



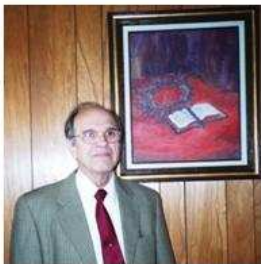
Arthur Church of Christ

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



The "Sower"

May 3, 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).

"I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD MOST high" (Psalms 7:17).

"THE RELEVANT BOOK" will be this morning's message, with Psa. 119:127 and 130 as the text. The evening lesson will be, **"Unselfish Living."** The text will be Gal. 1:10-11.

LET US PRAY FOR—Paul & Nadine; Inez; Dean; Woody, Lester; Rodger; Mary's mother; Charles Moore (improved; Tex.); Lewis & Mary Carter (Ind.); our service men and women, and the leaders of our nation and other nations as peace and financial stability in our world is sought.

STRENGTH FOR THE ASKING

A little boy was having a hard time lifting a heavy stone. His father asked, "Are you using all your strength?"

"Yes, I am," the boy replied.

"No you're not," said the father. "I'm right here waiting, and you haven't asked me to help."

When we are faced with a problem that seems unsolvable or a burden that is too heavy, we might ask ourselves, "Are we using all our strength?" Our Father, too, is waiting to help." *--Bulletin Digest*

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses..." (Romans 8:26a, NKJV).

CREATIVE SNEEZING... IF THIS STORY

IS NOT TRUE, IT OUGHT TO BE

They walked in tandem, each of the 93 students filing into the already crowded auditorium. With rich maroon gowns flowing and the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles and moms freely brushed away tears.

This class would not pray during the commencement—not by choice but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it. The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling.

They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families. The speeches were nice, but they were routine...until the final speech received a standing ovation.

A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then, the other 92 students—every single one of them—**SNEEZED!** The student on stage simply looked at the audience and said, **“God bless you—each and every one of you!”** and walked off the stage.

The audience exploded in applause. The graduating class had found a unique way to invoke God’s blessing on their future with or without the court’s approval!

In God We Trust, United We Stand. --*Fifty Plus Letter*, Aug. ‘04

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL

He says it is the “gospel of God” (Romans 1:1). This phrase may mean it is a gospel that comes from God, a gospel that God himself makes known. It may also mean it is a gospel “about” God. There is no need to choose between these two because Paul might have had both in mind. Both are certainly true and it is important in the book of Romans to see that both are true.

The gospel isn’t about less important things like the weather, or the economy of the Greco-Roman world or how to get along with our neighbors. The gospel is about God himself and how he relates to this sinful creation. And the gospel comes from God himself. It isn’t good advice or a philosophy that Paul or others have dreamed up—it comes from God. All this means is that the Romans (and we) should pay close attention to his message.

He says the gospel is God’s power to save (1:16). We’re tempted to think of God’s “power” as merely “divine muscle,” but it’s a mistake to think of it like that in this context. Even when speaking about human power, we know the difference between the power to move a huge stone and the power to “move” a person. A person “saved” in Paul’s sense means God brought that person back into relationship with himself and so saved him/her from sin and loss. This kind of “saving” isn’t done with “divine muscle.” Since God saves us in and by the cross of Christ, it’s clear that he doesn’t bully us into life and doesn’t save us by force. To be saved by God’s “power” means God set himself the task and was able to complete it. The gospel, or good news, is the message that a faithful God did that very thing, and that he did it through the crucified Jesus Christ. There are some places naked power or force can’t enter, and one of them is the human heart.

He says the gospel is God’s power to save all who believe because in the gospel God’s righteousness (faithfulness) continues to be revealed (1:16-17). God’s righteousness is God’s faithfulness. He keeps his commitments, and when he created humanity he made a commitment to humanity. Despite our rebellion against him, he didn’t utterly destroy us. He was faithful to his word, and that’s part of what we mean when we say God is “righteous.” His faithfulness is to all people, and not only those who are Jews. The gospel message that proclaims God’s faithfulness draws people to God in response to that faithfulness, and they put their trust in him. So the gospel is “from” faith (God’s faithfulness) “unto faith” (the faith of those who hear). The relationship between the righteous God and those who are declared righteous by faith is a dynamic one if salvation is to be experienced. It isn’t just God keeping faith with man; it is man trusting himself to that God who keeps faith.

—Kemp church bulletin

THE SHEPHERD PSALM

*The Lord is my Shepherd—that's a Relationship!
I shall not want—that's a Supply!
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures—that's a Rest!
He leadeth me beside the still waters—that's a Refreshment!
He restoreth my soul—that's Healing!
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness—that's Guidance!
For His name sake—that's Purpose!
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death—that's Testing!
I will fear no evil—that's Protection!
For Thou art with me—that's Faithfulness!
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me—that's Discipline!
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies—that's Hope!
Thou anointest my head with oil—That's Consecration!
My cup runneth over—that's Abundance!
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life—that's Blessing!
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord—that's Security!
Forever—that's Eternity!*

--Selected

"By perseverance the snail reached the ark." (Spurgeon)

THE OLD PATHS

I once heard of a mother who was very frustrated one day as she was hunting over the house for her cordless phone. After several minutes of searching, her little ten-year-old son said, "You know, Mom. I've got an idea. We should invent a phone that stays connected to its base so it never gets lost."

Friends, sometimes the answers to today's problems aren't found in the cutting-edge of tomorrow, but rather in the old solutions of yesterday. Sometimes in order to go forward, we must go backward.

That is never more true than when we are dealing with Christianity and our relationship with God. The prophet Jeremiah put it this way, "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it: then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16).

The way to Heaven is not found by blazing new paths never before trod, but by returning to the old paths and walking in them. "New" doesn't always mean "better" and "right," nor does "Old" always mean "worn out" and "wrong." Give it some thought. --Steve Higginbotham, *MercEmail*

THE MONARCH butterfly can discern tastes 12,000 times more subtle than those perceivable by human taste buds. Do you ever wonder how they come up with the figure 12,000 when measuring the butterfly's taste buds with human taste buds?

--Trib-Bits, *Decatur Tribune*, 1-23-08
