



Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4th St., Arthur, IL 61911-1303



The "Sower"

March 22, 2009



Ron Bartanen, Minister

Times of Worship

Bible Classes-----9:30 am

Morning Worship-10:30 am

Evening Worship—6:00 pm

Wed. Bible Study---1:30 pm

WELCOME to today's

Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a **VISITOR**, we especially appreciate your decision to meet with us. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity.

Have you checked our web site lately?

www.arthurchurchofchrist.com

Be sure to visit the "Apologetics Press" link, now in both English and Spanish. Also newly added: Sermon Outlines and "Family Minutes" (Dale Smith).



PRAYER CONCERNS:

It will probably be April before the house is ready for Paul and Nadine to return from their

daughter's in Michigan. *** Continue to remember Rodger, Inez, Dean, Lyla, Lester, Mary's mother, Doris's niece (Kellie), Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis & Mary Cater (Fla.), our service men and women, and our nation's and world's leaders as a way for peace is sought, and a solution to the financial crisis.

THANKS to all for your prayers and expressions of sympathy in the passing away of Doris's sister, Ollie, in Tenn.

**This is
The Word
of God**



I Believe It!

"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honor of his name: make his praise glorious" (Psalms 66:1-2).

GUEST SPEAKER: We welcome

Wayne Polk of the church in Shelbyville who will be bringing today's message: **"A Day of Good Tidings,"** a message based on 2 Kings 6:24-7:9. I am to speak in his place at Shelbyville this morning. We will both be back to our home congregations this evening. My message this evening will be the second in a series on the theme, **"We Would See Jesus,"** – **"Jesus In the Wilderness."** The text will be Matthew 4:1-11.

Being An Angel

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class was walking home from school. His name was Kyle . It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, 'Why would anyone bring home all his books on a Friday? He must really be a nerd.' I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him.. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him.. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him as he crawled around

looking for his glasses, and I saw a tear in his eye.

As I handed him his glasses, I said, 'Those guys are jerks..' They really should get lives.' He looked at me and said, 'Hey thanks!' There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived.. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before. We talked all the way home, and I carried some of his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid.

I asked him if he wanted to play a little football with my friends He said yes. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know Kyle , the more I liked him, and my friends thought the same of him.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, 'Boy, you're gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!' He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends... When we were seniors we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor and I was going for business on a football scholarship ...

Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak Graduation day, I saw Kyle . He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses.. He had more dates than I had. Boy, sometimes I was jealous! Today was one of those days, but I could see that he was nervous about his speech so I smacked him on the back and said, 'Hey, big guy, you'll be great!' He looked at me

with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. ' Thanks,' he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began 'Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach but mostly your friends I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story..' I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He told of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. 'Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable..'

I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his Mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize it's depth. Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person's life. For better or for worse. God puts us all in each others' lives to impact one another in some way. Look for God in others.

'Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly.' --**Shelbyville bulletin, 3-8-'09**



JESUS' BAPTISM—AND OURS

As John the baptizer was preaching a message of repentance and the kingdom of God, and baptizing in the Jordan River, many came to him to be baptized, **“confessing their sins”** (Matt. 3:6). We are then informed, **“Then cometh Jesus...to be baptized”** (Matt. 3:13). Jesus had lined up with the **“publicans and harlots”** (Matt. 21:31-32), though in no need of repentance and baptism **“for the remission of sins”** (Mark 1:4), being the sinless Son of God. We can learn much about the significance of baptism from the example of Jesus.

The baptism of Jesus was a decisive act. He was not brought as an infant, but came in a personal response to the will of the Father, or, as He explained to John, **“to fulfill all righteousness”** (Matt. 3:15). Righteousness is defined in Psa. 119:172: **“All thy commandments are righteousness.”** Baptism continues to be a command of God (Acts 10:48). Jesus made this commitment, knowing the path He was choosing would lead to the cross, His burial and resurrection, as prefigured in baptism. He was trading a life of personal security and privacy in Nazareth for a baptism of suffering. Baptism for us as well must be a personal decision of commitment to do the Father's will regardless of inconvenience or sacrifice.

Jesus' baptism was an act of humility. John recognized that Jesus had no need for baptism because He had no need for repentance. Standing with sinners, **“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”** (Philippians 2:8). Yet there are those who refuse baptism on the grounds of their morality. Baptism is a humbling act for the believer who, in baptism, is **“buried with Christ...into death”** and is raised to **“walk in newness of life”** (Romans 6:3-4).

Jesus' baptism was an act of separation. His private life behind Him and His public ministry before Him. To those baptized, **“Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness”** (Romans 3:17-18).

Jesus' baptism was a prayerful act, as declared in Luke 3:21: **“Jesus also being baptized and praying....”** In baptism, prayerful hearts commit themselves to God. The *“sinner's prayer”* is not independent of baptism. It was in baptism that Saul (Paul) was told, **“Arise and be baptized, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16). While such a prayer need not be vocal, in baptism one is to seek from God the **“remission of sins”** and **“the gift of the Holy Ghost”** (Acts 2:38-39).

Jesus' baptism was a divinely approved act. As Jesus arose from the watery grave, the Spirit of God descended upon Him, and the voice of the Father acknowledged Him: **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”** (Matt. 3:16-17). We are acknowledged as children of God in Christ, as Paul wrote, **“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”** (Galatians 3:26-27).

Those who refused the baptism of John **“rejected the council of God against themselves, being not baptized of him”** (Lk. 7:30). Men would do well to heed the principle set forth in Hebrews 12:24: **“If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.”**

--Ron