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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.

January 25, 2009

## BE SAFE, NOT SORRY

In some things we may take risks. We may take risks in the stock market, but the only thing we stand to lose is money. However, if we take risks with salvation, we stand to lose our souls, and Jesus said, "*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?*" (Matthew 16:26). We cannot afford to take foolish chances about eternal salvation. We are urged, "*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure*" (2 Peter 1:10).

**To be safe, not sorry**, build your life on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "*Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house: and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock*" (Matthew 7:24-25). To do otherwise is soul-destruction.

Look only to God's word for assurance that you are on the right path in life. Don't depend on how you feel, for "*the heart is deceitful above all things*" (Jeremiah 17:9). Safe guidance does not come from within us, but from the Bible. It is His word that will judge us (John 12:48).  
—Ron

## RESCUED FROM THE DOMAIN OF DARKNESS

*"For He has rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins"* (Colossians 1:13-14).

Most of us, I'm quite sure, prefer light to darkness. Without Jesus, all of us were in darkness, members, although we may not have known it, in the kingdom of Satan. Our heavenly Father desired that we all come to a saving knowledge, and has provided the means through His Son, the Lord Jesus. We are glad that we can share in the inheritance He has for us (Colossians 1:12).

The Word of God describes this transformation as changing kingdoms. We have been brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of the Gospel. The terminology used here by Paul is a military illustration. It pictures Rome going into a free country, and as a result

of waging war and winning they subdue that nation and take them into captivity. But in the spiritual realm we are the ones in bondage and when we accept the Lord Jesus and obey the Gospel, we are “transferred” (NASV) or “translated” (KJV), or are “conveyed” (NKJV) out of that bondage into the light of the Gospel. But it does not end there. Since we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins (Col. 1:14), we must put our newfound faith to the test. We have been called out of that dark kingdom, changed by the light of the Gospel and now have the privilege to go back to that kingdom, now empowered by the Holy Spirit and utilizing the Whole Armor of God (Eph. 6:10-20) to help others find their way out. We can never work our way to heaven, but upon salvation, we are to be the best workers the Lord has. Let’s be found letting our light shine for Jesus (1 Peter 2:10)!

--Larry Miles, Louisville, Ky.

### CHOOSING TO FORGIVE

On December 1, 1997, a student at Heath High School in Paducah opened fire on students assembled for a preschool prayer session. His actions killed three and left five others injured, including Missy Jenkins. Though paralyzed from the shooting, her positive attitude throughout the ordeal highlighted her faith, and landed her on the cover of *Christian Woman*. Recently she has released a book entitled, Choose To Be Happy, in which she tells of her choice to forgive the shooter and to actually visit him in prison.

After teaching the disciples how to pray, Jesus added, “*For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men then your Father will not forgive your transgressions*” (Matthew 6:14-15). In frequently dealing with the topic of forgiveness, the biblical writers seem to highlight two of its great values.

Forgiveness offers a release from the anger associated with past mistreatment. Missy says of her forgiveness, “It release me from being angry. Being angry holds you down. It causes you to be tired.” Anger leads to bitterness, hatred, revenge, and ultimately spiritual burnout. Paul endorses this truth in Ephesians 4:26-27. “*Be angry, and yet do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.*” Forgiveness shuts the door on the devil and allows us to move on with our lives.

In another way, forgiving others helps us appreciate and accept the forgiveness the lord provides us through the cross. Paul continued in verse 32 of Ephesians 4, “*And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*” The process of forgiving a neighbor or family member

reminds us of the real pain endured by Jesus on the cross.

Forgiveness is neither the denial of a hurt nor the refusal to recognize its ongoing consequences. Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. My forgiving another does not change their relationship with God, but it does change my relationship with them. It is a choice to release someone from a “debt” and to move on; or as Missy says, “Choose to be happy.”

--Lance Cordle, *The Encourager*, 1-25-'09, Calvert City, Ky..

### DEATH—NO LAUGHING MATTER

Life can be funny, but few people left to their most intimate thoughts can truly find humor in their own mortality. Erma Bombeck suggested these words for her grave marker: “Big deal! I’m used to dust.” “I’m not afraid to die,” said Woody Allen. “I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” “If you live to the age of a hundred you have it made because very few people die past the age of a hundred.” That was the late George Burns’ take on life and death. Dustin Hoffman once said he wanted the epitaph, “I knew this would happen!” While one may seek to bring levity to nearly every aspect of living, their thoughts quickly sober when faced with the serious subject of dying.

Death can be many things, but in the end no man can honestly say that it was unexpected. Life is plastered with warnings. We are reminded of death in the changing of the seasons, the observation of nature, and the passing of generations. Our bodies send out warnings when something is not right. Death is personally experienced through the loss of friends and loved ones. God reminds all that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

The Christian’s perspective of death should be clearly reflected in their approach to living. When faced with difficult circumstances in life, what choices did they make? When confronted with divine commands, what direction did they choose to go?....

Baseball great Leo Durocher once said, “I don’t want to achieve immortality by being inducted into baseball’s Hall of Fame. I want to achieve immortality by not dying.” What seems impossible, Jesus has made possible. The weeping of death shall give way to the joys of life eternal. Death is no laughing matter. Come to Jesus, and allow Him to help you make the choice today that will prepare you for forever.

--David Bragg, Cape Girardeau, MO,  
*Bulletin Gold*, Jan. '09

*“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” (Psalms 63:1, 3).*

“**JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VALUES**” will be this morning’s message, with Isaiah 5:20-25 as the reading. **This evening** we will have our monthly **Song Service**, it being the last Sunday of the month.

(For an outline of last Sunday morning’s sermon, *The Sufferings of Christ*, and today’s message, visit the website.)

**IN OUR PRAYERS:** Rodger continues to improve following his triple-bypass surgery. \*\*\* Woody is also doing well after his surgery. \*\*\* Continue to remember: Paul & Nadine; Dean; Inez; Lyla; Lester; Mary’s mother; 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. Pray that our new President will be granted wisdom in leading our country through very difficult times, and that his decisions will be in accord with God’s will.