

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

September 6, 2019

The Lion Tamer

Everyone has power over sin ...until they don't! An alcoholic has the power not to take another drink ...until he does. A liar has the power to tell the truth ...until he lies. And a religious man has the power not to sin ...until he sins. Many people wonder why we continuously preach "freedom from sin" through the blood of Christ. The answer is simple. "Freedom from sin" is the only answer that is offered in the gospel. Any other answer is no answer at all. Jesus did not say "The truth will give you power over." He said, "*the truth shall make you free.*" When the people asked him to clarify what he meant, Jesus told them clearly that he had come to make them free from sin. John 8:30-36.

There is an analogy we use seeking to give understanding concerning Jesus' promise to make you free. A man shares his house with a wild hungry lion. This man happens to be a "lion tamer" so he knows how to keep the lion at bay. He seems to be in full control of the lion as he uses the tools of his trade, a whip and chair. He can make the lion back away. He can make the lion sit. He has power over the lion. As great as this "lion tamer" is, there is one thing he cannot do. He can never close his eyes in rest. If he does, all his power over the lion becomes useless and the "lion tamer" will be devoured. As long as he lives

in this house, this man can have no rest until the lion is dead or until the lion is taken away. When that happens, he is finally free from the lion.

The analogy above fits every human religious effort to deal with sin. The things that promise you control or power over sin, are making a lion tamer of you. It will work as long as you are vigilant, determined, and never let down your guard. It comes in the form of various programs and precepts. Sometimes it is a list of principles or religious commandments to keep. At other times it is "spiritual warfare" methods by which you believe you are driving back the enemy and keeping yourself from Satan's devices. The power these things promise is sometimes said to be by the Spirit, or the blood, or faith, or knowledge, or determination, or something else. It always works ...until it doesn't. The day you grow too weary, you will fail. It is a great walk for someone who does not need rest for their soul.

Jesus said *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ...and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* Matthew 11:28-29. Do you see how different this is from being a "lion tamer?" Christ did not come, suffered and die, to give us power over sin. He came *"to take away our sins."* 1 John 3:5. You do not need power not to do something that is not in your heart to do. Christ is not a lion tamer. He is the lion slayer! He nailed our *"old man"* to his cross *"that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."* Romans 6:6. Sin and Satan are the lion! Only when sin is washed out of your heart by the blood of Christ will you ever find rest for your soul.

This simple truth of the gospel has become a rejected message in our generation. We think ourselves too wise for such simplicity. In our blindness we have traded “the lion slayer” for endless seminars in “lion taming.” Be honest and look at the results. Pornography is rampant in the church and increases more with every new program instituted to combat it. How many ministers in recent years have taught and fought against homosexual behavior only to become involved in it? Depression and even suicide in the ministry is increasing, especially among those who are teaching how to overcome these things. Their methods and programs always work ...until they don't.

The simplicity of the gospel is that Christ washes sin out of the heart of those who believe the gospel and trust in him. This is how Christ makes them free. They are not as strong as the “lion tamer.” Neither are they as “wise” as the one who knows all the principles. They are not even as determined as the one who has perfected himself. They don't have to be, because Christ has made them free!

Let me leave you with this: It is not the power of sin that destroys you, but the presence of sin. Wherever sin is present, it has power. But when through the cleansing power of the blood of Christ, sin is no longer “present” in your heart, it has no power whatsoever concerning you. This is the freedom that is promised in the gospel of Christ.