

PARK HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST

1301 E. Boynton St. • Hamilton • www.parkheightscoc.com

Thus Saith the Lord

PREACHING THE TRUTH

By Jeff Sweeten

When it comes to preaching the truth, is the truth itself really the problem? I am convinced, after a 40+ year preaching career, that it is not the truth that creates grief but the fact that the truth **gets preached**; that is what really galls folks. People just love hearing generic sermons that never address anything by a brand name. We all appreciate how that preacher straightens out our neighbor down the pew from us but he better stay off of our toes. Naming names tends to be too illuminating (cf. 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 4:14)! Unfortunately, however, if the truth is taught and understood, then an honest person has to deal with it; and that's the real rub.

You see, there is this ignorant notion about ignorance; it is like this big umbrella under which we can stand to escape the downpour of responsibility. "I didn't know..." seems to be everybody's get-out-of-Hell-free card, like Jesus is going to slap his forehead on Judgment Day and say, "Oh, you didn't get the memo? Well, come on in anyway then" (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:8). Pardon the sarcasm but, really, if being spiritually deaf, dumb or blind is license to ignore God, please direct me to that verse (meanwhile, check out Matthew 13:13-15). Nevertheless, woe be it unto that poor fella' that has the audacity to tell people the understandable, undeniable, "ungetoverable" truth, because then, you see, his audience cannot feign ignorance and pull the get-out-of-Hellfree card by denying accountability. The kind of preaching that got Paul persecuted, Stephen stoned and Christ crucified was the complete, reasonable and transparent truth.

If we understand but then deny the simple truth, then we deny God, and that's embarrassing. At that point, we have to concede in our heart of hearts that we are not handling the information honestly; and we all know where those kind of folks are headed (Revelation 21:8). If we understand and accept the truth, well, we may have to change our ways, our church or our faith, nurtured and emotionally embraced lo these many years. When it becomes too much to admit, "I am wrong," it is only then that preaching the truth becomes a problem.

The horns of dilemma are sharp indeed. So, do we really want someone preaching the truth? Jesus sure hopes we do (Matthew 23:37-39).

JOIN US ON SUNDAY AND WEDNESDAY!

SUNDAY: 9:30 a.m. Bible Study • 10:25 a.m. Morning Worship • 1:30 p.m. Bible Study

WEDNESDAY: 7:00 p.m. Bible Study • Contact the minister at 254-370-4130