

There's an art of living, an art to dying. Jesus presses matters of eternal consequences before us. It won't be long, I'll be buried up the hill, Tim Selbe has plotted a row outside of the center section, on the front right for pastors & wife. He's pressing me to pick out my plot, maybe he doesn't think I look like I have long; we all think we have more time than we do. I need to select my plot so Pastor Burgdorf can get his next to mine, then other pastors down the row.

This year, like others have done up there, I hope to get my tombstone. I might get Ps.118 on it (like Luther had painted on the wall) **I shall not die, but I shall live, and proclaim the deeds of the Lord.** That might happen, but as anyone with a wife knows, I'm not in charge of that, we'll see what's on the tombstone.

As you get old like me, you may daily check obituaries, see friends, friends family who die. I curiously even may click on strangers obituaries. I've always found it fascinating what people say about their dear departed, what they convey was important. Obituaries note their work, great things they did, how great they were, their favorite sports teams, their trips, hobbies, grandkids; note their pets, even name "furry" family members as survivors (don't do that.)

Most Obituaries I find sad, amidst their great accomplishments, filled with so many things, or even when its short, fewer mention true, eternal riches of Jesus or their church. What will your obituary say about your priorities, riches?

There is an art of living, an art to dying. The rich man lived poorly, died in judgment, hell. Lazarus died well because he was lived with Moses and the prophets. Did you catch that? Why the rich man condemned, Lazarus saved? Not found in their wallets, nor in their deeds, but in their hearts. For while it seems as though hungry Lazarus has nothing besides the mercy of dogs, in truth, he has riches the world can scarcely imagine. **He has Moses and the prophets**, God's Word to bring comfort, forgiveness, riches of the Kingdom in Word and Sacraments; having that treasure, that gift, you use your time, how you attend to people, how you use your talents and stuff, worldly riches for others. The right way to live is being ready to die.

This is so defining, this is the only parable with someone name: Lazarus means "God is my help." Lazarus, saved by grace, clings to God, his only help. Learn well the lesson of Lazarus: you've only 1 help, only 1 source of comfort, only 1 who can help in time of need.

If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. The rich man's problem, he lacks faith. **If they do not hear.** There at the bottom of the lectern, Rom. 10, **Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.** Jesus is warning you, your family, not to fall into disbelief by pushing away the Word, His living Word that you hear, He calls you to His Divine Service, His Sacraments; pushed away in worldly pursuits. A hellish warning for trusting in

your wealth, being selfish, living for yourself, consumed with your pleasures, your priorities.

An art of living, an art to dying. Of course yesterday, noteworthy for patriotic Americans. Were there any atheist on the beaches of Normandy? No shortage of men that day who confess, **I will not die but I shall live proclaim the deeds of the Lord.** And many did so as they entered the courts of heaven.

But the day before, June 5, important to you Germans. St Boniface known as 'the apostle to Germany', martyred June 5, 1270 years ago, a missionary, went to barbaric Germania to bring the Gospel. He will famously cut down the sacred oak tree and call on Thor, Jupiter, all the gods to strike him dead. Years later, armed robbers show up at the church, heard the church is filled with riches, rush in grab Boniface. The congregation did what you'd do if an armed band of men tried to grab me here, but you don't need to pull out your guns, I could take them. Boniface tells the congregation, put down your weapons, quotes Romans 12, **not to render evil for evil, but overcome evil by good.** Boniface, martyr with Bible in His hand, along with others. When the robbers went to get all the riches they'd heard about, found only Bibles, theological books. An art to dying. What is there to fear? To die in the Lord is no death at all. When your riches are Christ, His Word, what can man do to you? Satan, evil, death cannot win.

It's tough to believe that God's love for you is not proved in wealth and privilege, or in success. God's love for you is not proved in good health, good fortune, or number of grandchildren. God's love for you is proved in His promise fulfilled: Jesus on the cross, empty tomb, into your heart by way of the mouth in His Body and Blood. His greatness -in washing you, feeding you, forgiving you. His love is proved in the quiet things in which He has embedded in His promise of eternal life: words, bread, wine, water, even with mistake prone pastors. His love to give you all that is needed now to bring you home. His love to give you the greatest riches, unending life with Him now.

There's an art of living, an art to dying, matters of eternal consequences before you, your family. What it means to live well, die well -an eternal chiasm of difference in what are true riches and that of the world. You hear Moses and the Prophets and so much more. You see with Abraham, Your faith, counted to you as righteousness, the riches of Christ, all gift, grace. You've more riches than all the world. Thus you receive His gifts, only as a Lazarus, beggar. Nothing to offer.

Pray our gracious Lord will deprive you of everything that would stand between you and Him. For God in His abundant grace, wisdom would make us as holy beggar, helpless, weak, dependent, trusting in Him alone, satisfied with no other food, no other drink. That we be dogs eating undeserved crumbs from His table. Basking forever in His love! For of such, dogs and children, failures and outcasts, beggars and sinners all, is the Kingdom of God. Feast at His Table, you have riches beyond compare. Your begging one day will end.