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**THE SOWER**  
**ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Ron Bartanen, Evangelist**

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**CHOOSING WHAT TO BELIEVE**

Among the many witty and thought-provoking bits of wisdom that has come my way on the Internet recently was this observation: "The truth is that most of us decide what lies we want to believe." Prejudices abound in such realms as politics, culture and religion. True objectivity in separating fact from fiction is hard to find. We are universally affected by our backgrounds, friends, the media and environment. A truly subjective seeking after truth in a multitude of areas of life is difficult, if not entirely impossible, to find. The result is a divided society, often resulting in chaos and even war. Life, thereby, becomes a burden upon mankind as each seeks his own way. The natural inclination of man is to seek a way that will harmonize with his own prejudices and preferences. The problem is rooted within our own degenerate hearts, which the Bible describes as "deceitful in all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9).

God's answer to man's predicament is a person—His own Son, Who declared, "I am the way, the **truth**, and the life" (John 14:6). Through Jesus, God has reconciled believers to Himself, through the crucifixion of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-21), uniting us with Him who is the embodiment of truth. While our minds and hearts seek to feed us an assortment of lies, in Christ we are afforded the totality of truth, as He declared to His disciples: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). The Holy Spirit-inspired word which they proclaimed was the word of God, as Jesus prayed on the eve of His betrayal: "Father, sanctify them through your truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). That truth affects every facet of the believer's worldview and conduct. We open our hearts to Satan's lies if our hearts are not guarded by this truth, as Paul declared of those who did not love the truth, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). The choice is ours.

—Ron

## GOING UP?

A little boy got on the elevator in the Empire State Building in New York City. He and his daddy started to the top. The boy watched the signs flashing by as they went by the floors: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70. They kept going and he got nervous. He took his daddy's hand and said, "Daddy, does God know we're coming?" (Continue on back)

--Leighton Ford, "Hope For a Great Forever", *Preaching Today* tape #966. Via *House to House/Heart to Heart*

That's a good question—one all need to ask themselves: "**Does God know I'm coming?**" Do you share the expectation of the apostle Paul, who said, "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23)? Paul was assured in his mind and heart that when it came time to depart this life, he would be "with the Lord." Even beyond that, he anticipated the time when the Lord would return, and spirit and body would again be joined in the resurrection, and he would be "caught up...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Friend, are you among those whom the Lord knows are coming?

--Ron

## A SOBERING THOUGHT

Is the taking the lives of innocent yet-to-be-born children one of the "core values" of our nation which one candidate for the presidency says he wants to defend? It is to our nation's shame that Planned Parenthood, the leading abortion mill in our country, is responsible for over 900 babies being killed daily. Of secondary concern is the fact that tax-payers support Planned Parenthood with an outlay of \$1.5 million of our money each day. Truly, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

—Ron

## TID-BITS OF WISDOM—

**People will forget** what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.

**You can't direct the wind**, but you can adjust your sails.

## APPLE OF THY EYE

Lord, hear me when I pray to Thee.

Give ear unto my prayer.

Thou art omnipresent, Lord,

Thy Spirit's everywhere.

Oh, let my mouth speak nothing ill,

Let not my footsteps slip.

But keep me in the righteous path,

Keep me within Thy grip.

Thou Who savest all of those

Who put their trust in Thee,

Oh, as the apple of Thy eye,

I pray Thou wilt keep me.

Under the shadow of Thy wings

Hide me forevermore.

That I might fully rest in Thee,

My precious, loving Lord.

--Author unknown

## SOMEONE'S AT THE DOOR

**“Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if anyone hears My voice and openeth the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).**

Jesus is knocking on our door. We heard His voice, and saw Him through the peephole. We're afraid to face Him. We have turned down the TV and hid all our disgusting things. Now we are remaining quiet, hoping He will go away. He is really there with good news on how to overcome and be saved. Let's open up and be filled with joy. Will we? --*David Grubb*

**“EXODUS—A MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE (Part 2)”** will be today's message, with Exodus 14:15-31 as the reading.

**PRAY FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS:** 290 believers in Christ were killed by an Islamic terrorist in Sri Lanka on Easter, meeting to remember the crucified and risen Lord. Some politicians called them “Easter worshipers