

**THE SOWER
ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST
415 W. 4TH STREET
ARTHUR, IL 61911
Ron Bartanen, Evangelist**

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

**Arthur Church of Christ – 415 W. 4th Street,
Arthur, IL 61951**

OPEN TO QUESTIONS

Our Lord wasn't like the modern-day cult leaders. He did not isolate His disciples from other influences in order to program their minds to accept His teachings. Neither did He attempt to conceal His teachings from "outsiders. What He taught the disciples was not in contradiction to what He taught the multitudes. In fact, He affirmed as He stood before the high priest at the close of His ministry, "I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing" (John 18:20).

Everything was open and aboveboard with Jesus. It will be that way with us if we are true disciples. As we read the first four books of our New Testaments, which give an account of the life and teachings of our Lord, we realize that as He was often questioned, his answers were always forthright. The word of God requires the same of us as His disciples. Truth does not hide in a dark corner. Truth does not fear scrutiny.

In the first place, true disciples will be open to truth, even if it conflicts with previous opinions and traditions. Jesus summoned disciples with the plea, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me" (Matthew 11:29a). Denominational and sectarian creedism imposes human judgments as being on a par with divine revelation. It is a grievous error that all should avoid. As the noble Bereans, are we willing to receive with "readiness of mind," while at the same time to "(search) the scriptures...to see whether those things

(are) so”? (Acts 17:11) Paul also urged, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

If we have tested what we believe by the divinely inspired scriptures (1 Timothy 3:16-17), we should likewise invite questions, and encourage others to investigate for themselves. We must speak the truth openly, as Peter urged: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). If what we teach and practice will not stand the test of investigation in the light of the Bible, it does not deserve to be accepted.

–Ron

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT –

“**Faith**, however, is not intellectual and understanding: faith is deliberate commitment to the person of Jesus Christ, even when I cannot see the way ahead.” (Oswald Chambers)

“**Christianity** will survive without America, but America will not survive without Christianity.”

“**Stop** disliking people over what you **heard**, and be thankful God isn’t disliking you on what He **knows**.”

CHURCHES UNDER FIRE

That anti-God and anti-Christ sentiment in the world and in our nation is growing significantly can hardly be questioned. No mention of God or of Christ is to be heard or seen in many public places, including our schools, unless used profanely. Crosses are being removed from public property under the supposed “separation of church and state” that some appear to see in our Constitution. There have been examples of cities enacting zoning ordinances that would forbid gatherings in homes for Bible studies or other religious observances, while at the same time allowing such gatherings for secular purposes

Armed attacks on worshippers in churches and Jewish synagogues has become a growing threat, not just in distant countries, but also in “the land of the free.” . I read even of two street-preachers who were gunned down by a teenager who apparently took exception to their message.

The efforts of some political figures and the media to radicalize and marginalize conservative Bible-believers is becoming increasingly apparent. The public image of Christians and churches is being denigrated to the point that society has lost much of its respect for Christian values—so much so that more feel free to even deny the

Christian heritage of our nation. Few seem to see the need to be subject to God's laws, preferring politically correct "tolerance."

All of this, of course, should come as no shock to believers. We know that Satan hates Christ and the inspired word of God, the Bible. As some churches continue to proclaim Christ as the one hope of salvation, and His word as the authority for faith and practice, we must expect to feel his wrath. Jesus warned His disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). The apostle John admonished in 1 John 3:1 & 13, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.... Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." --Ron

SIXTEEN THINGS THAT CANNOT BE DONE

It is helpful to know our boundaries so that we do not spend our efforts in attempting things that cannot be accomplished.

- God's eternal purpose cannot be overthrown. (Acts 5:39)
- One cannot bear good fruit without Christ (John 15:5).
- No person can keep his sins hidden forever (1 Timothy 5:24).
- No person can live after the flesh and please God (Romans 8:8).
- A person cannot love God and not love his brother in Christ (1 John 4:20).
- A person cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).
- No one can take anything out of this world (1 Timothy 6:7).
- After dying lost, one cannot be saved (Luke 16:26).
- One cannot make God be a liar (Romans 3:4).
- One cannot enter into heaven by any door but Christ (John 10:1-9).
- One cannot enter in after the door is closed (Luke 13:25-27)
- One cannot avoid reaping what he has sown (Galatians 6:7-8).
- One cannot be justified by the law of Moses (Galatians 3:11, 5:4).
- One cannot be saved by animal sacrifices (Hebrews 9:22; 10:4-12).
- One cannot escape death or the judgment (Hebrews 9:27).
- A Christian who is faithful till death cannot lose his reward (Matthew 10:42; 1 Cor. 15:58).

--Brent Smith, *House to House/Heart to Heart*

TODAY'S LAUGH: "I was always taught to respect my elders, but it keeps getting harder to find one."

“PRAYER BASICS” (Part 2) will be today’s message, with Romans 8:26-28 as the reading.

THE POTTER CHILDREN’S HOME VAN will be in our area the week of March 8. See the bulletin board for items requested. Checks would also be welcomed.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME begins Sunday, March 8. Run your clock hands forward one hour Saturday night.

IN OUR PRAYERS: Ron McConkey (health problems); Ruby Bradd (Clinton; Cancer); Wayne Polk (Shelbyville minister; hardening of leg-arteries); Gavin Hardin (stationed in Kuwait).