

CINNAMON AND THE LION

By Timothy Cross

One Christmas my wife and two daughters flew to Texas to see my mother-in-law, while I drove to Kansas to see my parents who live in a small country town. Because there was no one to watch our dog, Cinnamon, I took him with me. He loved all the special attention he received from my parents: the Christmas goodies, yummy leftovers, and tummy rubs.

Later in the evening, around 9:00 P.M., I decided to take Cinnamon for a short walk around the block. Because my parents live only a block from Main Street, I decided to walk down Main Street and look at the buildings which had been so familiar to me as a child growing up. In front of the Community Center is a life-size sculpture of a lion standing on the sidewalk with its mouth open. The inside of its mouth has even been painted red to make it look realistic.

As we strolled, Cinnamon seemed to be having the time of his life, tugging at the leash, and living his scent on fire hydrants and lamp posts. He was pulling hard on the leash until he got about 15 feet from the sculpture. All of a sudden he froze in his tracks as he looked at the lion with its gaping mouth and white teeth showing in the dark.

Cinnamon, normally a brave dog, began walking around behind me never taking his eye off the lion for even a second. As I proceeded to stroll past the lion, Cinnamon walked as far away from the lion as the leash would allow. Even after we were past the sculpture he had his head craned backwards looking at the lion just to be sure it wasn't going to attack. He seemed much relieved when we were well past its intimidating presence, and were safe inside my parents home.

I laughed and laughed as I watched the whole episode unfold, and told my parents about it. Then I thought how typical this is. We're all a bit like Cinnamon. Life is full of things which appear real, frightening, and far more powerful than us. No wonder that we try to get as far away from them as possible. I sometimes wonder if God laughs because He sees our fears for what they really are; stone lions.—Isn't this where faith come in, trusting God even when things don't make sense and we're scared spitless?

Was God in control of the world before you were born?—Yes. Will God still be in control of the world long after you're gone?—Of course. So, why don't we hand over our here-and-now fears to Him? After all, He is the One who longs to walk beside us; to protect us, and lead us safely Home.

So, what are the lions in your life? You can focus your attention and your gaze on the lions in your life, or you can look to the One who said, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you."

"Dear Lord Jesus, watch over us and protect us. Grant us the grace to humbly confess our sins and seek you. Deliver us from the stone lions in our lives. Amen."

Peace!