
THE SOWER

Arthur Church of Christ

415 West 4th 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)

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

February 1, 2009

NO THE SOWER NEXT WEEK. I will be attending the Freed-Hardeman University Bible Lectureship Monday to Thursday, and will be unable to put out *The Sower*. I'll be going down with Ron Thomas.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT—

"God's existence and our accountability to Him is why we, as a nation, struggle with what constitutes a marriage, and with abortion. Is it true that we believe God exists, and that He will call man to judgment? If each of us took our relationship with the Lord as seriously as He takes His revealed will, these issues would not be difficult at all. However, because of our loyalty to something else, our country, our community, is plagued. This is laid at the feet of those not loyal to God and His revealed will.

--Ron Thomas, *Lantern*, Highway church, Sullivan

"**AT TIMES**, it is better to keep your mouth shut and let people wonder if you're a fool, than to open it and remove all doubt."

--Andrew Carnegie

Don't give God instructions—just report for duty!

The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

The will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

THE CALL OF NATHANAEL

In the opening chapter of the *Gospel of John*, John gives a vivid picture detailing just how much God knows us. John recounts a story of how Jesus amazed a man named Nathanael who did not understand why his friends thought Jesus was so special. It was Nathanael's good friend, Philip, who called Nathanael to Jesus. Nathanael had been a disciple of John the Baptizer, and Nathanael was among the throng who had witnessed John pointing out Jesus

as the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

The message, “We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote” (John 1:45), seemed to Nathanael a direct answer to his prayer. But Nathanael still had yet a trembling faith. He asked, “Can any good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46).. But when Nathanael finally met Jesus, Jesus told Nathanael He had seen what Nathanael was doing and knew Nathanael before they had even met. Jesus could see what Nathanael was doing, even when Nathanael was nowhere in His immediate line of sight. As you can imagine, Nathanael began to understand why Jesus was so special!

Just as Jesus knew about Nathanael, God knows all about us. He knew all about us before we were even born, and He knows all about us now. God has known us, and loved us, from even before the beginning of time. Let us thank God for loving us and knowing us so well.

1. *O Lord, You have searched me and known me!*
2. *You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar.* 3. *You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.* (Psalm 139:1-3)

God loves us so much that He has learned all about us, even before we were born. In fact, it can be said truly that God loved us even *before* the foundation of the world was laid, for it was even at that long ago point that God through His amazing and infinite love had already created the Gospel plan of salvation, specifically designed for the purpose of saving us from our sins. As Jesus tells us in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” The apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 1:3-8: 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,* 4. *even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.* 5. *He destined us in love to be His sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will,* 6. *to the praise of His glorious grace which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.* 7. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us.*

—David Ferguson, Lake Land church bulletin, Mattoon, IL

HUNGERING AND THIRSTING

Jesus began His well-known Sermon On the Mount in Matthew 5 with what has been termed the Beatitudes, meaning, “state of utmost bliss” Some have spoken of these opening verses as “the Be Happy Attitudes,” rightly indicating they are attitudes that will lead a soul to receive what is referred to in Scripture as “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8.)

One of these principles that will gladden man’s heart is in Matthew 5:6: “*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*” Few in our land of plenty have experienced real hunger and thirst, as have some in many less-advantaged countries. The words of Jesus here would probably be more meaningful to the poor who frequented Jesus’ audiences. It would speak of intense craving for that which would satisfy. Jesus compares the hunger of man’s spirit, a hungering “after righteousness” to the hunger of the physical man for that which alone can sustain life. Within us must be that craving for moral goodness and acceptance with God, which alone can satisfy and impart the joy of a full life. We must crave it, for in and of ourselves we do not possess it. Indeed, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10). We will not hunger and thirst until we realize our emptiness as expressed in the preceding blessings in verses 1 through 5: being “poor in spirit,” mourning our sinful state, and being meekly submissive to the will of God. Here is an emptiness that only God can fill. The psalmist declared, “He satisfies the longing soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness” (Psa. 107:9).

The blessing Jesus promises is that one be “filled,” literally, “be made fat.” The supply of God is never in short supply. Jesus spoke of the purpose of His coming as being, “that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

The quenching of thirst that Jesus promises is to be a constant satisfaction. Jesus promised the availability of “living water” to the woman at the well in John 4, “springing up into everlasting life,” the partakers of which “shall never thirst” (v. 14). Fulness of life is found only in Jesus. All of our personal righteousness is, in His sight, “as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6.) Paul, who had much to boast of under the law, found the joy of forgiveness and hope only in Christ. In Philippians 3:9 he summed up his true status in life as, “Not having my own righteousness

which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, even the righteousness which is from God by faith.” This righteousness is God’s doing, not man’s. The gospel (good news) that was proclaimed was summarized by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: “How that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,” which was verified by faithful apostolic witnesses. That righteousness is claimed by any who turn from self to Christ in faith and repentance, and identify themselves with Christ in His death and resurrection through baptism (immersion) in the name of Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4)

.(Continued in next column)

Have you hungered and thirsted after righteousness? Have you accepted it from Him who, alone, has it to give?

--Ron

“O God, thou art my God: early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;... Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee” (Psalm 63:1, 3).

“FROM PROBLEMS TO PRAISE” will be this morning’s message, with Psalm 42 as the reading and text.

This evening’s lesson will be, **“What Is Your Comfort?”** The reading will again be from the Psalms: **119:49-56**. An outline of the morning message is on our website this week.

THE WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS will not meet this week.

PRAY FOR: Pray for Rodger and Woody as they continue to recover from their surgeries. *** Continue to remember Paul & Nadine, Inez, Dean, Lyla, Lester, Mary’s mother (improving), Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis & Mary Carter (Fla.), Lola Hilliard (Tenn.), Doris’s former brother-in-law (cancer), our service men and women, and our nation’s and world’s leaders as they seek a way for peace.