

# The Gospel Witness

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

IN THE INTEREST OF JARVIS STREET BAPTIST  
CHURCH, TORONTO, AND OF EVANGELICAL TRUTH

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PASTOR AND EDITOR

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1: 16.

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## The Jarvis Street Pulpit

"OUT OF THE STRONG CAME FORTH SWEETNESS."

A Sermon by the Pastor.

Preached in Jarvis Street Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, Jan. 14th, 1923.  
(Stenographically reported.)

"Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him.

"And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

"And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

"And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

"And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion."—Judges 14.

Of all the biographies given to us in this sacred Word, we have the story of only one perfect man. The story of Samson is a somewhat tragic tale; and yet there are pages in his history which are full of instruction. If you would see the eagle in his glory, you must behold him when he is on the wing, and not when he is caught in the snare of the fowler. And it is unfair to measure any man by his weakest moments. You must view his life as a whole, if you are to form a just estimate of his character. And I want to take this old story this morning, that we may find in it some simple lesson, which has application to us in our everyday affairs.

I. And I began with this observation that THE PATH OF EVERY MORTAL WILL LEAD HIM TO A PLACE WHERE A LION WILL ROAR UPON HIM. Even aside from the moral and spiritual aspect of the story—and it is with that we are chiefly concerned this morning—but aside from that, the story is full of suggestion respecting the experiences of men in the realm of the physical and temporal. This is a large world; and one might suppose there was room in it for everybody, and abundant provision for all His creatures. "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry." Notwithstanding the provision which God has made, however, there is no path which any man can take in

which his progress will not soon be disputed. We shall succeed only as we are enabled to overcome. The young man who goes out into life presuming upon the idea that the world owes him a living will very soon discover that the world is very slow to recognize its obligation, and still slower to discharge it. There are no fences which men can make; there are no chains which human power can forge, which will protect us from this necessity of doing battle with the lion, somehow or somewhere. Even—to make particular application of the story—even in the attempt to realize love's young dream, as Samson attempted to realize it, there is always to be found a lion in the path.

But I want especially to make application of this principle to our spiritual progress, to "the path of the just. . . . that—the Word of the Lord says—shineth more and more unto the perfect day." You will not have fared far along that pathway until you hear the roar of the lion, for our "adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The line of least resistance is not the path of faithfulness, and whoever would walk in the paths of righteousness will discover, as Samson discovered, that success is achieved only by the most strenuous endeavour.

This is true respecting *the missionary activities of the church*, and of the individual—and by missionary activity I simply mean the exercise of the church's legitimate function, bringing men to a knowledge of the truth, finding a bride for the Lord Jesus. It was true of the Lord Himself. It was for this He came to earth, for the same purpose as led Samson to the vineyards of Timnath, to seek for himself a bride. But a lion roared upon Him as soon as He began His earthly pilgrimage. There were those who sought the young child's life, as we saw a week or so ago, from the very beginning. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord." If you are going to engage in definite Christian work; if you are going to put yourself at the disposal of the Spirit of God; if you are to be an Eliezer to find a bride for the divine Isaac; you will discover, as soon as you set your hand to the task, that there are difficulties in the way; there are enemies in the path; there are beasts of prey that will seek to rend you; and you will never serve the Lord effectually without strenuous opposition. You will remember what is written of David: he did not go at first to the battle-field; he did not immediately put on Saul's armor; but he was left in the wilderness to keep his father's flock. Even there the lion and the bear came upon him; and he found that if he would be faithful in that obscure situation, he must do battle with those who thirsted for his blood. And if we are to accomplish anything for the Lord as individuals, or as a church, we must be prepared for continuous conflict.

"Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease;  
While others fought to win the prize;  
And sailed through bloody seas?"

Therefore, you may as well give up your task, if you are determined to be at ease in Zion. You Sunday School teachers may find the lion in your class this afternoon. It may not be a full-grown lion; it may be just a cub; but you will have an opportunity to prove your mettle if you are going to lead those children to Christ. You will have to do battle with the lion—or a lioness—in some shape or another; and if you are not prepared for a hard task, nor ready for heroic service, you may as well resign at once; for you will accomplish nothing if you are ready to serve only so long as the way is easy.

My friend, *it is true of the merc effort to live a Christian life.* For after all, the greatest difficulty is with ourselves. I want you to try to remember what I

say to-morrow when you go to business, or when you set about your household task. If you endeavour to serve the Lord, you will hear the roar of the lion. And early to-morrow morning try to keep this in mind when the first difficulty presents itself, and say before the Lord, "Aha! Aha! there is my lion; that is just exactly what the preacher said yesterday morning, that I should have to fight my way through to-day if I am going to be a Christian." You will find that you cannot apply the principles of the Christian religion anywhere without opposition. *This is especially true of the inner life*, for we do not live our lives in public. The real man does not appear even at the breakfast table, nor at his desk in the office, nor at his bench in the shop: that is not the real man. There is another man which only God sees, the man the Scripture speaks of as "the inner man." The human heart is the real battle-field, where the principal battles are fought, and the chief victories are won; and that is where you and I will have to meet the lion. We may be outwardly calm; we may appear to live an untroubled life, a life that is not beset with difficulties; you may seem to have achieved Mr. Bonar Law's desideratum, "tranquility," it may be that somebody will envy you, and say, "If my situation were like Mr. So-and-so's it would be comparatively simple to live the Christian life; but God only knows the battles we fight within. In the lonely vineyards of Timnath, where no human eye sees us, where we are without human companionship, that is the place where the real battles of life are fought, and that is the place where the real victories are won. And if they are not won there, they are not won anywhere.

I would try to bring that home to my own heart and to yours this morning, that *it is the life we live before God that counts*, it is what we are before Him, where "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." That is what determines our true character, and that will determine the kind of victories we shall win. And in that realm which is shared by no other mortal, but where God is, we shall have to do battle with the lion.

II. My second observation, which is a very simple one, is this: **THAT THERE IS AVAILABLE FOR EVERY MORTAL, POWER TO OVERCOME:** "The Spirit of God came mightily upon him." Samson was naturally a strong man; but it was not by his natural strength that he accomplished his great feats. It was by a supernatural power that Samson did what he did; for when at last the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, Samson was as weak as other men. It was the presence and power of the Spirit of God in the life of Samson that differentiated him from other men: it is God reinforcing these human personalities by coming to dwell within us Himself which makes men mighty. And that is the message of the Gospel, that poor, bankrupt, enervated, impoverished, impotent, human nature can receive the power of God in such measure that it will be enabled to overcome the lion in the path. We are to triumph in the Name of the Lord as Samson did.

I believe it is still true that victory is possible even in the physical, in the material realm. This was no mere spiritual lion that Samson fought. It was a real lion, a lion with jaws, and with a real roar, that could be heard even by a man whose hearing was not particularly acute. Well, we cannot live altogether above the flesh. We must walk this earth. You will have to wade your way through the snow on your way home this morning. The fact that you are a Christian will not save you from the drifts. And the bread and butter question, and the matter of coal—I may touch a sympathetic chord in your heart by the mention of the coal question—and the rent question, and the question of employment: all these problems of the workaday world are very real to us all; and it would be of no profit to some of you this morning.

if I were to tell you only of the joys of getting away by yourself to meditate upon the things of God, of getting up into the heavenly places, and keeping company with the angels. That is all possible, but some of you would say, "But sir, I have to face these everyday facts of life. The multiplication table is a fact in my life. I want to know how five loaves and two fishes can be made to supply the need of my family for a whole week. The fact is, the lion roars upon me; and I am so beset with these common vulgar things of life that I can hardly lift my head above them." My answer is that I do not know what the religion of Christ is for if it is not to help us right there. The Spirit of God will help us in the material things of life. Jesus helped men. It was the body He touched when He said to the leper, "I will; be thou clean;" it was their bodies He fed; it was of their bodies He spoke when He said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It was concerning these common things,—the things that we regard as beneath our spiritual concern sometimes,—it was of these things He spoke when he said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

And I read in the Word that the Holy Spirit is to quicken our mortal bodies; that the divine Spirit has to do with the material realm; and that the Spirit of God can come mightily upon a man and enable him to triumph, even in the most difficult circumstances.

Now I do not know what your particular lion may be. You students—there are some here this morning, I think,—for instance, as a rule you do not have a very big bank account; and sometimes it is a problem how to make ends meet. I suggest to you this morning that there is no department of life that does not come under the care of Him Whom we call our Saviour. He wants us to take the most trifling things to Him; He wants us to win the victory over the lion in the back garden, in the kitchen, in the office—yes, the lion that is within us—over our tempers, over our natural disposition. The Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon us, if we will allow Him to do so, if we will seek His aid; and He will make us by grace other than we are by nature.

And I believe *there is victory in the path of service*, as well as in the direction of Christian living: though perhaps sincere, Christian living is the truest form of service. The apostles began their testimony for the Lord in Jerusalem; and it was there God gave them power to overcome; and it was there the first-fruits of the Gospel were gathered in. And if the lion has roared upon us, and we have failed thus far; let us meet him again in the strength of the Lord. I mean this: there is some man in whom you have been interested, and whom you have tried to win to the Lord Jesus; and when you approached him with a testimony for Christ, he may have literally roared upon you. I would tell you how he may yet be won.

I remember a man, he was a deacon of the church of which I was pastor some years ago. He was a very fine man in many respects, although a very conceited man, and a man, I felt sure, while there was a certain spiritual flavour about his speech, who had not learned wholly to cast himself upon God. And there was a certain young man, a mild gentlemanly sort of fellow, who for some reason or another could not be caught for the Lord. He eluded his pursuers always. One of the members of the church was a missionary in India. And when she came home on furlough she found that this young

man was still unsaved; and she thought she would make it her business to try to lead him to Christ. One evening she went to see him and talked with him about Christ. He listened quite politely, and then smiled as he could to everybody, and he said, "I understood Miss So-and-so that you were on furlough." And she said, she did not know what next to say. He was one of the most difficult cases I have ever met. Well, this young deacon announced to a company of us one day that he was going to call on Mr. So-and-so. He thought he understood his case, and he felt quite sure that he was going to have a victory. I met him shortly after his interview the same evening, and he even looked as if he had been in the company of a whole den of lions. I said to him, "How did you get along?" He said, "I never had such a time in my life."

If you want to meet the lion in his strength, you go after a soul. Michael the archangel contended with the devil over the body of Moses—and the devil was perhaps once an archangel himself—but the devil was never so much concerned to possess himself of the body of Moses as he is to possess himself of the humblest soul in Toronto. You go out and try to win a soul; and when you come in close contact with the man and try to lead him to Christ, you will discover then the full strength of the lion that is roaring after his prey. And yet it is possible to have victory there. Therefore when you are going on that business, my friend, remember this story, that as Samson approached the lion "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." By the might of the Spirit and by no power can the soul be led captive for Christ. We might as well cease our testimony unless it is given in the power of the Holy Ghost. There is no other power that can prevail.

Observe further, that this victory was in a sense easily won. The Spirit of the Lord not only came upon him, but *He came upon him in His fulness*: "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid." There was no particular effort, there was a surplus of power for that particular undertaking. When the Lord undertakes to feed the multitude, there are always twelve baskets full left over and above that which is eaten. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter—on the natural plane that is all we are—Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The Spirit of the Lord can give us the victory where otherwise we should fail.

And *the Victory was won without instruments*. Samson had nothing in his hand: empty-handed, depending wholly upon the might of the Spirit of God, this thing was done. And just in proportion as we lean upon God in these emergencies, we shall have the victory.

I must pause for a moment to remind you that *the victory was won in secret, and was never published*. "He told not his father or his mother." There are some victories that must be secretly won. There are some experiences, my dear friends, which are not given to us for publication. In the quiet places, in the vineyards of Timnath, God would work a miracle for you and for me, which we are not to publish to other people. I remember a good soul, an interesting woman, in a church of which I was pastor some years ago—by the way, she was the mother of the young deacon of whom I have spoken—and she was always telling us about the lions she was going to slay; always telling us in prayer-meeting about some of the lions that were across her path. She said she was praying for victory over these particular lions, but apparently she never got the victory.

And there are some people who are fond of telling of their secret conquests. There is a life, my friend, that is to be lived before God, and there are some experiences that are given to us for ourselves alone. Samson did not tell others of his victory, and I shall show you in just a moment why he did not. Do not despise or misjudge the man or woman of reserve. Do not misunderstand the person who fights his or her battle alone, and who does not always publish to the world the victories which God has given. There are victories that are given to us for that very reason, that we may share the secret with others, but there are some things which we are to experience with God alone.

III. Just this word and I have done: THE OVERCOMING LIFE IS ALWAYS A LIFE OF SWEETNESS. Samson slew the lion and then he continued on his love mission. It is said the woman pleased him well. In due time he returned to take her, but nothing is said about the meeting. That is the point that you would have written, but the divine Spirit tells us of something that happened in the way, that when he returned to take her, he turned aside. He said, "Here is the place where I had my conflict; here is the place where I fought the greatest battle of my life. I never told anybody about it; but I will turn aside to see the carcass of the lion." And, behold, it had become a beehive, and in the carcass of the lion there was a store of honey. *In the place of secret conflict and victory he found a source of sweetness*; and he took of the honey in his hands and went on eating. O the joy to be found in overcoming! There is a real delight in climbing the hill; there is real pleasure in attempting the difficult task. I heard a doctor say not very long ago, "I have a most interesting case." It was a difficult case; it was a case that challenged his utmost skill. But that was the case he wanted. It was not merely a case of headache or toothache, not an imaginary ill, but a really difficult task that put his science to the test; and he was delighted at the opportunity to do what he could to meet the emergency. Joseph Chamberlain, I remember, in one of his speeches once said, "Difficulties exist for statesmen to overcome." And that is true of the Christian life. Difficulties are left that we may overcome them; and it is by overcoming that muscle and sinew are developed and character is formed. Don't ask for the easy place; don't pray for permission to avoid the lion: you will have to fight with it, but you will find that in the very place where you had your greatest difficulty you will get your greatest joy: you will find a store of honey in the carcass of the lion, by and by. How many of us have found it so? We did not court the conflict, but it came; and in the experience we found our greatest joy.

I remember reading an old legend years ago of a certain Eastern king who took a paternal interest in his subjects, and in order to test their character he had placed in the midst of the highway a great boulder, to see how men would act when they approached it. Some came along, and paused to examine it, and then made their way around to the right side, and some made their way around to the left side. Some just touched it with their fingers to see whether it was particularly heavy, if it might not be moved; but when it was unresponsive to their gentle touch, they too passed by on the one side or the other. But there came at last a man who surveyed it and said, "This ought not to be here, a boulder in the midst of the highway is out of place, it ought to be removed that the progress of the king's subjects might not be impeded." He touched it with his hand but it made no response. Then he put his shoulder to it, but he could not move it; but he made up his mind that he would not pass on his way and leave that stone in the path. So he found a lever of some sort and with great exertion he moved it, then he

pushed it, until he rolled it off the highway. And right under the rock there was a pocket made in the road and it was filled with the king's golden coin for the man who was resolved to overcome difficulties. This is simply a parable which tells the same story. That is how the King does. He allows a lion to come in our path and if we conquer it we shall find the carcass of the lion full of sweetness.

*There was sweetness enough to be shared with other people*, though they did not share the conflict. Martha missed a great opportunity when Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus. She came in and said, "Lord dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" There are some people who never do anything alone. They summon the whole household to help if there is any work to be done. You mothers know the difference between your daughters; how one will patiently plod along and do the daily task and say nothing about it, while another cannot do anything alone. There is where faith finds her opportunity to be alone with God, and there to get the victory: then when you have won the victory in secret, and you have eaten the honey alone, behold! the victory that is won single-handed will always provide honey enough for the whole family and a multitude of others. And he took of the honey in his hand and he brought to his father and to his mother, but he told them nothing about the lion. You cannot win the victory in the secret place without having your whole life sweetened, and people will know that something has happened, though they may not be able to define or to discern your secret, but they can test the sweetness of it when you come with honey for the whole family. Try it, for instance, with the lion of temper. Just say, "Now Lord give me the victory over that lion to-day;" and as you cast yourself upon God the Spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon you, and you will get the victory. Then the whole family will say, "How sweet he is to-day! How lovely she is to-day!" Thus you may bring honey in your hand to everybody. But he told not his father or his mother: "He told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion." If ever Samson was tempted to tell his secret it was then, when he came with the honey. Perhaps they said, "Wherever did you get it?" What a temptation to show off then, what a temptation to say, O I slew a lion, that is where I got the honey." But he said nothing about it. He said, "Never mind where it came from, you taste it." Do not parade the victories that are won in secret. Distribute the honey, and people will know that there has been victory somewhere. What is the Spirit for? the Spirit is given to us to overcome lions in the way, and after He has done it, what then?—"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control: against such there is no law."—No, there is no law against the distribution of honey.

I have given you this simple, practical, word this morning, I trust under the guidance of God, to meet somebody's need. A man said to me yesterday in the hospital, "When I go to church on Sunday I like to get something that will keep me thinking all the week. It is not enough for me that I am just made to feel a little better for the moment, I want something that I can take with me back to my work on Monday, and that I can turn over in my mind all the week." Well I have given you this homely story this morning so that you will be able to turn it over in your mind all the week. Let us see what lions we can slay, what secret victories we can win, in the name of the Lord, and in the might of the Spirit; and what honey we can find, and what sweetness we can bring to those who are about us. May the Lord bless us every one for His Name's sake.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Gospel Witness continues to exercise its splendid ministry, reaching scores, if not hundreds of people beyond the reach of the Pastor's voice, and proving a veritable benediction to many, especially to the aged and sick folk who are never able to get to the House of God. Letters are constantly being received from all parts, telling of blessing received, of faith strengthened, and best of all, a number have been brought to know the Lord through reading the sermons of our Pastor. It is expected that soon the Witness will be enlarged and the subscription price reduced, so there may be a larger circulation, and thus its beneficent work extended. Much of the blessing that has come to us as a church may be attributed to the earnest prayers of many who have never attended our services, but have seen through the Witness what the Lord is doing for Jarvis St. Church, and the stand it is taking for the truths of the Gospel. Let us join all such in earnest supplication that the favor of God may more and more rest upon the printed page.

This is **Easter Sunday** and at the evening service several will put on the Lord in baptism. After a short address by the Pastor we shall gather as a church family around the table of the Lord. Let every member be present with us on this occasion; thirty or more new members are to receive the Hand of Fellowship.

The **Sunday School** will hold an open session in the Sunday School Hall at 3 p.m. An Easter programme has been arranged, including a brief address on "The Sinless Saviour." A very cordial invitation is extended to all friends to be present.

**Women's Mission Circle.** The April meeting of the Women's Mission Circle is to be of special interest. Miss Lucy Jones, our beloved missionary to India now on furlough in Toronto, is to be the speaker. In addition, the Jarvis St. ladies have invited the Women's Mission Circle of Immanuel Baptist Church to meet with us and hear Miss Jones. We hope for a large attendance of our women, for as hostesses we wish to give a cordial welcome to our guests who, we believe, will bring inspiration and blessing with them. Let us fill the parlour to overflowing at 3 o'clock **Thursday, April 5th**, each one bringing a verse from the Word. Tea will be served at the close, and an opportunity given to meet Miss Jones and the Immanuel ladies.

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### JARVIS STREET CHURCH DIRECTORY.

**T. T. SHIELDS, Pastor, 96 Winchester Street. Tel., North 628.**

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**W. J. HUTCHINSON, S. S. Superintendent, 295 George Street. Tel., M. 3321.**

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### The Church Calendar

**Sunday.** For the week beginning Sunday, April 1st, 1923.

10.00—Prayer Service in the Church Parlor, Mr. George Greenway.

11.00—Public Worship. The Pastor will preach.

3.00—The Bible School will meet. Open session.

6.00—Prayer Meeting in Church Parlor.

7.00—Public Worship—The Pastor will preach. Baptism will be administered.

8.30—Communion Service and Reception of Members.

Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday—8.00—Prayer Service.

Wednesday—Junior Mid-Week Service—7.15.

Thursday—Mission Circle—3.00.

The Parliament St. Branch, 250 Parliament St. **Sunday:** Bible School, 3.00; Evangelistic Service, conducted by Mr. W. L. McKay, 7.00.

**Wednesday, 8.00, Prayer Meeting. Friday, 7.15, Junior Service.**