



Arthur Church of Christ

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



The "Sower"

July 19, 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---6:00 p.m.

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).

- **"THE BELIEVER'S STATUS IN CHRIST"** will be this morning's topic, with Eph. 2:1-10 as the reading. The evening lesson will be, **"Jesus, Our Great Intercessor,"** and Heb. 4:14-16 & 7:25-26 will be the reading.
- **WEDNESDAY**, I will speak at the Sunnyside Rd. church in Decatur, and Greg Swango will be speaking here on a topic of his choosing.
- **SICK LIST:** Being short on space, see last week's bulletin.

WHOSE APPLAUSE?

Verdi, renowned musician from the last century, always received great applause for his performance. Those who watched him closely said his eyes always traveled upward to the box where his tutor sat. Verdi did not re-

spond to the applause of the audience until he saw his tutor applauding. It was then, and only then, that Verdi would smile and bow in acceptance of the audience's appreciation. What a lesson for the Christian!

What good is the world's acclaim and acceptance if our Master is not pleased. We need to labor for His applause, His acceptance, and His acclaim before smiling and bowing to the acceptance of the world's applause. For only when God has smiled and applauded may we celebrate our work well done.

—Main Street Harbinger, Milan, Tenn..

THE MAN who hates to be asked, "Who's calling?" when he places a telephone call, also despises having his calls answered with a phone number. One morning, everything fell into place. "211-8412," answered the secretary. "May I speak to Mr. Smith?" asked the man. "May I tell him who's calling?" asked the secretary. "219-3587," the man replied. —Trib-Bits, Decatur Tribune

THE UNGRATEFUL SCORPION

I recently read a parable about an old man who used to meditate each day by the Ganges River in India. One morning he saw a scorpion floating on the water. When the scorpion drifted near the old man, he reached to rescue it, but was stung by the scorpion. A bit later he tried again, and was stung again, the bite swelling his hand painfully and giving him much pain. Another man passing by saw what was happening and yelled at the media-

tor, "Hey, stupid old man, what's wrong with you? Only a fool would risk his life for the sake of an ugly, evil creature. Don't you know you could kill yourself trying to save that ungrateful scorpion?"

The old man calmly replied, "My friend, just because it is in the scorpion's nature to sting, does not change my nature to save."

It is in God's nature to save—because it is in God's nature to love. God seeks the lost, heals the wounded, forgives the offender, and gives hope to those who are in despair. But too many today are like the scorpion—they refuse God's help. Most refuse the saving and helpful hand of the Lord. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk. 10:45).

Will you respond to the reached-out-hand of the Lord in obedience, or will you "kick against the pricks" (Acts 9:5)? My friends, it is time that we all obediently submit ourselves to God (James 4:7).

--Tom Moore, Temple Texas

NOT STRANGE

The apostle Peter admonished, "*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you*" (1 Peter 4:12).

How easy it is to become accustomed to comfort! When all things are going well with us, we are prone to believe that it should always remain so. Anything that disrupts our accustomed comfort is regarded as "strange" or alien to the way things should be.

Believers in Christ in our country have grown accustomed to the blessing of freedom, as guaranteed by our Constitution. We especially, as Christians, have relished our freedom to practice our Christian faith without fear of government inter-ference, and to share Chris-

tian faith and values with those around us. Indeed, the founders of our nation based these freedoms upon scriptural principles. However, at no time in our history have these freedoms been so threatened as they are now. For a people who have taken for granted that this situation would be forever secure, it has become "strange" that we are expected to endorse the killing of babies in their mothers' wombs, same-sex sexual relations, and even same-sex "marriage," or find ourselves threatened by "hate-crime laws" now being considered in the U.S. Senate. For a preacher to preach what the Bible teaches (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27) against these practices will put him in jeopardy for arrest and civil lawsuits, as has been the case in other nations. The Bible itself will be viewed as a vehicle for "hate-speech".

However, we should not consider such to be "strange." Jesus has informed us that the **absence** of persecution would be strange. He told His disciples, "If we were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). Paul spoke of the eventual deliverance of believers "from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). By "world" is meant the age or dispensation, not the earthly globe. It is of this age that Satan is declared to be "the god of this world (age)" (2 Cor. 4:4), that is, it is he that dominates the present world-order. In such a system, it is imperative that the Christian don "the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day" (Eph. 6:11), being "strong in the Lord" (v. 10), struggling "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (v. 12). In fact, to some degree we may be confident that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). We are to be as the faithful of the Old Testament who "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. 11:13b). Yes, in this world-order, believers are the "strangers," or strange ones. The reason is that "our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ," (Phil. 3:20 NKJV).

May we never become so comfortable in this world that we feel we must conform to its standards, but live in the light of the Gospel of Christ. —Ron

A MORNING SONG

I owe the Lord a morning song

of gratitude and praise,

for the kind mercy he has shown

in lengthening out my days.

He kept me safe another night;

I see another day.

Now may his Spirit, as the light,

direct me in his way.

--Amos Herr,

LAUGHTER: THE BEST MEDICINE

Q.: what do you get when you cross a cow with an octopus?

A.: a cow that can milk herself.

Q.: What do you call pigs that live in harmony?

A.: Pen pals.

Q.: How do you make time fly?

A.: Throw your clock out the window!

Ever since the question was asked, "Why did the chicken cross the road?", there has been the need for humor. And today, in a world which continues to grow scarier by the minute, we can all use laughter in our lives. Laughter is THE best medicine!

Laughter is beneficial for the body. It exercises the face, shoulders, diaphragm, and strengthens the body to fight disease, and reduces levels of two major stress hormones. Laughter increases endorphins which are natural painkillers in the body. It can also tone facial muscles which can make you look younger. Think of the money that can be saved on plastic surgery! Laughter increases a blood chemical, interferon, which stimulates the immune system also. Laughter is contagious. Laugh, and the world laughs with you. Laughter inspires true humanity. Comedian Alan Alda says it best: "When people are laughing, they're generally not killing one another." Well said. So, instead of tuning into the latest news, turn on a funny show, read a comic book, or laugh at the world around you.

"A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones" (Prov. 17:22)..

—Kathy Reardon, Phil Rd. bulletin
