Why, to the conversion of that convict." The judge said, "But I was not referring to him. I was thinking of myself." The pastor, surprised, replied: "You were thinking of yourself? I don't understand." "Yes," the judge replied, "it did not cost that burglar much to get converted when he came out of jail. He had nothing but a history of crime behind him, and when he saw Jesus as his Savior he knew there was salvation and hope and joy for him. And he knew how much he needed that help. But look at me. I was taught from earliest infancy to live as a gentleman; that my word was to be my bond; that I was to say my prayers, go to church, take Communion and so on. I went through Oxford, took my degrees, was called to the bar and eventually became a judge. Pastor, nothing but the grace of God could have caused me to admit that I was a sinner on level with that burglar. It took much more grace to forgive me for all my pride and self-deception, to get me to admit that I was no better in the eyes of God than that convict that I sent to prison.

II

But yet, that just doesn't seem fair. It goes against the business mentality that dominates our lives. We have always been taught: you only get out of something directly in proportion to that which you put in it. Yet, that is not what happened in Jesus' story. In our way of thinking, the laborers who came to the field late got something for nothing. This parable challenges us not to look upon the Kingdom of God, or the church, as a business community. Yet, that is difficult for us to do, because that is our point of reference. What do you think would happen if a person joined the church this morning and immediately after receiving the vows of profession of faith I suggested to the congregation that he or she be nominated as the next chairperson of the Parish Council. What do you think the reaction would be? Well, I think I know what the reaction would be. The laity would protest as loudly as Simon Peter is protesting to Jesus.

You see, we live in a world of tenure and seniority and it goes against our grain when we hear Jesus say, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Certainly this was foreign to the Jewish mentality, for they were God's chosen people. They were the laborers who had been in the field and worked hard all day long.

Of course, their real problem, and in turn our problem, is that we really do not comprehend the nature of God's unmerited grace. We sing songs like "Amazing Grace," but the truth is that we usually are uncomfortable with last minute, death bed conversions. We feel that these persons have gotten the best of both worlds. It doesn't seem fair.

But God's grace is not based upon what is fair, but rather what helps. It wasn't fair that the laborers who worked only an hour receive a full day's wages, but look who they were. All day they had been in the Town Square and no one had chosen them for employment. They were the

rejects. You know, even as a child in grammar school I distantly remember feeling uncomfortable when sides were chosen for teams, because invariably there were a couple of kids who got left out. They were always the last ones to be selected, and you could see the hurt on their faces. The landowner asked of them: Why are you standing idle. Their response: Because no one has hired us. They were the rejects, the bottom of the barrel.

Now go back to the beginning of the parable and reread what the landowner said to those he hired at the beginning of the day. He said, "I will pay you what is right." God's grace isn't based upon fairness; it is based upon what is right and what helps.

III

If there is any special payoff for being selected early to labor in the Lord's field, it is simply the inner satisfaction that we receive from being in God's employ. But we are so much like those all day laborers. Notice how they worded it: we carried the burden in the heat of the day. Isn't that precisely so often how we look upon service in the church: Not a joy, not a privilege but a burden to carry in the heat of the day? Clearly when Simon Peter asked Jesus what they were to receive from the Kingdom, he had in mind something a little more substantial than inner satisfaction.

But we still don't think that the whole thing is fair, and by our standards it certainly isn't. But let me tell you something else that wasn't fair. It really wasn't fair that Jesus, a sinless man, go to the cross for your sins and for mine. Yet, that is precisely what happened. You see, we live in a world of tallies, and accounts, of debts owed and debts paid. We live in a world of boundaries and schedules, spreadsheets and bookkeeping, and of hourly wages.

The Kingdom of God is on another dimension one that turns our world upside down. But that is precisely why Jesus was so free. For when he chose to go to the cross for you and for me he didn't first ask the questions that we would ask: do we deserve it and can we repay it. Because the answer to both questions is no.

The issue is not what is fair. The issue is: How can we bring more into the fields to serve. Why? In the words of Jesus: Because the harvest is great, and the laborers are few.

After serving as a missionary for forty years in Africa, Henry C. Morrison became sick and had to return to America. As the great ocean liner docked in New York Harbor there was a great crowd gathered to welcome home another passenger on that boat. Morrison watched as President Teddy Roosevelt received a grand welcome home party after his African Safari.

Resentment seized Henry Morrison and he turned to God in anger, "I have come back home after all this time and service to the church and there is no one, not even one person here to welcome me home."

Then a still small voice came to Morrison and said, "You're not home yet."

We have a reward coming! We have a reward coming. But not in this world. You see the economics of the kingdom of God are different the economics of the world. Were not home yet.

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Human Resources would not have been happy with that landowner. Sometimes, it seems that Human Resources does not want to come out on the side of generosity. I remember a time that we wanted to pay an employee extra for work on a particular project. We were told that we could not do this unless we re-adjusted that employee's pay scale for all his work.

Back in the times of the Lord, HR did not exist. However, people had a sense of what was just and what was unjust. Day workers were given the daily wage of one denarius. The workday was sunrise to sunset. So, it would seem just that those who worked less than a full day should receive less. But in today's parable, sometimes called the parable of the Laborers in the Marketplace, other times, perhaps much better, referred to as the Parable of the Good Employer, the landowner has pity on those who could not find work throughout the day. They had families they had to feed. It was not their fault that no one hired them. Therefore, he hires them, some of them even a few hours before sunset, and gives them all the same daily wage. He is not being unjust to those hired in the early morning. He is being charitable, merciful, to those hired at the end of the day.

Justice and mercy are compatible when charity is involved. "Are you envious because I am generous," the owner says to those hired at sunrise who protested that they did not receive more. The exact translation of this is "Do you view my actions with an evil, jealous eye?" This occurs in the *Gospel of Matthew* where we also read, "If your eye causes you to sin, then pluck it out." Usually we relegate this phrase to a sexual connotation. Properly applied to the point of today's parable, the Lord is saying, "If you begrudge generosity to the less fortunate, than you cannot be a Christian." If we do not rejoice in the benefits given to others, than we cut ourselves off from the benefits we have received. As Christians, we are obligated to care for the poor. We need to establish governmental and private means to aid those who cannot help themselves. Yes, these agencies must be regulated to eliminate those who abuse them. That is justice. But our main concern must be to care for those who have less. That is mercy. Some people reduce those forced into situations where they have to seek help from others. This is not how a Christian should act. Yes, we should be happy when we realize that poor, sick, or people hurting in any way are being helped, but more than that, much more than that, we should be extending the hand of God to lift others up.

"Are you envious because I am generous?" Envy and jealousy are horrible. The jealous person looks for ways to destroy another person's life. The jealous person usually ends up destroying his own life. Or her own life. The jealous person does not appreciate his own gifts. He can only see the gifts that others have. He hates them for their gifts. And his hatred destroys him. Everybody is different. No two people are the same. We do not have the right to compare or contrast others to ourselves.

This parable should also be applied to our view of our relationship to God. God loves the person who is faithful throughout the day. He loves cradle Catholics who practice their faith throughout their lives. He also loves those who come to him during the day and even in the evening. Many people respond to God's mercy at the end of their lives. God loves them for taking a huge step away from their former lives and for falling into the arms of His Mercy. Literature presents Don Juan who refuse to reject his immoral lifestyle and would rather suffer hell than entrust himself to God. It is a tremendous step of humility to turn from a sinful life and turn to the Lord. God loves those who take this step, even though they join St. Augustine in mourning, "Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient ever new. Late have I loved you." What matters is that they are with him now. God loves cradle Catholics, and he loves converts. He loves those who practice their faith throughout their lives, and he loves those who return to the faith. We rejoice in those who join the faith or return to the faith. We don't consider ourselves superior to them because we are not superior to them.

At the end of the gospel reading we come upon the phrase, "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." We cannot impose our ways on the Lord. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord." That is from our first reading. We cannot tell God how to be God. We have to do our best to respond to the call to labor in God's vineyard as we have received it. That call demands that we are open to God's mercy in our lives and that we become vehicles for God's mercy in the lives of others. That is Christianity. To act otherwise is to begrudge God for his generosity, or to be scripturally literal, to look upon God's goodness with an evil, jealous eye.

The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard calls upon us to ask God to help us be vehicles of His Mercy

III

هل تعلم أن سيغمووند فرويد، مؤسس التحليل النفسي واحد من أهم الشخصيات في أوائل القرن العشرين كان صراف النكات؟ كان. في الواقع، في طريق العودة في عام 1915 قال مزحة عن وزير استدعته مجموعة من الأقارب القلقين. أرادوا منه أن يستخرجوا تحويلات الموت من بائع تأمين إلحادي وغير مستعجل.

وقد عقد اللقاء بين الوزير ومدوب التأمين، وكلما طال أمد الاجتماع خلف أبواب المستشفى المغلقة، كلما أخذ أفراد الأسرة الأمل. عندما فتح الباب أخيراً، ومع ذلك، لم يتم تحويل بائع. ومع ذلك، ذهب القس بعيداً مع التأمين وافرة لتغطية أي احتمال. كان هناك وقت أخذت فيه ما يسمى تحويلات الموت الموت على محمل الجد. كان من المهم للناس أن أحبائهم التوقيع على الخط السفلي ليصبحوا مسيحيين، حتى لو كانت اللحظة الأخيرة. وكان هذا لضمان أن أحبائهم تجنب حرائق الجحيم. ولكن هذه الممارسة دفعت المسيحيين الآخرين إلى طرح سؤال مهم حول الإيمان بالمسيح: "هل يمكن أن تعيش حقاً حياة فظيعة، انتظر حتى اللحظة الأخيرة قبل أن تموت، ثم نسأل مغفرة لخطاياك، وجعل اعتراف الإيمان بالمسيح ولا يزال تلقى في ملكوت الله كما لو كنت قد أعظم القديس الذي عاش من أي وقت مضى؟"

من قراءة درسنا من الإنجيل لهذا اليوم يجب أن نقول أن الجواب هو "نعم". قال يسوع موقفاً حول مالك الأرض الذي ذهب إلى السوق في وقت مبكر من صباح اليوم لتوظيف العمال - ممارسة شائعة في المجتمعات الريفية حتى في الأونة الأخيرة. وأولئك الذين استأجرهم وافق على دفع الأجر المعياري لعمل يوم واحد. بعد ثلاث ساعات رأى أنه سيحتاج إلى المزيد من العمال إذا كان العمل سوف تحصل على القيام به. عاد إلى السوق واستأجر المزيد من العمال. حول ظهر انه وجد مرة أخرى أنه من الضروري توظيف المزيد من العمال، ثم مرة أخرى في 03:00، ثم مرة أخرى في خمسة. كان

الإقلاع عن التدخين الساعة السادسة. في الساعة السادسة كان له رئيس العمال يصطف العمال الذين يتعين دفعها. بدأ مع أولئك الذين عملوا ولكن ساعة. دفع لهم لمدة يوم كامل.

مشاهدة هذا كان أولئك الذين عملوا منذ ستة في الصباح، واثنتي عشرة ساعة كاملة. كانوا يفكرون أيديهم في فرحة. "واو"، كانوا يعتقدون بأنفسهم، "إذا كان يدفع لهم أجره يوم كامل للعمل ساعة واحدة فقط، فكر كم سيدفع لنا!" عندما جاء وقتهم، ومع ذلك، كما حصلوا على الأجر القياسي للعمل يوم واحد.

كانت غاضبة. لقد عملوا طوال اليوم وكانوا يتلقون نفس المبلغ الذي عملوا به ساعة واحدة فقط. لم يكن ذلك عادلا. لم يكن ذلك فقط. ولكن مالك الأرض قال: "ألم أدفع لك ما اتفقنا عليه؟ إذا أريد أن أكون أكثر سخاء مع هؤلاء الآخرين ليس كذلك؟ ليس أموالي أن أفعل مع كما أنا من فضلك؟"

وبما أن معظمنا هنا اليوم نشعر بأننا أولئك الذين عملوا منذ الساعة السادسة صباحا، قد يكون هذا واحدا من أصعب تعاليم يسوع لقبوله. هل هذا حقيقي؟ فهل يمكن أن يكون الشخص حقا مطلقا حتى لحظة وفاته ثم التوبة، ويعترف بالإيمان بالمسيح ويحصل على هدية الحياة الأبدية كما لو كان قديسا طوال حياته؟

لماذا لا بعد ذلك، شخص يسأل، والمضي قدما والعيش حياة من الخطيئة والانتظار حتى آخر لحظة للتوبة؟ في الواقع السؤال هو أكثر إثارة للقلق بالنسبة لي من الجواب. لماذا نطرح مثل هذا السؤال في المقام الأول؟ ليس هذا السؤال يشير إلى أننا نعتقد أننا نعيش حياة الخطيئة أكثر من حياة الإيمان؟ لماذا نكون قلقين بشأن الانتظار حتى آخر لحظة؟ هل نصلي صلاة أو غسطين، "الرب إنقاذ لي، ولكن ليس بعد" لأن عميق في قلوبنا نعتقد أن إعطاء في الله سوف يفسد متعة لدينا؟ أن العيش حياة الإيمان سيكون عبنا بدلا من نعمة؟

اسمحوا لي أن أسألك سؤالا جديا. ماذا تتغير عن حياتك إذا كنت تعرف أنه لا توجد السماء ولا الجحيم؟ هل ستكون أقل محبة تجاه عائلتك؟ هل تغش على زوجتك؟ هل تكون غير شريفة في عملك؟ لا أعتقد ذلك. رأى القديم أن "الفضيلة هي مكافأتها الخاصة" صحيح. هناك أسباب أخرى أن نحافظ على تعهدات الزفاف لدينا، وإدارة أعمالنا بطريقة أخلاقية، ونحب أسرنا إلى جانب الخوف من الجحيم. ونحن نسعى إلى أن نعيش حياة فاضلة ليس من الخوف ولكن لأننا قد نظرت حولنا ورأينا أن الحياة الأخلاقية هي حقا أفضل طريقة للعيش في هذا العالم.

لا يمكننا أن نتصور عالما من دون قيم أخلاقية أو روابط أسرية. نحن قد نكتة حول جاذبية الخطيئة والغناء مع المراهقين، "كنت غرق عميقة في الخطيئة. . . وي. . .". ولكن في أعماق قلوبنا نعلم أن حياة الخطيئة تؤدي فقط إلى حل وتدمير كل ما هو جيد ودائم ومرضية في نهاية المطاف في هذا العالم. الله ليس عدونا. عميق في قلوبنا ونحن نعلم ذلك. الشيطان هو العدو - الذي يغري لنا أن تكون أقل من جميلة، كلها، وصحية، ومحبة أطفال الله، خلق الله لنا أن نكون

ما الذي سوف تتغير بصراحة عن حياتك إذا كنت تعرف أنه لم يكن هناك السماء أو الجحيم؟ أظن القليل جدا. البعض منكم ربما يفكر أنك لن تجلس من خلال أي خطب أكثر مملة إذا كان لديك تلك المعرفة. هل سمعت "أمين" من الخلف؟ في الواقع، إذا كان الخوف من الحكم الذي يجلب لك الكنيسة، وربما كنت لا تحصل على الكثير من العبادة على أي حال.

عندما نصل إلى الإدراك الناضج بأننا نسعى إلى الحق في عدم إرضاء الله الغاضب، ولكن لأنه في نهاية المطاف في مصلحتنا القسوى في القيام الصحيح، فإننا سوف لم يعد الحسد من الغضب الذي يجعل اعتراف السرير الموت. في الواقع، ونحن سوف شفقة له لأخذ وقتنا طويلا لنرى ما كنا نعرف على طول.

إذا كنت لا تصدقني، هل تعتقد أن غرانددي مجنون صدمة روك أليس كوبر؟ قبل بضعة أسابيع شاركنا تعليق نقطة توقف من قبل ستيف بيرد عن بوب ديلان. لحية فعل عمود آخر عن أليس كوبر، الذي هو شخصية أكثر غرابة بكثير. قبل بضع سنوات، فاجأ كوبر صحيفة لندن صنداي تايمز بقوله: "شرب البيرة سهل. يمكن نقل غرف الفندق بسهولة. ولكن كونها مسيحية، وهذا هو دعوة صعبة. هذا تمرد". كوبر اخترع عمليا كلمة التمرد. حتى اليوم يسافر مع عرض المرحلة التي تتميز المقصلة والكراسي الكهربائية والدم وهمية، والشعابين القاتلة، دمي طفل، والسيوف مبارزة.

في ذروة الشهرة له في جميع أنحاء العالم، ويلاحظ اللحية، وشرب كوبر زجاجة من الويسكي يوميا. ولكن الزجاجة دمرت تقريبا زواجه من شيريل، زوجته من خمسة وعشرين عاما. ولكن عندما أدرك أنه كان في ورطة، بدأت أليس كوبر التوجه إلى الكنيسة مع زوجته وهناك شعر أن الله يتكلم معه.

كوبر شهدت كل متعة أن المال يمكن شراء ولكن وجد أنه لم يرضي. "كنت الابن الضال. غادرت المنزل وحققت شهرة وثروة، ووجدت أن ذلك ليس ما أردت". "الآن قرأت الكتاب المقدس كل يوم، أدعو كل يوم. هذا ما أنا عليه حقا". "ويواصل:" كنت شيئا واحدا في وقت واحد، وأنا شيء جديد. أنا مخلوق جديد الآن. لا نحكم أليس بما كان عليه. الحمد لله على ما أنا الآن."

في وصفه لأهمية إيمانه المسيحي، يقول: "كل شيء. هذا ما أعيش فيه. إذا كنت أعطاني خيارا بين الصخرة واللفة وإيماني، كنت تأخذ إيماني"، وقال كوبر صحيفة. "روك أند رول هو متعة - هذا ما أقوم به لقمة العيش. ولكن هذا ليس ما أعيش عليه. اعتقد في المسيحية

الكلاسيكية. لقد أعطيت حياتي كلها للرب. ولكن لا أعتقد أن هذا يعني أنك لا يمكن أن تكون صخرة وبكرة ". بعد كل شيء، كما قال كوبر، " يجب أن أكون الأب الوحيد الذي ينفجر على باب غرفة النوم ويقول: "تحويل هذه الموسيقى حتى! "

سأل الذي هو أكثر مرضية - حياة الخطيئة أو الحياة كمتابع يسوع، وسوف أليس كوبر أقول لكم ان اتباع المسيح هو أعلى بكثير. وهذا صحيح. بعضكم، مثل كوبر، تعلموا أن الطريق الصعب. ولكنك تعلم أنه صحيح. في كتابه، ستة ساعات واحدة الجمعة ماكس لوكادو يروي قصة كيف انه وقاربه نجا مرة واحدة إحصار. نصح بحار قديم ماكس أن يأخذ زورقه إلى المياه العميقة، وإسقاط أربعة المراسي قبالة كل ركن من أركان القارب، ونصلي أن المراسي عقد. ماكس نجا من تلك العاصفة، لكنه يقول انه تعلم درسا هاما: كل واحد منا بحاجة إلى مرسة التي ستعقد خلال عواصف الحياة. إذا كنا حكيما بما فيه الكفاية أن يكون لدينا مرسة قوية من شأنها أن تصمد أمام أي عاصفة، ونحن لن تحتاج إلى تقديم اعتراف السرير الموت، ونحن لن أحسد الشخص الذي يفعل. نحن لسنا مثليين، ولكننا من الحكمة أن نرى أن هناك قوانين معينة - قوانين أخلاقية، وقوانين روحية، إذا كنت - سوف تحكم هذا الكون كما هو الحال تماما كما قانون الجاذبية. وبفضل الله سوف نسعى إلى القيام بالحق، لأنه على المدى الطويل هو في مصلحتنا العليا وفي مصلحة من نحب. هناك سبب ثان لماذا هذا سؤال مثير للقلق. إذا كان الله يفرح عندما خسر أحد الأغنام، فقدت عملة واحدة، فقد وجد صبي مفقود - كما يقول لنا إنجيل لوقا إنه يفعل - ألا نفرح أيضا؟ وأولئك الذين عملوا في الكرم لن يكونوا على الإطلاق غير راضين عما تلقوه إذا لم يقارنوا أجورهم مع ما تلقاه الآخرون. هناك شيء بشري جدا حول ذلك. بعض منكم معتادا على الصورة المتحركة، أماديوس - درامية مسلية من حياة موزارت. الشخصية المركزية في الدراما هي الملحن الذي كان معاصرة من موزارت، أنطونيو ساليري. في الصورة المتحركة ساليري هو الرجل الذي يكرس حياته للموسيقى. في الواقع، في وقت مبكر من الحياة وقال انه وعد الى الله انه سوف يعطي حياته كلها لله إذا كان الله ببساطة تسمح له لكتابة الموسيقى سامية. يتم الرد على صلاة ساليري. يكتب الموسيقى الجميلة و هو نجاح في مهنته المختار. وهو يكسب مكانا كمؤلف رئيسي في محكمة الإمبراطور.

يوم واحد، ومع ذلك، وقال انه يسمع الموسيقى من موزارت وانه يعترف، حتى لو كان العديد من معاصريه لا، أن موزارت له الهدايا أعلى بكثير من بلده. يحدث شيء داخل ساليري. يصبح مهووسا بالرغبة في تدمير موزارت. حتى القضاة ضد الله. ويعتقد أن الله يسخر منه من خلال موزارت - على الرغم من أن الله قد أجاب صلاته وأعطاه هدايا عظيمة، تلك الهدايا ليست كبيرة مثل موزارت، و ساليري لا يمكن أن يغفر الله. وتوقفت مهنته الخاصة، وهو يبحث عن سبل لتقويض مهنة منافسه الأصغر سنا. نهاية الفيلم هو تصوير مأساوي لقوة الحسد لتدمير قلب الشخص وروحه. وكما قال أحد السخرية، "لا يكفي ذلك

Did you know that Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis and one of the most important figures in the early twentieth century was a jokes banker? It was. In fact, on the way back in 1915 he said a joke about a minister summoned by a group of anxious relatives. They wanted him to extract the conversions of death from a non-urgent and urgent insurance seller.

The meeting was held between the minister and the insurance representative, and the longer the meeting lasted behind the doors of the closed hospital, the more the family members hope. When the door finally opens, however, the seller is not converted. However, the pastor went away with ample insurance to cover any possibility.

There was a time when the so-called death conversions took death seriously. It was important for people that their loved ones sign on the bottom line to become Christians, even if they were the last minute. This was to ensure that their loved ones avoided Hellfire.

But this practice prompted other Christians to ask an important question about faith in Christ: "Can you truly live a terrible life, wait until the last moment before you die, then ask forgiveness for your sins, make confession of faith in Christ and still receive in the kingdom of God as if you had The greatest saint who ever lived? "

From reading our lesson of the Gospel to this day we must say that the answer is "yes". Jesus said a position around the landowner who went to the market early in the morning to recruit workers - a common practice in rural communities even recently. Those who hired them

agreed to pay the standard wage for a day's work. After three hours he saw that he would need more workers if the work would get done. He returned to the market and hired more workers.

Around noon he once again found it necessary to hire more workers, then again at 3 am, then again at five. The quitting was at six o'clock. At six o'clock the boss had lined up the workers to be paid. He started with those who worked but an hour. Pay them for a whole day.

Watch this was those who worked since six in the morning, and twelve full hours. They spread their hands in joy. "Wow," they thought by themselves, "if he pays them a full day fare to work only one hour, think how much will pay us!" When their time came, however, they also got the standard pay for work one day.

She was angry. They worked all day and were receiving the same amount as they did for only one hour. It was not fair. It was not only that. But the landowner said, "Did not I pay you what we agreed on? If I want to be more generous with these others, will not I do my money as I please?"

Since most of us here today feel that we have been working since 6 am, this may be one of the most difficult teachings of Jesus to accept. is this real? Can a person be an absolute right until the moment of his death and repentance, and confess the faith in Christ and receive the gift of eternal life as if he were a saint throughout his life?

Why not then, someone asks, go ahead and live a life of sin and wait until the last moment of repentance?

In fact the question is more worrying to me than the answer. Why do we ask such a question in the first place? Does not this question indicate that we believe that we live the life of sin more than the life of faith? Why are we worried about waiting until the last minute? Do you pray Augustine's prayer, "Lord save me, but not yet" because deep in our hearts believe that giving in God will spoil our pleasure? To live a life of faith would be a burden rather than a blessing?

Let me ask you a serious question. What do you change about your life if you know that there is neither heaven nor hell? Would you be less loving towards your family? Do you cheat on your wife? Are you dishonest in your work? I do not think so. The old saw that "virtue is its own reward" is true.

There are other reasons that we maintain our wedding commitments, manage our business ethically, and love our families along with the fear of hell. We seek to live a virtuous life not from fear but because we have looked around and see that moral life is truly the best way to live in this world.

We can not imagine a world without moral values or family ties. We had a joke about the attraction of sin and singing with teenagers, "I was drowning deep in sin ... wii." But deep in our hearts we know that the life of sin only leads to the dissolution and destruction of everything that is good, lasting and ultimately satisfactory in this world. God is not our enemy. Deep in our hearts we know it. Satan is the enemy - who tempts us to be less than beautiful, whole, healthy, loving children of God, God created us to be

What would you honestly change about your life if you knew there was not heaven or hell? I think very little. Some of you may think you will not sit through any more boring speeches if you have that knowledge. Have you heard "Amen" from behind? In fact, if the fear of judgment brings you church, you probably do not get much worship anyway.

When we reach the mature realization that we seek the right not to please the angry God, but because ultimately it is in our utmost interest to do the right, we will no longer envy the anger that makes bedside confession death. In fact, we will pity him to take a long time to see what

we knew along.

If you do not believe me, do you think that granddie crazy rock shock Alice Cooper? A few weeks ago we shared a stop point comment by Steve Bird about Bob Dylan. Beard did another column about Alice Cooper, who is a much more unusual character. A few years ago, Cooper surprised the London Times Sunday by saying: "Drinking beer is easy, the hotel rooms can be moved easily, but being Christian, this is a tough call.

Cooper practically invented the word rebellion. Even today he travels with a stage show featuring guillotine, electric chairs, fake blood, deadly snakes, baby dolls, duel swords.

At the height of his fame around the world, Beard notes, drinking a bottle of whiskey a day. But the bottle almost destroyed his marriage to Cheryl, his wife of twenty-five years. But when he realized he was in trouble, Alice Cooper began to go to the church with his wife and there he felt that God was speaking to him.

Cooper saw all the fun that money could buy but found that he did not satisfy. "I was the prodigal son, I left home and achieved fame and fortune, and found that was not what I wanted." "Now I read the Bible every day, I call every day, that's what I really am." "I was one thing at a time, and I am something new, I am a new creature now, we do not judge Alice as he was, thank God for what I am now."

In describing the importance of his Christian faith, he says: "Everything, that's what I live in. If you give me a choice between rock and lap and my faith, you take my faith," Cooper said. "Rock and Roll is fun - that's what I do for a living, but that's not what I live in. I think in classical Christianity, I've given my whole life to the Lord, but I do not think that means you can not be a rock and a ball." After all, as Cooper said, "I must be the only father who explodes on the bedroom door and says:" Turn this music up! "

He who is more satisfying - the life of sin or life as the follower of Jesus, will ask Alice Cooper to tell you that the followers of Christ is much higher. This is true. Some of you, like Cooper, have learned that the road is hard. But you know it's true.

In his book, Six Hours One Friday Max Locado tells the story of how he and his boat once survived a hurricane. Old sailor Max advised to take his boat to deep water, drop four anchors off each corner of the boat, and pray that the anchors hold. Max survived that storm, but he says he learned an important lesson: each of us needs an anchor that will be held during storms of life.

If we are wise enough to have a strong anchor that will withstand any storm, we will not need to make a death bed confession, we will not envy the person who does. We are not homosexuals, but we are wise to see that there are certain laws - moral laws, and spiritual laws, if you are - will govern this universe just as it is the Law of Attraction. Thanks to God we will strive to do the right, because in the long run it is in our supreme interest and in the interest of the love.

There is a second reason why this is a troubling question. If God rejoices when a sheep loses, loses one coin, he finds a missing boy - as the Gospel of Luke tells us he does - do not we also rejoice? Those who worked in the vineyard would never be dissatisfied with what they received if they did not compare their wages to what others had received. There is something very human about it.

Some of you are familiar with the animated scene, Amadeus - an amusing drama of Mozart's life. The central character of the drama is the composer who was a contemporary of Mozart, Antonio Salieri. In the moving picture Salieri is the man who dedicates his life to music. In fact, early in life he promised God that he would give his whole life to God if God simply allowed him to write sublime music.

Saliri prayer is answered. He writes beautiful music and is successful in his chosen career. He earns a place as chief author of the Emperor's Court.

One day, however, he hears music from Mozart and he admits, even if many of his contemporaries do not, that Mozart has much higher gifts than his own. Something happens inside Saliri. Becomes obsessed with the desire to destroy Mozart. So the bars against God. God is believed to mock him through Mozart - although God has answered his prayers and given him great gifts, those gifts are not as great as Mozart, and Salery can not forgive God. He stopped his own career and is looking for ways to undermine the career of his younger rival. The end of the film is a tragic depiction of the power of envy to destroy the person's heart and spirit. As one irony said, "That is not enough

In asking God about such things, what failed to see is how valuable the human soul is to God. This is the important fact here. God's fundamental passion is to save people - whenever it happens. This is the Bible.

Leslie Wetherhead puts that fact in a beautiful way in his book, *The Next Door Key*. When Whiterhead was visiting some friends he noticed that they had an old dog called the "House" house, and Wetherhead said "you do not have much to dissuade him as far as she was concerned concerned." The dog swooped around and had a rough spot on the back, and some suggested that the dog should put to sleep.

Moreover, Winterhead was about to propose the same to his hosts. But then the dog learned that dog Mike. Mike was the son hosts and the parents memorize the dog for Mike. They admitted that the dog was a bit of a bother, but after all, they said: "It's Mike's dog, we love the dog for Mike."

They saw Mike's dog dog, and could not put him to sleep, because Mike and the dog and their love were linked together. They could see Mike coming home from the university and saying, "Where's the old house?" They could not see themselves saying, "Oh, we put away because it was a bother, and it is not worth saving!"

"Not worth saving?" It was this label that Weatherhead could put on an old house, but not parents because his happiness was Mike. Weatherhead adds at this point: "You can not just imagine some angel gardener looking down on the world and saying, " I can not imagine why God keeps these Manji humans around. Why does God not only wipe them on the face of the earth? See how disobedience. Look how miserable the most! "(4)

But God can not do it, is it? We belong to Christ, and so, it is of infinite value.

That is why even the old death confession is sorry enough to enter into the kingdom of God. , desperate in love with humanity. There is nothing that will not give us salvation from the forces of sin and death. But why make him wait so long? Why wait until we have lost the forest and deformed our divine dignity? Why not make this confession of faith today?