

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.....6:00 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 17, 2008

FOR THE JOY OF IT

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

God's word, the Bible, declares that Jesus' coming as the sacrificial "Lamb of God" to die for man's sins was in God's plan "from the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). If there had been any other way for justice to be done, and at the same time for mercy and grace to be extended to man, the crucifixion of Jesus would never have been. The writer of Hebrews (above) affirmed that Jesus "endured the cross" "for the joy that was set before him." In context, this joy was the joy of winning the "race" (v. 1), the obtaining of the salvation of lost sinners. Our salvation cost Jesus His life's blood. The reaching of that goal made even the cross endurable.

The lesson for us is that as Jesus made that ultimate sacrifice, we are to begin that race, and then run it faithfully, even in the face of personal pain and sacrifice. The joy of heaven is before all who faithfully run that race. Have you begun the race? Is your faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord? Have you committed yourself to Him in repentance and baptism? (John 3:16; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; 22:16). If you've begun, are you being "faithful" in running the Christian race? We are admonished, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).
—Ron

FROM THE INTERNET--

Teacher Wins Right to Direct Union Dues

For two years, a teacher in Washington state has been fighting the Vancouver Education Association over her right to send her union dues to charity, as state law allows. Last week, a labor board ruled in favor of teacher Susan Wiggs, but the VEA won't give up. "They absolutely don't want a precedent of religious objectors being able to choose their own charity," Wiggs said. And, according to citizen-link.com, they do not approve of Wigg's charity choice because of the charity's president, Linda Smith. Smith was a state legislator who was instrumental in writing and passing a measure that restricts how unions spend member dues.

— Submitted by Ron Thomas

BASKIN' ROBBINS"

Two robins were sitting on a branch high in a tree. One looked down and saw a field full of worms. Turning to the second bird he said, "We ought to go down there and eat." "Good idea," said his friend.

The two of them flew down to the field and ate their fill and then some. When he could eat no more one said to the other, "You know, we ought to stop eating and fly back to our branch." Rubbing his belly the second responded, "Yep." With that they tried to fly to their branch in the tree, but they had eaten too much to get off the ground. The second one said, "Maybe we should just stay here and relax in the sun." Before long the two birds slept, basking in the afternoon sun.

As they slept, a cat happened upon the field. Seeing the birds, sleeping, and oblivious to his presence, the cat pounced. As feather's settled around him, the cat rubbed his belly, and said, "There is nothing better than Baskin' Robbins."

It is a poor pun, but there is spiritual value. Throughout Israel and Judah's history, they were physically blessed at times. It was during these times that they would often forget God. Amos warns his hearers, "Therefore I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith Jehovah, whose name is the God of hosts. Woe to you who are at ease in Zion..." (Amos 5:27-6:1). The people thought all was good, and they sat back, enjoying the good things in life, forgetting God, and neglecting obedience. We must always remember from whom blessings come, and seek to obey Him.

The birds also forgot about the cat. They forgot to be watchful. Peter warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The lesson of this modern parable is this: The field is the world with its pleasures. The birds are you and I. The cat is our enemy the devil. When we focus too much on what this world has to offer, we forget to trust in God, and we become easy targets for the devil.

[author unknown; edited; submitted by Paul Kent, Georgetown, IL]

- *"In a free society, there is much clamor with little suffering; in a despotic state there is little complaint but much suffering."* --Carrot
- *"A half truth is a whole lie."* --Ancient proverb
- *"To belittle is to be little."*
- *"Well done is better than well said."* --Ben Franklin
- *"Politeness is the flower of humanity. He who is not polite enough is not human enough."* --Joubert

"The LORD liveth: and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted" (Psalms 18:46).

- **WELCOME** to today's Bible class and/or worship assembly. If you are a VISITOR, we want to express our appreciation for your decision to join with us today in honoring our Lord. It is our hope that you will return at every opportunity. If we can assist you in your walk with the Lord, please feel free to call on us.
- **"JOHN AND THE SON OF GOD"** will be this morning's message, another in our series on **"John, the Theologian."** The reading will be John 20:24-31. I had previously planned this series for Sunday evenings, and a series on Ephesians for Sunday mornings, but have decided to switch. This evening's lesson, the second in our series in Ephesians, will be, **"The Dead: Quickened, Glorified, Sanctified,"** with Ephesians 2:1-10 as the reading.
- **NEXT SUNDAY morning's** message in our series in John will be a consideration of some of the seven "I AMs" of Christ. The reading will be John 6:41-51.
- **SONG SERVICE AND BIRTHDAY FELLOWSHIP:** Next Sunday we will have a potluck following the morning service, recognizing those with birthdays in February and March, and our monthly **SONG SERVICE** following. **Happy birthday** to: (Feb. 3) Mary Taylor, (24) Inez, (Mar. 4) Lyla, (5) Sammie, (6) Nadine and Boyd, (11) Howard, and (22) Rodger. We will not meet that evening.
- **BIBLE CLASSES: Wednesday** evening's study will begin with "4" under "XXX" in our study sheet in our series on the history of the church. Currently we are studying the uniting of the unity movements sometimes identified as the "Reformers" (or "Disciples" and the "Christians," also identified with prominent leaders, Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. Extra lesson sheets are on the literature table.
- **IN OUR PRAYERS:** Paul is making progress, and plans are for him to be transferred to Hook's Rehabilitation Center in Indianapolis for therapy. *** Our latest report concerning Jason and Tina's son, Jay, is that surgery may not be necessary, and that he may outgrow his problem. *** Tina's husband, Jason, is to have leg surgery April 1. *** Mary Taylor, Boyd's brother (Vic), Charles Moore (Tex.), Lewis Carter (Ind.), our service men and women, and our nation's and world's leaders as they seek a way for peace. Pray that more will come to know Him who is the Prince of Peace.

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