



Jeff Sweeten

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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Thus Saith the Lord **ON "DRAWING CIRCLES"**

By Jeff Sweeten

When I first became a member of the church of Christ, my circle was very small. After hearing the Gospel (1 Corinthians. 15:3-4), I believed in Jesus as the Son of God (John 8:24) and repented of my sins (Luke 13:3, 5), confessing His Lordship before men (Matthew 10:32) and obeyed my Lord's command to be baptized for the remission of my sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38). In so doing, I put off the old man of sin and put on Christ (Romans 6:5-6) and understood that very few in this world (Matthew 7:13-14) are willing to submit to Jesus (John 12:47-48; 14:23-24). I was added by God to the body of Christ (Acts 2:47), the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:9), and wore His name (Acts 4:12). But I was condemned for following the old paths (Jeremiah 6:16), which were too restrictive, I was told. I didn't want to appear self-righteous, as though "I was the only one going to heaven," so I drew my circle again...

And included "contemporary" worship, "traditional" doctrines and "alternate" lifestyles. Of course, following this philosophy led me to wonder, "Why would I be so judgmental as to say that *anyone* that professed to believe in Jesus might not be saved? Isn't God a merciful God?" This naturally led me to the "open-minded" position of accepting anyone who even claimed to "believe" (regardless of what they believed, how they lived, how they worshiped or what religious name they wore). They just *might* be saved and I should fellowship them. Of course, this was welcomed with open arms by those who loved to innovate, especially since claiming to know something is actually right or wrong is "dogmatic" and "negative." These terms, indeed, sounded unchristian, so I drew my circle again...

And was feeling pretty good about myself (which is very important) when I realized that not being able to really know the truth obviously meant my friends who worshipped Allah, Brahma, Buddha or themselves are probably "good, moral" people. Who was I to say that they may not have the truth (since I can't really know)? So, now, all humanity is my brother, my sister, my mother. So, I drew my circle again...

And then, in the absurdity of it all, I wondered: "Why am **I** drawing circles? Who do **I** think **I** am, God? Is it my place to say who will be saved and who will be condemned?" The burden was too great so I turned the chalk over to Jesus. "And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! **For whoever does the will of God** is My brother and My sister and mother'" (Mark 3:34-35). For those of you who like to draw circles: "if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).