



Jeff Sweeten

Thus Saith the Lord

A PREACHING LIFE

By Jeff Sweeten

In his book *Teaching to Change Lives*, Howard G. Hendricks stumbled on a Bible concept that was largely responsible for the growth of the church in the New Testament, verifying (once again) Solomon's observation: "...and there is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). His application in context was directed toward teachers when he said:

All communication has three essential components: intellect, emotion, and volition – in other words, *thought, feeling, and action*. So whatever it is I want to communicate to another individual it involves...something I know,... something I feel, ...and something I'm doing. If I know something thoroughly, feel it deeply, and am doing it consistently, I have great potential for being an excellent communicator. In fact the more thoroughly I know the concept... the more deeply I feel it... and the more consistently I practice it... the greater my potential as a communicator.

The Bible teaches that our lives fail to convey the lessons they should because our inconsistencies betray a lack of practical application in the conviction of faith we claim. God's name is used in vain with assumed impunity, His solemn assemblies are forsaken for entertainment/leisure and His statutes are ignored to accommodate the flesh. Little wonder that we, as fine, upstanding, moral examples of true Christian principles, fail to impress the unbeliever. Really, why should anyone convert to the Christ we "preach?" Shame on us!

Paul was not plagued with such dissonance. He confessed, "...*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ*" (Philippians 3:7-8). Note: knowledge fueled a devotion to live a life that shouted Jesus toward every corner of the earth. Little wonder heathens of Thessalonica feared; "*These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also*" (Acts 17:6). Paul was committed to the cause, "...*I am not ashamed: for I KNOW whom I have BELIEVED, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I HAVE COMMITTED unto him against that day*" (2 Timothy 1:12, emp. JDS). Paul's claim that the Gospel "*was preached to every creature which is under heaven*" was not surprising (Colossians 1:23).

Yes, you can preach a sermon with your life but is it consistent with what you profess, or is it so totally irresolute, inharmonious, and erratic that your effectiveness as a proclaimer of the Gospel leaves you tongue-tied? Just as Paul preached regularly, frequently, and boldly, his opportunities to verbalize the invitation of Christ were often the culmination of a life that instigated questions and inspired confidence. Paul told the Ephesian elders at Miletus, "*You know... in what manner I always lived among you*" (Acts 17:18). The church grew in Ephesus because Paul knew of, committed to, and lived for Christ. If we live the preached life, the cause of Christ will have impact (1 Corinthians 3:7).

Thus Saith the Lord
is presented by the

Park Heights Church of Christ

1300 E. Boynton St.
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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