

Lions And Hatred

"Then he said to them, 'So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.'" Matthew 22:21 (NIV)

"Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate.

And they began to accuse him, saying,

'We have found this man subverting our nation.

He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.'"

Luke 23:1-2 (NIV)

I am certain that most of us, if not all of us, would never wish to be alongside a lion in his natural world. As long as we have iron bars between us and the lion we feel safe and are willing to get to within a few feet of him. Take the bars away and we run for our lives.

Hatred is an emotion that is a dreadful master. It often distorts our thinking and, before we realize it, lies come out of our mouths and evil thoughts crowd into our minds in order to control our actions. How careful we need to be with regard to our emotional lives.

If we were able to view hatred the way we view a lion on the loose, then we would show greater respect for that emotion and we would avoid it at all costs.

One of the accusations

against our Lord when He appeared before Pilate was that He taught the people not to pay taxes to Caesar (Luke 23:2). This was false as our first verse today makes clear. But sometimes hatred will cause people to deny the truth in order to do harm to the person they hate. The Pharisees hated our Lord with a pure and dreadful hatred. Thus they lied about His teaching in order to destroy Him.

Our Lord taught us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us. Matthew 5:44 (NIV) "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." I believe that we ought to view hatred as though it were a lion on the loose. As soon as we see hatred we ought to run from it as though it was coming to devour us.

Guard your hearts and minds regarding this spe-

cific emotion. Many people have been ruined because they allowed hatred to breed in their hearts until they were consumed by it. As soon as you realize hatred has entered your heart, start praying for the person you seem to hate, seek to do good to your enemy. By performing loving actions toward the person you feel so negative toward you will defeat Satan's purpose to ruin your soul.

Remember our Lord when He was being nailed to the cross. Luke 23:34 tells us that Jesus went on praying for His enemies who were crucifying Him. He repeated the petition again and again, asking the Father to forgive the ones who were causing Him such sorrow. Go out today and behave like Jesus. Pray for your enemies.

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