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# THE SOWER

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## Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Arthur, IL 61911

### Times of Worship

Bible Classes.....9:30 a.m.  
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.  
Evening Worship.....6:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study.....1:30 p.m.



**Ron Bartanen, Minister**

**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 visited our website lately?** ([www.arthurchurchofchrist.com](http://www.arthurchurchofchrist.com))

Be sure to check out the "Christian Evidences"/"Apologetics Press" links Now in both English and Spanish.

Feb 15, 2009

## NOT WASTED

A young woman, who was a great lover of flowers, had set out a rare vine at the base of a stone wall.. It grew vigorously, but it did not bloom. Day after day she cultivated it, watered it, and tried in every way to coax into bloom. One morning, as she stood disappointedly before it, her invalid neighbor, whose back lot adjoined her own, called over and said, "You can't imagine how much I have been enjoying the blooms of that vine you planted." The owner looked, and on the other side of the wall was a mass of blooms. The vine had crept through the crevices and flowered luxuriantly on the other side.

So often we think our efforts are thrown away because we do not see their fruits. We need to learn that in God's service our prayers, our toil, our crosses are never in vain. Somewhere they bear fruit and hearts will receive blessing and joy. Remember these words of the apostle Paul, "I planted. Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6, 7).

--Tom Moore, Temple, Tex.

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***"Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.... Shew me thy ways, O LORD: teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation: on thee do I wait all the day" (Psalm 25:1, 4-5).***

**"THE HEART OF MAN"** will be this morning's message, with James 1:13-15 as the reading.

**REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Rodger says he's feeling better every day, though he still has shortness of breath and some pain. \*\*\* Woody continues to improve from his surgery. \*\*\* Continue to remember Paul & Nadine, Dean, Inez, Lyla, Lester, Mary's mother, Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis & Mary Carter (Fla.), Doris's former brother in law (cancer ;in remission!), our service men and women, and our nation's and world's leaders as they seek a way for peace.

## BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO EVERYBODY

Bad things happen to everybody. I'm pretty sure about this. Solomon agrees. No one escapes the bad stuff. The question that follows is always, "Why?" Well, I have a new question for you. "Why does good stuff happen?" Given all the bad things, why should there be anything good?

The universe could well be just a junk heap of random minerals clashing about in space. But since we do have a little spot of dirt to live on, we have to at least ask why we get anything good. Like air. Why have anything so simple and clean to push in and out of our nostrils? Why not grey, grimy sludge? Why do we get air? (Not just to pump up our volleyballs as Bill Cosby deduced.) It is a beautiful and nearly invisible item. Gather the oxygen out of it, mix in another gas, hydrogen, and the two gases become a liquid—water! Why do we get to have water?! It is so cool. The streams and lakes and oceans serve us generous portions for free. What a neat present.

Why do we get to eat? Why are there potatoes, tomatoes, and lamba juice? I like eating. Why does my tongue have sweet and salty and bitter taste buds? They are good. But why should I get anything good? There is lots of bad stuff. My radio and my TV and my computer tell me every day how much bad stuff is out there. Why isn't everything just terrible, ugly, putrid, painful and grotesque? Bad stuff happens all the time and I get used to it. I guess I deserve it. It's all over the place. Feeling bad, getting sick, and being sad is normal, right?

So why should there be anything at all that makes for happiness? Why is there love? Where did that come from? Who made that up? How does cosmic indifference produce emotions anyhow? Love really exists. Everyone wants it, talks about it, competes for it, recalls it, so it must be real. Why, though? What could initiate an emotion, a goal, a reason for living that is so powerful? It's too good. Love is too good for humans. We don't deserve it.

No one is exempt from bad stuff. Everyone dies. Everyone feels sad. Everyone has disappointments. With billions of people running around, and into each other, there is no end of accidents, arguments, shortages, outages, and outrages. No question about it—there is a reason for bad stuff happening. Conflict arises out of the human heart. Throughout the day, all day, all night, humans are unhappy.

So where does the good come from? Why is there good stuff? We get to enjoy beauty, sensations, friendship, and even expectation of better things. What is the source? Good exists and it is really good. Simple and complex, short-term and long-term, tangible and intangible, good is real. Explain it. James came up with the answer: "But whatever is good and perfect comes from God, the Creator of all light, and He shines forever without change or shadow" (James 1:17). God is good. —Mike Petrillo, *The Family of God*, Philo Rd., Urbana

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## HAPPINESS—

"Happiness doesn't depend on what happens outside of you, but what happens inside of you; it is measured by the spirit in which you meet the problems of life."

"Happiness is found in little things: a baby's smile, a letter from a friend, the song of a bird, a light in the window. The master secret of happiness is to meet the challenge of each new day with the serene faith that "All things work together for good to them that love God."

--Trib-Bits, Decatur Tribune

## ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM THE INTERNET

It is amazing to me how some "news" makes it to TV, while truly significant world-events often go unnoticed. I have a love-hate relationship with my computer and the Internet, but without this technology we would be deprived of much information regarding what is happening in our world. We need to be aware of the direction our world and especially our country are moving. Space will not allow me to print complete news items in *The Sower*, but below is information gleaned from three of the articles.

- Dutch Lawmaker to be Prosecuted for Anti-Islam Comments:** The Dutch Court of Appeal supports prosecution of Dutch lawmaker, Geert Wilders, for the "insult of Islamic worshippers" by comparing Islam to Nazism. On the web site of his Dutch Freedom Party, Wilders responded, "I see this as a black day. If you voice your opinion you run the risk of being prosecuted." In a 15-minute Internet film he had urged Muslims to rip out "hate-preaching" verses from the Koran, which he referred to as a fascist publication which should be banned. (Bloomberg.com) *Freedom of speech is being stifled for the sake of multicultural political correctness. How long until the same will be true in the U.S.A?*
- Polygamists to Use Gay Marriage as Defense in Trial:** In Canada, two men, Winston Blackmore and James Oler, are to stand trial for polygamy.. Blackmore's lawyer said, "If homosexuals can marry, what is the reason that public policy says one person can't marry more than one person?" Canada's Parliament granted full marriage rights to same-sex couples in 2005. (msnbc.com) *The redefining of marriage will predict-ably cause social chaos wherever it is tried.*
- A "Hate Crimes" Law a Reality in 2009?** A bill is being considered in Congress that would expand federal "hate crimes" laws which could threaten politically incorrect speech. Chuck Colson in his Breakpoint commentary refers to such proposals as "Thought Crimes" plans, inasmuch as it outlaws peaceful speech that would define homosexual conduct as morally wrong. Some states are already enforcing such. In New Mexico, photographers that refused to provide photographic services for a wedding of two lesbians faced thousands of dollars in fines. In Pennsylvania, a 75-year-old grandmother faced the threat of prison when she advocated a biblical perspective of homosexuality. In England a preacher was detained for "homophobia" for reading what Paul wrote regarding the practice in Romans, a Christian campaigner was arrested for handing out tracts, and a Catholic archbishop was investigated for being critical of homosexual practice. (wnd.com) *One is made to wonder if eventually the Bible could become a banned book in our twisted world. Maybe publishers of Bibles would be required to remove passages that would be an offense to them? And to be consistent, should we be silenced from teaching against all sexual sins so as not to offend those who practice such? We have to be consistent.*  
--Ron