

THE SOWER
ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Have you visited our web site lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

“GET WITH IT”

God has never promised anyone that life would be easy. Far from it! The future is not always filled with sunny days, but frequently with dark clouds and thick darkness. For the Christian, difficulties, grief and frustrations serve as a constant challenge to our faithful endurance. However, God abundantly supplies the resources needed to achieve a favorable outcome in life. Chief among such resources is the record of God's people as recorded in God's word, set as examples for us. The apostle Paul wrote the Christians at Rome: "Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4, ESV). One among many "former-days" examples is Joshua, a successor to Moses, chosen by God to lead Israel in conquest of Canaan following their 40-year trek through the wilderness. The first chapter of Joshua records God's commission to Joshua. He is to lead Israel to take the land in Canaan, which God had centuries before promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In essence, God is telling Joshua, "You are my man. Heed my word. Rid yourself of all fears. Fulfill my purpose for you. Now, get with it!"

While Joshua may well feel overwhelmed by the task set before him, God does not leave him without divine assurance. Four times within this short 18-verses chapter God encourages him, saying, "Be strong and courageous" (vs. 6, 7, 9, 18). For Joshua and the army he leads there must be no retreat, for this is God's battle. He is assured, "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you" (v. 5). Faith in God's presence, and obedience to His word, will assure him of victory. The fact that the Lord told him to "be strong and courageous" four times would imply, first of all, that God meant it, and second, that Joshua needed it.

Joshua, through 40 years of wandering with God's people through the wilderness, knew them in all their fickleness. He must have heard them ask a hundred times, "Where is God?" The "God is dead" cry is not anything new to our generation. We would not be surprised if many times he heard comments

like, "Maybe God spoke to Moses, but maybe not." Now, could he trust the people to not be faithless as they faced Jericho?

Remembering that this was written "for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope," the Lord's promise to us is unchanged: "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20, ESV). We can hear God saying to us, "I've given you life, with all its challenges. You are my man (or woman). Heed my word. Rid yourself of all fears. Fulfill my purpose for you. Now, get with it!" --Ron

"You can never do a kindness too soon because you never know how soon it will be too late." --Ralph Waldo Emerson

"HALFWAY UP THE MOUNTAIN"

The dictionary defines the word "mediocre" as coming from the Latin word "mediocris", which means halfway up a mountain. The soils there were found to be stone and of ordinary or poor quality. Modern usage has come to mean of middling quality; of only moderate excellence; neither good nor bad; indifferent; ordinary; common place.

The Bible has more than a few things to say about this. In Genesis chapter 4 the NIV reads that Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil, but Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. Abel's sacrifice sounds first-rate while Cain's sounds kind of ordinary, maybe of middling quality—what might be called mediocre, halfway up the mountain, stony hearted, indifferent. Later we read how Cain's attitude and purpose of heart played out in his life. In Revelation 3:15 and following it speaks of being lukewarm, and the ending result—neither hot nor cold, halfway up the mountain. The image presented is not just to spit, but "spew thee out of my mouth." The comparison would be to vomit. Totally distasteful. Not a pleasant picture, but a very vivid one, of God's reaction to such an encounter. In Colossians 3:23 it says whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.

There is a saying that it is good enough for who it is for. Halfway up the mountain is not good enough for God. He has given us His best. What should we give in appreciation?

--Lyle Warfel, *Kemp Church Bulletin*

"College curriculums have many voices of hate at work, but a voice of Christian love is considered too divisive to be tolerated. Dartmouth College prohibited copies of

"Mere Christianity from being distributed as gifts to students. A Dean ruled that the book could be considered "offensive." (*Trib-Bits, Decatur Tribune*)

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE—

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things, thus doing more walking.

And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things, requiring them to bend, reach and stretch.

And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders, and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise.

And God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age that you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

-Logansport (IN) Lifelines

AN ALARMING QUOTE—DARE WE IGNORE IT?—

(Commenting on Detroit's overwhelming Muslim population): "*Islam isn't in America to be equal to any faith, but to become dominant. The Qur'an should be the highest authority in America, and Islam the only accepted religion on Earth.*" (Omar Ahmed, Director of Council on American-Islamic Relations) Source: *News With Views*

"**A MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE**" will be today's lesson, with two scriptures as the reading: Exodus 3:8-10 and Acts 7:29-36.

IN OUR PRAYERS: This past week Doris met with her cancer doctor following blood tests. She was told, following four blood tests and an examination, that she is now "CANCER FREE," and probably should not have either chemo or radiation. *** Sammy continues to do well following her surgery. *** A date has not yet been set for my cataract removal.