

THE SOWER
ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Ron Bartanen, Evangelist

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Have you visited our web site lately? (www.arthurcoc.com)

“WE HAVE AN ANCHOR”

As a ship would need an anchor to prevent it from being driven by the wind and waves onto a rugged, rock-infested shore and destroyed, without exception we all need an anchor for our lives to keep us from the storms of life that would destroy us. Our faith in Christ is just such an anchor—and especially we would view the resurrection of Christ in this regard. While all religions have their revered founders and gurus, all are powerless against the winds of time that would drive us onto the shores of God’s judgment. Only Christianity has a founder who died for our sins and been raised from the dead. Death is not the ultimate conqueror. Though even Jesus, in death, willingly gave up His spirit into the Father’s hands, yet, as a verse in one of our hymns declares, “Death could not keep his prey.” He arose in triumph over death, and holds within His hands “the keys of hell (hades) and of death” (Rev. 1:18). Ours is not a dead savior, but the Living One. Without the assurance of a living Savior, we would be at the mercy of all that is spiritually destructive to our souls. We would not even be assured of who Jesus is—the Son of God. After all, anyone could make the claim. Of Jesus alone can it be said that He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead” (Romans 1:4). We know who He is because of His resurrection.

Without His resurrection we would have no assurance of our own. Death would be the great ultimate destroyer. But because He was raised, we, too, will be raised. In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul linked our resurrection to His, saying, “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man (Adam) came death, by man (Christ) came also the resurrection of the dead” (15:17-20). Hebrews 6:19-20a compares His

resurrection to the believer's anchor, declaring, "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." This hope is secure—"within the veil," that is, beyond the veil of death into heaven itself, where the risen Christ has entered as the "forerunner", preparing the way for our resurrection. Our eternal welfare is established only in the crucified, risen and glorified Son of God. For the believer, it is as one hymn declares: "We have an anchor that keeps the soul, Steadfast and sure while the ages roll...."

The greatest question we could ask is: Is your faith anchored and made secure in Christ. Have you accepted Him, who, by the grace of God, "tasted death for every man?" (Hebrews 2:9) Have you identified yourself with Him in being "buried with Him in baptism" and raised with Him to walk "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4). Is it your hope to continue that walk till you share in "the likeness of His resurrection" (6:5)?—to share His glory? —Ron

THE CHURCH IS NOT THE BUILDING

All my life I have heard the oft-repeated message, "the church is the not the building. It's the people. Another way I have heard it expressed is, "You can't go to church because you are the church."

Now's the time to prove it! Our meeting houses have been empty for the past month now, but the church is as busy as it ever has been!

- While our church buildings have been as quiet as a tomb for the past month, the church has raised her voice and proclaimed the gospel of Jesus broader than ever before.
- While the doors to our church buildings are locked and none are entering, the doors to the church are still open and many have walked through those doors and into a new or restored relationship with God.
- While church buildings are dark, the church remains to be a light to the world, reflecting the brightness of God's glory to the world.
- While the last echoes of laughter and edification have long since faded away in our church buildings, the church is as active as ever in building one another up in the most holy faith.

- And while our church buildings currently are an unused tool in the churches' toolbox, thank God it is not the only tool in our toolbox, and thus the work continues.

You know, what I've heard all my life is right! The church is not the building, it's the people, and this pandemic has demonstrated it. And for those who have for many years affirmed "the church is not the building" but who are upset because we are not able to meet at the building at this present time, I would encourage you to start believing what you've been preaching for all these years! The church building is not the focal point of our religion. Jesus is! Remember, the church is not a building, it's the people!

--Steve Higginbotham, *MercyMail.com*

A LETTER TO A DEAR WEARY CHILD

I heard you cry last night. I was there in the darkness when the tears slipped down your face and your heart broke within you. Did you think I didn't see and didn't care? Do you really think I don't know how tired and weary you are?

Child, I have been with you when life has dealt its bitterest blows. I've watched you handle all the sorrow and all the pain. But you are weary now. And I can see the broken spirit and the faded hopes and dreams.

Please don't forget that I care. My touch and caress can restore and mend your heart and kindle the flame of hope once more within you. Let Me love you. Take down the barricades around your heart and lean on Me.

I am not tired, and I am not weary, and I have the strength enough to carry you if you will let Me.

You are not alone, and you never have been, for I am your friend, and I will never, ever leave your side. Trust Me.

Your friend, Jesus --[http://god'slittle acre.net](http://god'slittleacre.net)

PRAYER CONCERNS: Sammie's cancer has returned, but at the age of 90 she has opted to not take chemo. She is homebound at this time, and lacking energy. Also, she asks for prayers for a great-grandson, Ethan Coller, who has been inducted into the Marines, effective May 26. *** Doris is finding it more difficult to get around without my help. *** Continue to remember: Ron McConkey (respiratory problems); Mary's nephew, Gavin Harlin (Iraq); Ruby Bradd (Clinton; cancer); Wayne Polk (Minister in Shelbyville); David Ferguson's (Minister in Mattoon) mother, Jackie Ferguson (Masson Point). *** Larry Miles, our WEB site manager, writes that reports following his cancer therapy have been favorable. *** Pray for a soon-solution to the covid-19 pandemic, and a recognition of God's hand in the situation. This could be viewed as a wake-up-call world-wide, as we see a world that is increasingly ignoring God and God's standards. *** Pray for the many suffering persecution and even death for their faith in Christ, especially in China and Muslim countries.