

Among Lions

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that Christians who face persecution and opposition for their faith should find comfort in their fellowship with Christ, remain patient and loving, and trust that God restrains the power of their enemies.

Scripture: Psalm 57:4, Matthew 10:16, John 15:18, Daniel 6:22, Hebrews 12:1-3

Topics: "Persecution", "Faithfulness", "Christian Fellowship"

Description

In 'Among Lions,' C.H. Spurgeon addresses Christians who endure persecution and opposition for their faith. He encourages believers to find comfort in their union with Christ and the Church, to respond to hostility with patience and love, and to trust in God's sovereign protection. Spurgeon reminds his listeners that while the world may be hostile, God's power restrains their enemies and that enduring trials refines their faith and character.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"My soul is among lions." Psalm 57:4.

SOME of you cannot say this and you ought to be very thankful that you are not obliged to do so. Happy are you young people who have godly parents and who dwell in Christian families. You ought to grow like the flowers in a conservatory, where killing frosts and biting blasts are unknown. You live under very favorable circumstances. Your soul, I might almost say, is among angels, for you dwell where God is worshipped, where family prayer is not forgotten, where you can have a kindly guidance in the hour of difficulty and comfort in the time of trial. You dwell where angels come and go and God, Himself, deigns to dwell! Happy should young people be in such circumstances! How grateful and how holy you ought to be!

I want all who dwell where everything helps them, to remember the many gracious ones who dwell where everything hinders them. You who live near the Beautiful Gate of the temple must not forget the many who are sighing in the tents of Kedar. If your soul is not among lions, praise God for it—and then let your sympathies go out towards those who mournfully complain—

"My soul with him that hates peace Has long a dweller been. I am for peace, but when I speak, For battle they are keen."

It is a Christian duty to "remember them that are in bonds as bound with them." And whenever our own favored circumstances lead us to forget those who are persecuted and tried, our very mercies are working mischief in us. "We are all members, one of another." If one member suffers, all the rest should suffer with him and, therefore, we will turn our thoughts towards our persecuted Brothers and Sisters tonight, that our united supplications may sustain them under their difficulties and, if the Lord is so pleased, may even deliver them.

When may a Christian truly say, "My soul is among lions"? Such is the case when, either from our being members of ungodly families, or from having to gain our livelihood among unconverted and graceless people, we are subjected to reproach and rebuke and to jest and jeer for Jesus Christ's sake. Then we can say, "My soul is among lions." I know that many in this congregation are the only ones in their family whom God has called. I bless His name that He is often taking one of a household and a lone one of a family and bringing such to Jesus. Some quite un-Christian person who thinks not of God drops in here out of curiosity and God meets with him and he becomes the first of his kith and kin to say "I am the

Lord's."

Frequently when converts come to cast in their lot with us, they will say, "I do not know one in all my family who makes any profession of godliness. They are, all of them, opposed to me." In such a case the soul is among lions and it is very hard and trying to be in such a position. Well may we pity a godly wife bound to an ungodly husband! Alas, full often a she is married to a drunk whose opposition amounts to brutality. A tender, loving spirit that ought to have been cherished like a tender flower is bruised and trod under foot—and made to suffer till her heart cries out in grief, "My soul is among lions!" We little know what life-long martyrdom's many pious women endure.

Children also have to bear the same when they are singled out by Divine Grace from depraved and wicked families. Only the other day there came under my notice one who loves the Lord. I thought that if she had been a daughter of mine I should have rejoiced beyond all things in her sweet and gentle piety, but her parents said, "You must leave our house if you attend such-and-such a place of worship. We do not believe in these things and we cannot have you about us if you

do." I saw the grief which that state of things was causing and though I could not alter it, I mourned over it. Woe unto those who tyrannize over my Lord's little ones!

Nobody knows what godly working men have to put up with from those among whom they labor. There are some shops where there is religious liberty, but frequently the working men of this city are great tyrants in matters of religion. I tell them that to their faces—if a man will drink with them and swear with them, they will make him their companion—but when a man comes out to fear God, they make it very hard for him. And pray, dear Sir, has not a man as much right to pray as you have to swear? And has he not as much right to believe in God as you have to disbelieve? It is a wonderfully free country, this wonderfully free country! Almost as free as America in the olden times when every man was free to beat his own slave, for now the working man claims freedom to laugh and swear at every other working man who chooses to be sober and religious!

There are large factories all over London where a Christian man has to run the gauntlet of sneers from morning to night which never ought to come upon the face of honest men and which never would come if Britons were as fond of freedom as they profess to be! They declare that they never will be slaves, but they are slaves—slaves to their own ungodliness and drunkenness—the great mass of them! And only

where Divine Grace comes in and snaps the chain do men become free at all. If one serious man sets his face steadfastly to serve God, the baser sort seem as if they must get him under their feet and treat him with every indignity that malice can devise. It may be all in sport, but the victim does not think so.

Do not tell me that persecution ceased when the last martyr burned! There are martyrs who have to burn by the slow fire of cruel mockery day after day. But I bless God that the old grit is still among us and that the old spirit still survives, so that men defy sneers and slander and hold on their way! I could tell stories which would both shock you and delight you of what is said and done by the common order of English working men against those who profess religion—and how courageously the righteous and the true bear it all and, in the long run, conquer, too—they oftentimes win their mates to confess the same faith!

They call us all cants and hypocrites and the like, but they know better! And if they had a grain of manliness, they would cease from such lying. A true Briton gives that liberty to others which he claims for himself and if he does not choose to be religious himself, he stands up like a man to defend the rights of others to be so if they choose! Now, then, you British workmen, when shall we see you doing this? The text speaks of a soul among lions. Why did the Psalmist call them lions? "Dogs" is about as good a name as they deserve! Why call them lions? Because at times the Christian man is exposed to enemies who are very strong—perhaps strong in the jaw—very strong in biting, tearing and rending.

Sometimes the Christian man is exposed to those who loudly roar out their infidelities and their blasphemies against Christ—and it is an awful thing to be among such lions as those. The lion is not only strong but also cruel. And it is real cruelty, which subjects well-meaning men to reproach and misrepresentation. The enemies of Christ and His people are often as cruel as lions and would slay us if the law permitted them to. The lion is a creature of great craftiness—creeping along stealthily and then making a sudden leap—and so will the ungodly creep up to the Christian and, if possible, spring upon him when they can catch him in an unguarded moment. If they think they spy a fault in him, they come down upon him with all their weight!

The ungodly watch the righteous and if they can catch them in their speech, or if they can make them angry and cause them to speak an unguarded word, how eagerly they pounce upon him! They magnify his fault, put it under a microscope of 10,000 power and make a great thing of it. "Report it! Report it!" they say. "So would we have it!" Anything against a true-born child of God is a sweet nut for them! Such as are daily watched, daily carped at, daily abused, daily hindered in everything that is good and gracious—go with your tears before the God you serve and cry to Him, "My soul is among lions."

Now, it is to such that I am going to speak tonight. A little, at first, by way of comfort. And then a little by way of advice.

I. First, BY WAY OF COMFORT. You are among lions, my dear young Friend, then you will have fellowship with your Lord and with His Church. Every Lord's Day and every time we meet, this benediction is pronounced upon you, that you may enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit brings you into fellowship with Jesus and this involves your being conformed to His sufferings. Now, your Lord was among lions. The men of His day had not

a good word to say of Him. They called the Master of the house, Beelzebub—they will never call you a worse name than that. They said that He was a drunk and a winebibber—possibly they may say much the same as that of you and it will be equally false.

You need not be ashamed to be pelted with the same dirt that was thrown at your Master! And if it should ever come to this, that you should be stripped of everything and false witnesses should rise up against you—and you should even be condemned as a felon and taken out to be executed—your lot will still not be worse than His. Remember that you are the followers of a Crucified Lord and cannot expect to be the world's darlings! If you are Christians, the Inspired description of the Christian life is the taking up of the cross! Do you expect to be dandled on the knees of that same ungodly world which hung your Master upon the Cross?

No. You know that he who is the friend of this world is the enemy of God. This Truth of God is unchangeable. It is just as certain, today, as it was in years gone by that, "the evil hates the righteous and gnashes his teeth at him." You may pick up a fashionable religion and get through the world with it very comfortably, but if you have the true faith, you will have to fight for it. If you are of the world, the world will love its own. But if you are not of the world because the Lord has chosen you out of the world, the world will hate you! When a villager goes up the little street the dogs do not bark at him, for they know him well. But when a stranger rides along, they set up a howl. By this shall you know whether you are a citizen of the world or a pilgrim towards the better land.

Nor was your Master alone. Remember the long line of Prophets that went before Christ? Which of them was it that was received with honor? Did they not stone one and slay another with the sword? Did they not cut one in pieces with a saw and put others to death with stones? You know that the march of the faithful may be tracked by their blood. And after our Lord had gone to Heaven, how did the world treat the Church? In the streets of Rome and all large cities, the fierce cry was often heard, "Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions!"

At the dead of night men cry, "Fire!" when a house is blazing. A mob will cry, "Bread!" when they are starving. But the cry of old Rome that was dearest to the Roman heart and most expressive of their horrible enmity to goodness was, "Christians to the lions!" Of all the gallant shows the Roman Empire ever saw that excited the populace beyond all things else was to see a family—a man and his wife, perhaps, and a grown daughter and son and three or four children— all marched into the arena, the big door thrown open and lions rushing out to spring upon them and tear them to pieces!

What harm had the Christians done? They had forgiven their enemies! That was one of their great sins! They would not worship the gods of wood and stone. They would not blaspheme the name of Jesus whom they loved, for He had taught them to love one another and to love all mankind. For such things as this, men raised the cry, "Christians to the lions! Christians to the lions !" All along, this has been the cry of the world against all who have faithfully followed in the steps of Jesus Christ. Just now the merciful hand of Providence prevents open persecution, but only let that hand be taken away and the old spirit will rage again! The seed of the serpent still hates the Seed of the woman—and if the old dragon were not chained, he would devour the man-child as he has often tried to do. Do not deceive yourselves—in one form or other the old howl of, "Christians to the lions!" would soon be heard in London if almighty power did not sit upon the Throne and restrain the wrath of man.

You who have to suffer a measure of persecution for Christ's sake ought to be very glad of it, for you are counted worthy not only to be Christians, but to suffer for Christ's sake. Do not, I pray you, be unworthy of your high calling, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ should. In these afflictions you are having fellowship with your Head and with His mystical body, therefore be not ashamed. Here is another thought. If you are among lions you should thereby be driven nearer to your God. When you had a great

many friends, you could rejoice in them. But now that these turn against you and the Truth of God has come home to you that, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household," what ought you to do? Why, get closer to God than you ever were before!

Jesus Christ so loved His Church that He said, as He looked at His poor disciples, "These are my mother, and sister, and brother." You should do what your Master did—make His Church your father and mother and sister and brother! No, better still, make Christ all these to you and more! Take the Lord Jesus to be everything that all the dearest of mortals could be and far more. Sing that charming verse, which is a great favorite of mine, for it was very precious to me in days gone by—

"If on my face, for Your dear name,

Shame and reproach should be,

All hail reproach, and welcome shame,

If You remember me."

Be sure that you live near to God. All Christians ought to do so, but you especially should be driven by every false accusation, by every caustic remark, by every cutting sentence nearer to your Father's bosom. The more they rebuke you the more constantly should you abide under the cover of His sacred wings and find your joy in the Lord!

And, getting close to Christ, let me say to you, now, by way of advice and by way of comfort, too, endeavor to be very calm and happy. Do not mind it. Take as little notice of the scoffer as you can. It is a grand thing to have one deaf ear! Mind that you keep yourself very deaf to slander and reproach as the Psalmist did when he said, "I was as a man that hears not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." One blind eye towards the folly of enemies is often of more use to a man than two that are always looking about with suspicion. Do not see everything; do not hear everything. When there is a hard word spoken, do not notice it, or, if you must hear it, forget it as quickly as you can.

Love others all the more, the less they love you—repay their enmity with love. Heap coals of fire upon them by making no return to a hard speech except by another deed of kindness. Very seldom defend yourself—it is a waste of breath and casting pearls before swine. Bear and bear again! Remember that our Lord has sent us forth as sheep among wolves and sheep cannot defend themselves. The wolf can eat all the sheep up if it likes, but, do you not see, there are more sheep in the world, now, than there are wolves, 10,000 to one? Though the wolves have had all the eating and though there never yet was a sheep that devoured a wolf, yet the sheep are here and the wolves have gone! The sheep have won that victory and so will Christ's little flock.

The anvil is struck by the hammer and the anvil never strikes in return and yet the anvil wears the hammer out! Patience baffles fury and vanquishes malice. The non-resistance principle involves a resistance which is irresistible. The steady patience that cannot be provoked, but which, like Jesus, when reviled reviles not, is certain of conquest. This is what you persecuted ones need to learn, to get more near your God when you are among the lions in order to be the more calm and patient as men rage against you.

A third piece of comfort is this. Please remember that although your soul is among lions, the lions are chained. When Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, the lions were hungry and would soon have devoured him, but you know why it was that they could not touch him. Ah, the angel came. Just as the

fierce lions were about to seize Daniel, down he came swift from Heaven and stood in front of them. "Hush!" he said—and they lay as still as a stone. So says the text—"My God has sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths." They had fine teeth, but their mouths were shut! If the Lord can easily shut a lion's mouth, He can as easily quite the mouth of an ungodly man! He can take all trouble off of you, if He wills it, in an instant!

And He can give you a smooth path to Heaven when it pleases Him. Only remember that if everything on the road to Heaven were smooth, Heaven would not be so sweet at the end and we should not have an opportunity of displaying those Christian Graces which are brought out and educated by the opposition of the world. God will not quench the fire of persecution, for it consumes our dross—but He will moderate its power so that not a grain of pure metal shall be lost. The lions are chained, dear Friend! They can go no farther than God permits. In this country the most they can do, as a rule, is to howl—they cannot bite—and howling does not break bones, so why, then, be afraid?

The man who is afraid of being laughed at is not half a man, but almost deserves the scorn he receives. Never mind what is said. Talking will not hurt you. Harden your spirit against it and bear it gallantly. Go and tell your Lord of it if your heart fails you and then go forward, calm, as your Master did, fearing nothing, for God will bear you through. The lions can roar, but they cannot tear—fear them not.

Another fact for your comfort is this—when your soul is among lions, there is another lion there as well as the lions that you can see. Have you never heard of Him? He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah! How quietly He lies! How patiently He waits by the side of His servants! The jest, the jeer, the noise continues and He lies still. If He only would—if He thought it wise—if it were not for His superlative patience He has only to rouse Himself for one moment and all our enemies would be destroyed! Our great Lord and King could have had 20 legions of angels when He was in the garden for the lifting of His finger, but He continued alone, a suffering Man.

If He willed it at this day, He could sweep the ungodly away as chaff before the wind! His longsuffering is for their salvation, if haply they may turn and repent. If your faith is as it should be, it will be a great joy to you to know that He is always with you; that He is always near you. If He is ever absent from others of His servants, He is never away from His persecuted servants. Ask the Covenanters among the mosses and the hills and they will tell you that they never had such Sabbaths in Scotland as when they met among the crags and set their scouts to warn them against Claverhouse's dragoons. When Cargill or Cameron thundered out the Word of God, with what power was it attended! How sweetly was the blessed Bridegroom with His persecuted Church among the hills!

There is never such a time for seeing the Son of God as when the world heats the furnace seven times hotter. There is the flaming furnace—go and stand at the mouth of it and look in. They threw three bound men in their clothes and in their hats into it and the flame was so strong that it killed the soldiers who threw them in! But look! Can you see them? Nebuchadnezzar himself comes to look. See how greatly he is astonished! He calls to those around him and he demands, "Did not we cast three men bound into the furnace? Look! There are four! A strange, mysterious form is that fourth! They are walking the coals as if they walked in a garden of flowers. They seem full of delight! They are walking as calmly as men do when they converse in their gardens in the cool of the day! And that fourth, that mysterious fourth is like the Son of God!"

Ah, Nebuchadnezzar, you have seen a sight that has often been seen elsewhere. When God's people are in the furnace, God's Son is in the furnace, also! He will not leave those who will not leave Him. If we can cling to Him, rest assured that He will cling to us, even to the end! Fear not the lions, then. Our Samson would turn upon them and tear them in a moment if their hour were come—

"Jesus' tremendous name Puts all our foes to flight! Jesus, the meek, the angry Lamb, A Lion is in fight. By all Hell's host withstood,

We all Hell's host overthrow. And conquering them, through Jesus' blood

We still to conquer go."

Again, I want to comfort you with this word—you whose souls are among lions should remember that you will come out of the lions' den unharmed. Daniel was cast into the den. Darius could not sleep that night and when he went in the morning he did not expect to find a bone of Daniel left and so he began crying out to him. How surprised he must have been when Daniel replied that his God had preserved him! How thankful he was to fetch him out of the den! You, too, dear child of God, will come out of the den all right. There will be a resurrection of God's people's bodies at last and there will be a resurrection for their reputations, too!

The slanderer may belie the character of a true man, but no true man's character will ever be buried long enough to rot. Your righteousness shall come forth as light and your judgment as the noonday. You need not be afraid but, as Daniel rose from the den to dignity, so will every man who suffers for Christ receive honor and glory and immortality "in that day." Remember that if you are now among the lions, the day is hurrying on with speed when you shall be among the angels! Our Lord and Master, after being in the wilderness with the wild beasts, found that "angels came and ministered to Him." Such a visitation awaits all the faithful.

What a change those martyrs enjoyed who took a fiery breakfast on earth, but supped with Christ that very day after riding to Glory in a chariot of fire! If you have to suffer now, even all that can possibly be wreaked of vengeance upon you for Christ's sake, you will think nothing of it when you have been five seconds in Heaven! Indeed, it will be a subject of congratulation that you were permitted, in your humble measure, to be counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake! Therefore be comforted, you young people, and march on with heroic step. I see a soldier or two here tonight and I am right glad that we have generally a block of red coats in the congregation. I know that often in the barracks it is hard for a Christian man to bear witness for Jesus Christ.

Many and many a soldier has found his path as a Christian to be extremely difficult. He has had to sail very carefully, like a ship among torpedoes, and only Divine Grace has kept him safe. Some of you who reside in large establishments,

where you sleep in rooms with great many others, find it difficult, even, to kneel down to pray. Mind that you do it, though. Do it at first right bravely and keep it up! Never be ashamed of your colors. Begin as you mean to go on—and go on as you begin! If you begin parleying, you will soon lose all their respect and make it worse for yourself. In the name of Jesus Christ let me beseech you to be firm and steadfast even unto death!

Be comforted, for there has no new thing happened to you. It is no novelty for the followers of Jesus to be ridiculed and despised. He came to send fire on the earth and it has been kindled well near 2,000 years. The fiery path is the old road of the Church militant—therefore tread it and be glad that you are permitted to follow the heroes of Heaven in their sacred way!

II. Now, a few words BY WAY OF ADVICE. Of course this does not deal with all of you who are now present. I hope that many of you dwell among the godly. Still there are some whose soul is among lions and to them I give this counsel. First, if you dwell among lions, do not irritate them. If I happened to be among lions, I would not tease them. I would take good care that if they were cruel and fierce I did not make them so. I have known some who I hope were Christians, who have acted very unwisely and have made matters worse for themselves.

There is such a thing as ramming religion down people's throats, or trying to do so. You can put on a very long face and try to scold people into religion. This will not do. Never yet was anybody bullied to Christ and there never will be. Some are very stern and make no allowances for other people—these may be good, but they are not wise. What is a rule to you and to me may not be a rule to everybody else. We said, the other Sunday, that we should not think of eating what we give to swine, but we do not, therefore, say, "These swine must not have their slop." No, no! It is good enough for them. Let them have it.

And as to worldly people and their amusements, let them have them, poor things. They have nothing else, let them have their mirth. I would not touch their joys, nor would you, for they would be no pleasure to you. But do not, as a new-born man, go and set yourself up as the standard of what the ordinary sinner, dead in sin, is to be! He cannot come up to our standard. Do not be perpetually finding fault! That is pulling the lions' whiskers and the creatures are very likely to growl at you. If your soul is among lions, be gentle, be kind, be prudent, be tender—sometimes be silent. A good word is on your tongue, but there are times when you must not say it—for the life of you, you must not say it—for it would rouse the lions and make more sin than needs be.

Sometimes a Truth of God needs defending, but, my inexperienced and untaught Brother, do not try to defend it, for you have not the strength. The champion of infidelity will challenge one who is weak and uninstructed and he overthrows him—and he who came forth valorously is beaten in argument. He was not up to the mark in knowledge and so he was vanquished! And then, what do the adversaries say? Why, they boast that the Truth is disproved and that Christ is beaten. Nothing of the kind! The British empire was not defeated when a regiment of our soldiers were slain at Isandula—and the Truth and cause of Christ is not defeated when some weak champion full of zeal rushes to the front when he ought to have kept in the rear.

I do not say much on this point because we have not much rash zeal, nowadays, and it would be a pity to check what honest zeal there is. But still, there is such a text as, "Be you wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Put your finger on your lips when you are irritated. You cannot speak to the purpose when you are perturbed and are likely to be angry. Be quiet and bide your time. Many a man would do more good for the cause of God if he would not irritate ungodly people. Leave them alone—seek their salvation lovingly and tenderly—but when your efforts to do them good only provoke them to sin, try another way. Do not go on with that which angers them—invent another method. I believe that some Christians make half the opposition which they get from the world by their own ill tempers and stupidity. They challenge conflict. Their actions seem to say, "Who will fight me?" and then, of course, somebody takes up the challenge. Do not act foolishly! If your soul is among lions and they are inclined to be quiet, do not needlessly excite

them.

Secondly, if your soul is among lions, do not roar, yourself, for that is very easy to be done. We have known some who we hope were Christians who have met railing with railing, hard words with hard words, bitter speeches with bitter speeches. The ungodly are lions, but you are not—do not try to meet them in their own line. You will never roar as well as they do! If you are a Christian, you have not the knack of roaring. Leave them do it. Your way of meeting them is not by losing your temper and abusing your antagonists and so becoming a lion, yourself—you must conquer them with gentleness, patience, kindness and love!

I pray you, dear Brothers and Sisters who have to bear a good deal for Christ's sake, do not get soured in spirit. There is a tendency in a martyr age to become obstinate and pugnacious. You must not be so. Love, love, love! And the more you are provoked, love the more! Overcome evil with good. I think it necessary to mention these cautions because I know many require them. Again, if your soul is among lions, do not be cowardly. Have you never heard that a lion is afraid of a man if he looks him steadily in the face? I am not sure about that piece of natural history, but I am quite certain that it is true with regard to the ungodly world.

If a man will bear himself calmly. If he will be unmoved, determined, resolute and steadfast, he will overcome the adversary. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." If you give way a little, you will have to give way a great deal. If you give the world an inch, you will have to give it a mile as sure as you are alive. If you will not yield an inch, no, nor yet a barleycorn, but stand steadfast, God will help you. Courage is what is needed. The world, after a while, says of any man, "It is of no use laughing at him—he does not mind it. It is of no use calling him hard names—he only smiles at you. It is useless to be his enemy, for he will not be yours. He will only be your friend."

Then the world whispers, "Well, after all, he is not so bad a fellow as we thought he was. We must let him have his own way." There is a big human heart somewhere down in men if you can but get at it and, after a while, when truth and righteousness have suffered and been denounced, men turn round and are almost ready to carry on their shoulders with hosannas the same person whom, a little while before, they longed to crucify. Do not be a coward! Do not be a coward!—

"Stand up! Stand up for Jesus! The fight will not be long. This day the noise of battle, The next the victor's song."

Even if the fight were long, for such a Master as Jesus it were worth while to endure 10,000 years of scorn and, moreover, the reward at the end will repay us a thousand-fold!

If your soul is among lions, then do not go out among them alone. "Then whom shall I take with me?" asks one, "there is not a Christian in the shop." Take your Lord with you! Be absolutely sure that you do that. Now, my dear Friend, I know what they said yesterday and how they bantered you and you were tart and short with them because you were not in prayer in the morning as you ought to have been. If your mind had been more calm and gentle as the result of prayer, you would not have minded it one-half so much. Take your Master with you and whenever you have to speak, remember that He is standing at your side and try to say what you would like Him to hear. And then, when you have made your defense, you will be able to say, "Good Master, I think I have not dishonored You, for I have spoken Your words."

Oh, live near to Christ if you live among lions! Those of you who endure opposition make the best Christians. Many that have been distinguished for Christ in later life have had to rough it a little at first. "It is good for a man that he bears the yoke in his youth." If I could bring a garden-roller and roll the grass for you all the way from here to Heaven, do you think that I would do it? Certainly not! A rough place or two is good for you—it tries and strengthens pilgrim feet! A child will never become a man if he is carried about, all his life, like a baby. You must run alone. You must learn the arts of holy warfare or else you will not be fit to be a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb! May His good Spirit help you to keep in fellowship with Christ that He may guard and protect you from every temptation and persecution.

Further, let me say to you that if your soul is among lions and you feel very weak about it, you are permitted to pray the Lord to move you in His Providence to quieter quarters. A Christian man is not bound to endure persecution if he can help it—"When they persecute you in one city flee to another." You are quite warranted in seeking another situation. There may be reasons why you should remain under the trial and, if so, take care that you do not overlook them. Prudence may make you avoid persecution, but cowardice must not mingle with the prudence! That prayer which says, "Lead us not into temptation," gives us, as it were, a permit to move from places where we are much tempted and sometimes it is the duty of the Christian to seek some other sphere of labor, if he possibly can, where he will not be so much tried.

One thought more—the braver thing is to ask for Grace to stay with the lions and tame them. "My soul is among lions." Well, if the Lord makes you a lion tamer, that is the very place where you ought to be! In some of our districts in London as soon as ever a man is converted he feels that he cannot live there any longer and this makes the district hopeless. My dear Friend, Mr. Orsman, working in Golden Lane, as it used to be, told me that his was an endless task because as soon as ever the people were converted they would say, "Would you have me live here any longer, in such a horrible place as this?" They naturally felt that as they had grown sober, decent and respectable, they should move into a different locality and they did so—and the result is that the old spot does not improve.

Sometimes the Christian man should say, "No, God has made me strong in Grace and I will stop here and fight it out. These are lions, but I will tame them. I believe that God has put me here on purpose to bring my fellow workmen to the Savior and, by His Grace, I will do it." Now, if I were a lamp, I daresay that if I had my choice of where I should burn, I should choose to blaze away in a respectable street. I should like to scatter my light in front of the Tabernacle! But surely if I were a really sensible lamp I should say to myself—"If there are only a few lamps and all the streets have to be lit, there is more necessity to light up a back slum or a blind alley than to adorn a main street. Therefore let me shine in the dismal courts. In a lonely, dark place where murder may be done—there let me act as guardian of the night and detective of the villain."

A wise lamp would say, "I came into the world to give light and I should like to give light where light is most needed. Hang me up in Mint Street, or in St. Giles's, or away there by the back of Kent Street where I may be most useful." And now, Christian people, is there not sense about this advice? Is there not reason in it? Would not your Master have you go where you are most needed and should you not, therefore, if your soul is among lions, say, "Thank God it is so. These people are not going to conquer me, but I am going to conquer them"?

What a beautiful spectacle was that which was exhibited by the Moravian Brethren in their grand times! They could not land on one of the West Indies to preach the Gospel to the Negroes, for the planters would not have anybody there but slaves. So two Brothers sold themselves for slaves and lived and died in

bondage that they might teach the poor Negroes of Christ! It is said that there was a place in Africa where persons were shut up whose limbs were rotting away through leprosy and other diseases. Two of these Brethren climbed up a wall and saw these poor creatures—some with no legs and others with no arms. They asked to be allowed to go in to win souls for Christ and the answer was, "If you enter you can never come out again because you would bring contagion. You go in there to die, to rot away as the lepers do."

These brave men went in and died that they might bring the lepers to Christ! I hope that we have some drops of that grand Christian blood still in our veins! And if we have, we shall feel that we could go to the gates of Hell to win a sinner! You are not like your Master unless you would die to save men from Hell. You will bear jests and jeers and count them nothing if you can but win souls. So stop where you are, my stronger Brothers and Sisters—if your souls are among lions, tarry and tame the lions!

It will be a grand thing for you to come, one day, to the Church meeting with two or three of your neighbors whom you have been the means of converting to Christ. I like to see a man march, if he can do it, with a tame lion on each side! When a man has, by God's Grace, brought some of those that were drunks and swearers to the feet of Jesus, oh, it is a grand triumph! It has been my business for many years to be a lion tamer and I delight in it! If there is any lion of the sort here, I wish the Master would tame him and make him lie down and crouch at His feet. There is the place for us poor sinners—at the feet of Christ.

But do not be afraid of sinners, dear Friends, for how can you tame them if you tremble at them? Go forth to win them in the strength of the living God and you shall yet see the lion lie down with the lamb—and a little child shall lead them. Amen and amen!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/among-lions/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net