

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

**APRIL 7, 2019**

Have you visited our web site lately? ([www.Arthurcoc.com](http://www.Arthurcoc.com))

**SPRING HAS SPRUNG!**

*“For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth: The time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land” (Song of Solomon 2:12, NKJV).*

Such were the words of Shulamite maiden’s suitor, as related to the “daughters of Jerusalem,” expressing her anticipation of the coming of her beloved, seen allegorically as the joy of God’s people awaiting the coming of Christ. The harsh bite of a stormy winter has passed, and she is filled with the joy of hope with the coming of spring and new life. Winter is a time of deadness, but spring is a time of renewal.

Officially, “spring has sprung!” In fact, our calendars inform us it began almost 3 weeks ago. However, during this time we have desired to experience it, that it not be in name only. In fact, reports indicate that we may be having a taste of it this weekend. For many across our land winter has been especially harsh, but now there is the anticipation of milder days and nights. It is hoped that the winter storms are over, and now we can watch for the springing forth of flowers, and the singing of birds as they welcome the new season. That which has the appearance of hopeless death will spring forth into life.

All of this, of course, is to remind us of the believer’s hope. It is truly an eloquent sermon that our heavenly Father delivers to us through the voice of Nature. In Christ, those who undergo the sting of the harsh winter of death do so with the assurance that death “*is swallowed up in victory*” (1 Corinthians 15:54), looking for the coming of our Beloved, Jesus Christ, and our eternal union with Him in the “mansions” He has prepared for His bride, the church (John 1-3; Ephesians 5:25, 32). Jesus Christ won the victory through His own death and resurrection. “*Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Have you, in faith, identified yourself with Him in His death, burial and resurrection? In the words of Paul, “*Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him in baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection*” (Romans 6:3-5).

Has spring sprung for you? Have you let the spring of life in Jesus Christ spring up in your heart and life?  
--Ron

*“If I have learned anything in my career as an educator, it is this: Whom the gods would destroy, they first subsidize.” (George Roche, President, Hillsdale College)*

*“it seems that every family tree has some sap in it.”*

## HUMILITY, etc.

- True humility is not to think low of myself, but to think rightly truthfully of myself.
  - A Christian minister once said, "I was never of any use until I found out that God did not intend me to be a great man."
  - It is possible to be too big for God to use you, but never too small for God to use you.
  - God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and physician. A poor, poor imitation of Him as I am or wish to be.
  - Lead that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am receiving." (Einstein)
  - There is no king who has not had a slave among his ancestors, and no slave who has not had a king among his. (Helen Keller)
    - Second Street is the first street in America., according to R.L. Polk & Co., publishers of city directories. Second Street is the most common street-name in this country. Park Street is in second place. Third Street is third. Fourth is fourth. Fifth is fifth. Main is sixth. First Street is seventh
- --*Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations*

## PRAYER—"THE NEW PORNOGRAPHY"?

Am I imagining it, or is our religious freedom in danger of removal? Is religious freedom—the freedom to publicly reveal your heart-felt devotion to God in such personal activities as prayer—to be restrained? We saw it in an earlier stage in the '60s as Bible reading and prayer in public schools came to be viewed as unconstitutional and as somehow toxic to the upbringing of children. This sentiment has evolved to where now prayer should be restricted to the privacy of your home.

One example among many is that of Coach Joe Kennedy, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and, until recently, a beloved high school football coach. I wrote, "until recently" because he has been fired. The reason? Following every game, win or lose, he would kneel and silently say a 15-second prayer. Officials of his beloved Bremerton, Washington High School ordered him to not so much as even bow his head as this would be seen as "religious," and could not be tolerated. *The First Liberty Institute (FLI)* in Colorado is attempting to appeal this case before the U. S. Supreme Court. Kelly J. Shackelford, CEO of FLI, has commented, "***It's like prayer is the new pornography.***"

It seems apparent that a counter-culture is at work in America to drive religious thought out of the public consciousness, especially Christian-Judeo values. To contact and support efforts to defend our values go to [FirstLiberty.org/JelpCoachKennedy](http://FirstLiberty.org/JelpCoachKennedy). --Ron

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***"Difficult roads lead to beautiful locations."***

**IN OUR PRAYERS:** Wayne Polk, minister at the church in Shelbyville is having additional health problems. Keep him in your prayers.