

THE SOWER

ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST

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AUGUST 4, 2019

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THE FORGOTTEN SON OF GOD

When my children were small, I gave them memory verses to learn each week. When Luke, our youngest, was about four, his verse one week was John 3:16. He had a particularly hard time with one word in that familiar passage—“*Begotten*”...” He kept substituting another similar sounding word: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only FORGOTTEN Son....*”

It occurs to me that in the life of many people that is exactly where Christ is—FORGOTTEN!

We live in a world that has come unraveled in chaos and descended into savagery because men and women have forgotten the Son of God! Christ has often been forgotten, even by those who claim to honor and serve Him. Sometimes He is even forgotten at church! (Cf. *Revelation 2:14-20*). Notice some of the ways this can happen...

1) FORGOTTEN IN CULTURAL BLINDNESS. Jesus accused the church at Laodicea of forgetting Him because they didn’t see Him! “*You are blind,*” He said (*Rev. 3:17*). The condition still exists. *Romans 12:2* commands, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” There is a culture of Christ and a culture of the world. We lose Christ when we allow ourselves to be shaped by the world rather than by Him. There is a constant danger we will find ourselves listening and looking to the world instead of Jesus because we are constantly bombarded by the messages from the world—through newspapers, TV, movies, magazines, people among whom we live and work, etc. It is not that surprising that many professed Christians begin to think and act more like the world than like Christ. They simply forget about

Christ and the Bible when it comes to translating the realities of the Christian faith into daily living!

2) FORGOTTEN IN INSTITUTIONAL MACHINERY. There is a sense in which people can get so “busy” with “church” work that they forget all about Jesus. Many congregations are top-heavy with organization. There is a lot going on. The church becomes a collection of committees, meetings, programs, ministries, memos and related procedures that maintain institutional momentum. Jesus Christ and Him crucified (*1 Corinthians 2:2*) get lost in the bureaucratic shuffle.

3) FORGOTTEN IN OUR PREOCCUPATION WITH SUCCESS. The church at Laodicea had a warped concept of success. They judged by size, growth, wealth, prestige and power, and said, “We have everything.” Jesus judged by faithfulness and said, “You have nothing!” Often today’s church is more concerned with a false secular definition of success than in loyalty to Jesus. Is attendance up? Are contributions up? Have we been able to build bigger, finer buildings? Our Lord measures success by faithfulness. In *Revelation 3:10* Jesus urged, “*be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life.*” He did not say, “Keep growing...meeting your budget...building bigger buildings...until death.” He said, “*Be faithful.*” Our purpose is not to build temples, set attendance records or retire the church debt. It is to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified! We must be “*steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*” (*1 Corinthians. 15:58*).

Our great need is to get Jesus back at the center of our lives. *He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock....”* Will you open???

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Bobby Dockery, Fayetteville, Ark.

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.” Psalms 84:1-3)

THE DISTINCTIVE WORD

Officers who had been sent to take Jesus returned and testified, “No man spake like this man” (John 7:46). Jesus is, without doubt, distinctive of all who have walked upon this earth. He is the Son of God, both Savior and Lord.

In a similar manner, God’s word, as recorded in the Bible, is distinctive of all that has been recorded in human language. It alone is declared to have been given “by inspiration of God,” and by which we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16).

Whether we consider the Bible’s unique perfection, its influence, its impartial justice toward all, its timelessness, its prophecies, its miracles, or its theme, it has no equal. Its unique power is in its central message of the gospel (good news) of Christ, a theme that shines forth from Genesis to Revelation. Therein is found “the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16).

Spend time in God’s word. Through it may God plant and nourish faith in your heart.

–Ron

“I PREDICT FUTURE HAPPINESS for Americans if they can prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people under the pretense of taking care of them.”

--Thomas Jefferson

I HOPE YOU ARE DRINKING FROM YOUR SAUCER, TOO

I’ve never made a fortune,
And it’s probably too late now.
But I don’t worry that much—
I’m happy anyhow.
And as I go along life’s way,
I’m reaping better than I sowed.
I’m drinking from my saucer,

'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches,,
And sometimes the going gets tough,
But I've got loving ones all around me,
And that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for His blessings,
And the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong,
My faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke,
And the sun peeped through again.

So, Lord, help me not to gripe
About the tough rows I have hoed,
I'm drinking from my saucer,
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage

When the way grows steep and rough,
I'll not ask for other blessings,
I'm already blest enough.
And may I never be too busy
To help others bear their loads.
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer
'Cause my cup has overflowed. -Copied

UPDATE: I had another laser treatment with multiple laser shots in my left eye Aug. 1,, and am to return for evaluation on the 15th. Since I had a skin cancer removed, I am to undergo a check-up to see if I might have more Tuesday. Then on the 21st I'm to see a kidney doctor to see if I may have kidney problems. *** **PRAY FOR:** Ruby, the 2-yr. old daughter of the Stephen Bradds, who has stage-4 cancer. Stephen preaches at the Clinton, IL church. *** Pray for believers in Muslim and Communist countries especially, who are undergoing intense persecution.