

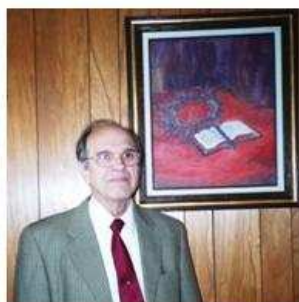


Arthur Church of Christ

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

The "Sower"

February 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).

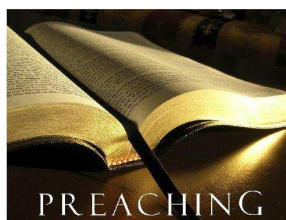


PRAYER LIST:

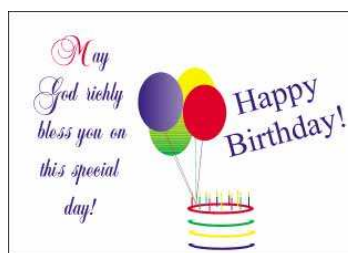
Woody was able to be with us Sunday, and is doing well following his surgery. ***

Rodger continues to recover from his bypass 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 a way for peace is sought

"Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.... Blessed be God which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me" (Psalm 66:1, 2, 20).



"THE FIRST MARRIAGE" will be this morning's message, and Genesis 2:18-25 will be the reading and text. The evening lesson will be, **"Self Deception—the Pride of Edom"**, with Obadiah 1 being the reading.



Lyla (3-4); Sammie (3-5); Nadine (3-6); and Rodger (3-22).



Next Sunday after morning services we will recognize all who have had, or will have, birthdays in January through March at a **POTLUCK**. **Instead of the monthly SONG SERVICE, usually on the last Sunday of the month, we will have it NEXT SUNDAY after the potluck. Be sure to be with us.**

THE PURE AND HOLY LIFE

Jude, the brother of James, warned the Christians of his day to beware of those who pervert the gospel to allow for a sinful lifestyle. "For certain people have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were designated for condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality..." (v. 4). According to Jude there were people claiming to be Christians but who taught that a person could be immoral, and the grace of God would cover their immorality. It would seem that such an idea has been around all through history. From Jude's day until ours there have been doctrines by one name or another that tried to justify immorality. Examples include the first century mystics, second century Gnostics, the worldliness of the clergy in the Middle Ages, and many religious groups in today's world who tolerate immoral behavior even among religious leaders.

In the New Testament it is clear that grace is not an excuse for fornication. Jude called those who taught such doctrines "ungodly people." The apostle Paul wrote, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who have died to sin still live in it?" (Romans 6:1, 23). The apostle John wrote, "Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:7, 8).

The warnings of the New Testament writers are just as appropriate today as they were in the first century. We should not be deceived by those who want to tolerate immoral life styles. Paul said it best: "God...commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which He will judge the world..." (Acts 17:30, 31). -----Richard L. Cave, *Senior Bulletin*, Henderson, Tenn., Feb. '09

NEEDED ADVERSITY

A distinguished botanist, being exiled from his native land, obtained employment as an undergardener in the service of a nobleman. While he was in this situation, his master received a valuable plant, the nature and habits of which were unknown to him. It was given to the gardener to be taken care of, and he, fancying it to be a tropical plant, put it into the hothouse (for it was winter), and dealt with it as with the others under the glass. But it began to decay. When the strange undergardener asked permission to examine it, as soon as he looked at it, he said: "This is an Arctic plant. You are killing it by the tropical heat into which you have introduced it." So he took it outside and exposed it to the frost, and, to the dismay of the upper-gardener, heaped pieces of ice around the flowerpot; but the result vindicated his wisdom, for straightway it began to recover, and was soon as strong as ever.

Now, such a plant is the Christian's spiritual life in this world. It is not earthly difficulty that is dangerous to it, but ease. Put it into a hothouse; separate it from the wintry blasts of worldly hostility; surround it with luxury; hedge it in from every opposition and you take the surest means of killing it. Inspiration says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:2-4).

—Tom Moore, Temple, Tex.; submitted by Paul Kent

WHO SOWED THE SEED?

Who sowed the seed? None could recall.
But somewhere in the bygone years
A toiler in the ground let fall
A seed that in the soil took hold,
And through long months of heat and cold,
Increased and spread, till now appears
An annual harvest of rich gold.

Who planted the tree? Nobody knew.
But someone, sometime, set it out,
And it through rain and sunshine grew,
Although no eye was near to see,
'Til from the little tender sprout
There came a sheltering giant tree
And many a pilgrim breathed a prayer
Of thanks for him who put it there.

Who sowed the Good Seed? Perhaps not now,
But in eternity we'll know.

The Master then will tell us how
Some gentle soul, devoid of fame,
Proclaimed a truth in His Great Name,
Showed someone else the way to go.
And then another, seeing the light,
Turned from the way of doubt and wrong,
And followed the pathway of the right
And thus the good work moved along.
But only in Heaven will it be known
By whom the original seed was sown.

--C. R. Brewer

PICK-AND-CHOOSEISM



The religious community has gone from “Go to the church of your choice” and “One church is as good as another” to “Worship the god of your choice” and “One god is as good as another.” Blessed as we are in this country to be given the privilege of choice in matters of faith, we have become victims of the cult of “Pick-And-Chooseism.” American individualism has worn away much of the foundation of objective reality.. Truth is seen as what we observe to be true, rather than what God’s word declares to be true. With this concept, it is difficult to question anyone’s “truth” without being criticized for a spirit of intolerance.

The results of a Barna Group poll last month brought this response from pollster and Barna Group president George Barna: “Growing numbers of people now serve as their own theologian-in-residence.” Concerning this poll, a report from csmonitor.com observes that “Many ‘cafeteria Christians’ go beyond the teachings of Christian denominations to embrace parts of other world religions.” It even concluded that especially in the West and Northeast, “Christianity has lost its status as the favored American religion.” This echoes a similar poll taken in the 2007 US Religious Landscape Survey by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, which found a majority of Christians believing that salvation and eternal life could be found in other religions.. A follow-up survey released in December revealed that 65 percent of American Christians, including 47 percent of Evangelicals, came to this conclusion, with 80 percent saying one non-Christian faith would provide a route to heaven, and another 61 percent naming two or more.

More specifically, when asked how one obtains eternal life, only 30 percent of church members thought that correct beliefs would be necessary. As for one’s actions, only 29 percent believed them important for salvation, and only 10 percent felt both beliefs and actions are necessary. It was also revealed that 42 percent of religious Americans believe that “atheists are able to find eternal life.” In particular, 69 percent believe that salvation is obtainable in Judaism, and 52 percent in Islam. Plain Christian doctrine is increasingly rejected, even by those who would call themselves “Christians.” The Barna survey revealed that nearly half of those polled do not believe Satan is real, a third believe that Jesus was not sinless, and two thirds say it is not one’s responsibility to share one’s Christian faith with others. The Lord’s Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47) has become our Great Omission!

While some in today’s pluralistic society would take delight in these findings, others see this as a wake-up-call. There is seen to be an obvious lack of Biblical teaching in churches today. The emphasis has shifted from Bible-based doctrine to a needs-meeting criteria to make us feel good. Entertainment, not the crucified Savior, has become the attraction. I am reminded of the words of the prophet Amos: “Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11).
--Ron
