

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

December 18, 2016

POWER OVER SIN?

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 describes every religious effort of man 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 “how to books”, precepts and principles, laws to keep, or “walling off” everything around you. The power it promises 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's a great walk for someone who doesn't need rest for their soul.

Jesus said *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: 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 killer. 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 is the lion! Only when sin is washed out of your heart by the blood of Christ will you ever find rest for your soul.

Jesus told the disciples, *“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”* Luke 10:19 As we stand for Christ, we will face attacks of Satan and the powers of darkness. If we remember that it is *“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts,”* Zechariah 4:6 we will see these things bow at the exalted name of Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that these things are external to a child of God, and not internal. These are things “without” and not things “within.” You only struggle with sinning if sin is “within.” But, some ask, If Christ takes sin, and therefore the struggle with sin, out of our hearts, why did Paul say *“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin?”* Hebrews 12:4 Ask yourself, “Has anyone in the

history of the church ever ‘resisted unto blood’ striving against sin in their own heart?” Of course not! Paul was speaking of the persecutions they suffered while they strove against the sin that holds lost souls captive. This “*striving*” was the preaching of the gospel of Christ to a sin-filled world. They were striving against sin, not in their own hearts, but in the hearts of those who fought the gospel of Christ.

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’s not the power of sin that destroys you, but the presence of sin. Where sin is present, it has power. But when, through 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.