

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

NOT WANTING JESUS?

There was an occasion when people were so upset by Jesus that they “besought him to depart from them” (Luke 8:47). The reason: Jesus had cast a plurality of demons from a man and sent them into nearby hogs. Rather than rejoice in the restoring of soundness of mind through the casting out of the demons by Christ, the citizens did not want Him among them. Like these people, many today are not comfortable with Jesus, or even the mention of His name in prayer.

Some would purposely exclude Him from their lives. These tell us that no positive mention should be made regarding Him in our schools or public activities. He is even being edited out of school history books, as well as His influence. In our modern educational system, we are to believe the freedom and relative prosperity of our nation is unrelated to the Christian impact upon civilization. In our diverse, multi-cultural society, the godly principals set forth in the Bible are no longer acceptable. Tolerance of perverseness and politically correct deceptions require intolerance toward Him who is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6).

Some would exclude Him from their choice of lifestyle. Evil so fills their hearts and lives it is impossible for Christ to take up residence in them. He is excluded from their lives. Sadly, for the majority “the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is in the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Others would crowd Him out—not purposely, but simply by filling their lives with material things. Such find no time for Christ, the Bible, or His church. Other things clamor for their attention. It is needful for we who would follow Christ to beware lest we permit the multitude of other interests to take precedence over Christ.

What about you? Are you among those who would send Him away? Or would you welcome Him into your life? Through the revelation given to the apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, Jesus addressed the materially blessed church at Laodicea which had become lukewarm in their relationship to Christ, saying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Yes, even “religious” church members can unwittingly distance themselves from Christ, Are we willing to stand with Him when the world rejects Him and His teachings? Will you permit Him to be the priority in your life? Or would you, too, be among those who would send Him away?

--Ron

THINK ABOUT IT: “Make a big lie, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.” (Adolf Hitler, *Politics 101*)

DO YOU GOLF ALONE?

Have you ever heard the story about the woman who asked her husband, “Why don’t you play golf with George anymore?” The husband responded, “Well, would you play golf with a man who puts down the wrong score and moves the ball when you aren’t watching?” “No, of course not,” the wife said. And the husband said, “And neither will George.”

Friends, what kind of person are you to be around? Do you know that the Bible holds up both good and bad people (e.g. Demetrius and Diotrophes-3 John 9-12) as examples: some to imitate and others to avoid?

As you reflect on your life, how would you describe yourself? Have you been the kind of person that blesses the lives of others, or have you been the kind of person that others just endure until they can get away from you?

Surely we all would like to be more like Joses, nicknamed Barnabas (Encourager) by the apostles (Acts 4:36). He seemed to see and bring out the best in everyone. It was Barnabas that was sent by the Jerusalem church to encourage the brethren at Antioch (Acts 11:22-24). It was Barnabas who stepped forward and accepted the recently converted Saul of Tarsus when no one else seemed willing to take the risk (Acts 9:26-27). And it was Barnabas who stood up for John Mark and was willing to give him a second chance (Acts 15:37-39).

What’s your recent impact on others then? Or, let me ask it this way: “If you wanted to go golfing, would you have to go alone?” Give it some thought. –Steve Higginbotham, *MercEmail*

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify another.” (Romans 14:19)

“DON’T BE A FOOL”

Obviously it’s not nice to call somebody a fool, nor is it the Christian thing to do (Matthew 5:22). While we personally may not be qualified always to make such a judgment of our fellow human beings, the Bible makes plain the fact that some are fools. Among the fools designated in Scripture as fools are those who make light of sin. Solomon said it well: “Fools make a mock of sin” (Proverbs 14:9).

To a fool, sin is often only a laughing matter. For examples of such today, simply try watching most of the current TV-“comedies.” Sin, especially sexual sins, plainly condemned in God’s word, is seldom taken seriously in our society, and usually defended. Shortly prior to the Jewish nation being taken into captivity by Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah spoke words that would also be true of many today: “Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.” (Jeremiah 6:15 & 8:12). Sin is no laughing matter. ***“Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”*** (Isaiah 59:2). --

Ron

“EXODUS—MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE” continues to be the theme of my messages. Today’s reading will be Jeremiah 31:31-37.

PRAYER CONCERNS: Doris continues to improve following her recent fall, though not as quickly as we would hope. *** My surgery-scars are healing following my ear-cancer surgery. Thankfully, I have experienced very little pain. My next concern will be preparing for cataract surgery of both eyes. On the 31st I’m scheduled for a laser treatment on my left eye. *** A number of states are seeking to defend unborn children’s right to life. Babies are as much humans in their mothers’ wombs as they are when they are born. Prayers are that abortion “rights” may be questioned and rightfully put down by the Supreme Court of the USA.