
THE SOWER

ARTHUR (IL) CHURCH OF CHRIST

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LIFE'S GREATEST QUESTION

In life one must confront many great questions—Where will I go to college? Who should I marry? Where should I seek employment? How can I prepare for retirement? Where should I invest my money?—but none of these is the greatest question of all. The greatest question of all has consequences beyond the limits of time into the vastness of eternity.

The greatest question of all is that of Governor Pilate in Mark 15:12: “What shall I do then with the one you call the King of Jews?” (NIV). What shall I do with Jesus? Their reply was, “Crucify Him!”

What would some today do with Jesus?

A few would say, “**Nothing—He never existed.**” They would deny the scriptural and historical records.

Others would ignore Him as they seek to fill life with the pursuit of things and pleasures. But they find it difficult to ignore Him in the quiet hours of a restless night, or when faced with financial or physical stress, or the death of family members or friends.

Still others would say, “I look to Him as an example.” And, that He is! Peter declared that He left us “an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). But we need more than an example—we need a Savior, for “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,” and “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 3:23 and 6:23a).

The wise receive Him as Lord and Savior. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (John 1:12). On Pentecost, 3000 received the crucified and risen Christ in faith, repenting and being baptized “for the mission of sins” (Acts 2:38-41).

The most important question in life comes to you: WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH JESUS?

--Ron

THE DEATH OF RELIGION??? “Hollywood elites like Bill Maher demanded on live TV that religion must die in order for mankind to live.” (Source: *News Max*, 6-14-2019)

ARE YOU LIVING YOUR FAITH?

What is faith? “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11). The conviction of things not seen—how can that be? It can be this way because those things unseen are in the eternal realm. Those things in the eternal realm we can have conviction about are those things God has revealed (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29).

When I think about this, I am encouraged. The other day I heard a young lady say that she wanted to have more purpose in life than just being dropped here—as if it might have been by a stork. More people than you realize might make the same remark. God’s word has revealed man’s purpose (cf. Ecclesiastes 12). Man’s purpose is not exclusively singular. He also has a purpose in trying to make the lives of those around him better (cf. Colossians 3:5-6). He does this by living the gospel message and trying to teach it to others, thus giving them hope, an anchor in a tempestuous sea of despair (cf. Romans 12:1-2).

--Ron Thomas, Highway church, Sullivan, via *Bulletin Gold*

CHRISTIANITY CONFRONTS CULTURE

(While limited space forbids us copying the entire article by John Waddey in the Nov. 2011 issue of *Christianity: Then & Now*, we want to present the concluding paragraphs.)

“Every Christian lives in his own unique culture. It may encourage his endeavor to live for Christ, or it may discourage him and even make war against him if he follows Christ (John 15:19). Though we live in this cultural maelstrom, we are not of it (John 17:14). We must not be “conformed to the world.” Rather, we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds according to God’s standard (Romans 12:1-2)

“We are not mindless and helpless before the pressures of our culture. Made in God’s image, we have volition, the freedom and ability to choose the good or the evil (Gen. 1:26). We can do

all things through Christ who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13). He strengthens us with power through “His Spirit in the inner man” (Eph. 3:16). Just as the man born in the ghetto must resist and rise above that culture if he wants to succeed in life, so Christians and the church must resist and rise above the unwholesome aspects of our culture. True Christianity is, and always has been, counter-cultural. When culture encounters Christ, it is culture that must yield!” (Next column)

Compromise with a corrupt, godless culture can only end in defeat for a Christian or a church. Our culture will one day be consumed in fire with our sin-cursed universe (2 Pet. 3:10). But those who have defied culture and lived according to the standards of the kingdom of heaven will live forever (1 John 2:17). Today, more than any other time in the history of our nation, the waves of a corrupt culture are threatening to overwhelm and swamp the Lord’s Church. Those principles also would lower her standards and change the faith, doctrine, worship and nature of the church to comply with the demands of culture are unfaithful stewards of God’s kingdom (1 Cor. 4:2).

APPROACHING GOD DIRECTLY

“I don’t need Jesus as a go-between—between me and God. I pray to God directly,” is a statement sometimes heard. Well, one can attempt to do whatever he wants, but the question is, “What works?” According to the Bible, what works?

The Bible says, “*Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*” (Colossians 3:17b). Jesus said, “*No man cometh unto the Father but by me*” (John 14:6b). These verses show Christ to be the only go-between. So also 1 Timothy 2:5: “*There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*” No priest or preacher stands between you and God. Nor do angels or saints. There is “one mediator”—Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that every Christian is a priest, while Jesus is our one High Priest. True believers are described as “a royal priesthood...that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). John wrote that Christ “loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father:: to him be glory and dominion for ever and for ever” (Revelation 1:6).

--Ron

“MATURING WITH ONE ANOTHER” will be today’s message, with James 41-12 as the reading.

PRAY FOR: Ruby, the 2 yr. old daughter of the Stephen Bradd at Clinton, IL who has stage four cancer. *** Larry Miles, the church’s web manager, is to undergo an MRI of the prostate tomorrow. He is apparently doing satisfactorily following a recent auto accident. *** I am waiting for the results of a biopsy of a skin blemish. Also, my eye pressure will be checked again Thursday.