



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord

THE MIGHTY FALLEN

By Jeff Sweeten

A lap behind and fading fast. A day late and a dollar short. Just past the nick of time. The clichés are endless and often elicit the kind of humor that results from a combination of tragedy and time. You would think we could see some things coming a mile away (and maybe we do) but it doesn't seem to change what we live to regret.

Peter was warned that he would deny Christ despite his protests to the contrary, a servant girl's observation and the fire-side fellow's comment; he had no excuse (Luke 22:57). Then there was that centurion standing at the foot of the cross, looking up at the mangled body of the Son of God as He breathed His last; and all he could muster concerning this limp and lifeless body was: "Certainly this was a righteous Man" (Luke 23:47). So many examples of human failure and all one can say is: "*O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Romans 7:24).

It feels hopeless sometimes; but it is not. Paul would fall face first before his Maker and exclaim: "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin*" (Romans 7:25). Were it the case that we had to depend upon our own merit to warrant Heaven, no ascent would be high enough, no life so lofty as to justify itself. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*" (Ephesians 2:8). My confidence in Heaven is not based upon the foolhardy assumption that I have somehow perfected my existence to such an elevated status that God owes me salvation; no one has. "*So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do*" (Luke 17:10).

So, Satan, hurl your most vicious darts at the hearts of imperfect saints whose only hope is Christ. Slam us into the dirt of shame, sully our best efforts to serve the Master, ridicule us when we fall (and we certainly will); but be advised, the battle we fight is won and your time will come! We must not stoop to cynicism (Galatians 6:9) or lose our faith in God (Hebrews 11:6). Where we fail, His grace is greater than our sin (Acts 20:32). He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5); and His blood covers our sins (1 John 1:7).

We cannot be perfect in the sense of sinless (1 John 1:8) but we can *never, never* give up; not on God, not on our brothers and sisters in Christ, and not on ourselves. "*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*" (Revelation 14:12).

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

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Hamilton
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Schedule of Services

SUNDAY

9:30 a.m. Bible Class
10:25 a.m. Morning Worship
1:30 p.m. Afternoon Worship

WEDNESDAY

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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