

## Chapter 16      What Happened about the Statues

“What an extraordinary place!” cried Lucy. “All those stone animals- and people too! It’s... it’s like a museum.”

“Hush,” said Susan, “Aslan’s doing something.”

He was indeed. He had bounded up to the stone lion and breathed on him. Then without waiting a moment he whisked around- almost as if he had been a cat chasing its tail- and breathed also on the stone dwarf, which was standing a few feet from the lion. Then he pounced on a tall stone Dryad which stood beyond the dwarf, turned rapidly aside to deal with a stone rabbit, and rushed on to two centaurs. But at that moment Lucy said,

“Oh, Susan! Look! Look at the lion!”

For a second after Aslan had breathed upon him the stone lion looked just the same. Then a tiny streak of gold began to run along his white marble back- then it spread- then the color seemed to lick all over him as the flame licks all over a bit of paper- then, while his hind-quarters were still obviously stone the lion shook his mane and all the heavy, stony folds rippled into living hair. Then he opened his great mouth and gave a prodigious yawn. And now his hind legs had come to life. Then, having caught sight of Aslan, he went bounding after him, frisking round him whimpering with delight.

Of course the children’s eyes turned to follow the lion; but the sight they saw was so wonderful that they soon forgot about him. Everywhere the statues were coming to life. The courtyard looked no longer like a museum; it looked more like a zoo. Creatures were running after Aslan and dancing round him till he was almost hidden in the crowd. Instead of all that deadly white, the courtyard was now a blaze of colors; glossy chestnut sides of centaurs, indigo horns of unicorns, dazzling plumage of birds, reddy-brown of foxes, dogs, and satyrs, yellow stockings and crimson hoods of dwarfs; and the birch-girls in silver, and the beech-girls in fresh, transparent green, and the larch-girls in green so bright that it was almost yellow. And instead of the deadly silence the whole place rang with the sound of happy roarings, brayings, yelpings, barkings, squealings, cooings, neighings, stampings, shouts, hurrahs, songs and laughter.

“Ooh!” said Susan in a different tone. “Look! I wonder- I mean, is it safe?”

Lucy looked and saw that Aslan had just breathed on the feet of the stone giant.

But it was too late to do anything about it. The change was already creeping up the Giant’s legs. Now he was moving his feet. A moment later he lifted the club off his shoulder, rubbed his eyes and said,

“Bless me! I must have been asleep. Now! Where’s that dratted little Witch that was running about on the ground. Somewhere just by my feet it was.” But when everyone had shouted up to him to explain what had really happened, and when the Giant had put his hand to his ear and got them to repeat it all again so that at last he understood, then he bowed down to Aslan, beaming all over his honest ugly face.

“Now for the inside of this house!” said Aslan. “Look alive, everyone. Up stairs and down stairs! Leave no corner unsearched. You never know where some poor prisoner may be concealed.”

And into the interior they all rushed and for several minutes the whole of that dark, horrible, fusty old castle echoed with the opening of windows and with everyone’s voices crying out at once “Don’t forget the dungeons- Give us a hand with this door! – Here’s another little winding stair- Oh! I say. Here’s a poor little kangaroo. Call Aslan – Look out for trap doors – Up here! There are a whole lot more on this landing!” But the best of all was when Lucy came rushing upstairs shouting out,

“Aslan, Aslan! I’ve found Mr. Tumnus. Oh, do come quick.”

A moment later Lucy and the little Faun were holding one another by both hands and dancing round and round for joy.

But at last the ransacking of the Witch’s fortress was ended. The whole castle stood empty with every door and window open and the light and the sweet spring air flooding in to all the dark and evil places which needed them so badly. The whole crowd of liberated statues surged back into the courtyard.

And then Aslan, rising up on his hind-legs, bawled up at the Giant. “Hi! You up there,” he roared, “Giant Rumblebuffin, let us out of this, will you?”

“Certainly, your honour. It will be a pleasure. Then he strode to the gate himself and bang- bang- bang went his huge club. The gates creaked at the first blow, cracked at the second, and shivered at the third ...and when the dust cleared it was odd, standing in that dry, grim, stony yard, to see through the gap all the grass and waving trees and sparkling streams of the forest, and the blue hills beyond that and beyond them the sky.

Aslan called for silence.

“Our day’s work is not yet over,” he said, “and if the Witch is to be finally defeated before bed-time we must find the battle at once.”

“And join in I hope, Sir!” added the largest of the centaurs.

“Of course,” said Aslan. “And now! Those who can’t keep up- that is, children, dwarfs, and small animals- must ride on the backs of those who can- that is lions, centaurs, unicorns, horses, giants and eagles. Those who

are good with their noses must come in the front with us lions to smell out where the battle is. Look lively and sort yourselves.”

And with a great deal of bustle and cheering they did. The most pleased of the lot was the other lion, who kept running about everywhere pretending to be very busy but really in order to say to everyone he met, “Did you hear what he said? *Us lions*. That means him and me. *Us lions*. That’s what I like about Aslan. No stand-off-ishness. *Us lions*.” He went on saying this till Aslan had loaded him up with three dwarfs, one Dryad, two rabbits, and a hedgehog. That steadied him a bit.

When all were ready they set out through the gap in the castle wall. One great hound picked up the scent and gave bay. Soon all the dogs and lions and wolves and other hunting animals were going at full speed with their noses to the ground, and all the others, streaked out for about half a mile behind them, were following as fast as they could. Every now and then with the music of the hounds was mixed the roar of the other lion and sometimes the far deeper and more awful roar of Aslan himself. Faster and faster they went as the scent became easier to follow. And then, just as they came to the last curve in a narrow, winding valley, Lucy heard above all these noises another noise- a different one, that gave her a queer feeling inside. It was a noise of shouts and shrieks and of the clashing of metal against metal.

Then they came out of the narrow valley and at once she saw the reason. There stood Peter and Edmund and all the rest of Aslan’s army fighting desperately against the crowd of horrible creatures whom she had seen last night; only now, in the daylight, they looked even stranger and more evil and more deformed. There also seemed to be far more of them. Aslan’s army looked terribly few. And there were statues dotted all over the battlefield, so apparently the Witch had been using her wand. But she did not seem to be using it now. She was fighting with her stone knife. It was Peter she was fighting- both of them going at it so hard that Lucy could hardly make out what was happening; she only saw the stone knife and Peter’s sword flashing so quickly that they looked like three knives and three swords. That pair were in the center. On each side the line stretched out. Horrible things were happening wherever she looked.

“Off my back children,” shouted Aslan. And they both tumbled off. Then with a roar that shook Narnia from the Western Lamppost to the shores of the Eastern sea the great beast flung himself upon the White Witch. Lucy saw her face lifted towards him for one second with an expression of terror and amazement. Then Lion and Witch had rolled over together but with the Witch underneath; and at the same moment all war-like creatures whom Aslan had led from the Witch’s house rushed madly on the enemy’s line.

And Peter’s tired army cheered, and the newcomers roared, and the enemy squealed and gibbered till the wood re-echoed with the din of that onset.

-----

Ok, everybody freeze! No, I mean it. Don’t move a muscle. Don’t smile, don’t twitch, don’t blink, don’t shift in your seats. Don’t move. I’m guessing 80% of you have already given up on my exercise. But for those dedicated 20% of you, let me clue you in on a few things I learned about “freezing” from doing theatre exercises. The minute I say “Don’t blink,” you’ll start to notice just how dry your eyes feel. The moment I say “Don’t take any big, deep breaths,” you’ll start to realize how oxygen starved your lungs are feeling. The minute I say “Don’t move a muscle,” there will be some muscle in your back, or your calf, or your arm that will decide it’s just not happy where it is and will insist that you move it, now. It will insist with increasing intensity until it is burning and you **MUST** move it. Do you feel it yet? Are you comfortable? Happy? Okay, relax... you can move again.

You see, we were not created to be statues. We’re made to move, and not moving feels wrong. We were not created to be statues. Sure, Genesis says that God sculpted humanity from the dust of the earth, but then he took that clay statue and he breathed into it (literally, he in-spired it), and that statue became a living, moving being. We are kinetic creatures. Until we return to the dust we came from, we will be moving. It’s how we’re made.

Of course as a father of two little ones, I am all too aware of the active nature of our being. There are days I might enjoy just a few hours with the White Witch’s wand. My kids are always in motion, and that motion isn’t always graceful. But have you ever noticed how kids just don’t seem to mind? Just watch kids dance and you’ll see what I mean. They don’t care about moves, or looking good, they have no fear, or any of the baggage we adults seem to have. They just dance for the pure joy of moving to music.

Can you remember feeling that way? Do you remember what it was like to live a life full of the joy and excitement of being a kid?

When do we become statues? What happens? You know we stop doing cartwheels long before our bodies become unable to do them. And long before we lose the strength and coordination required for skipping, we stop skipping. When’s the last time you made up a song, just to sing. I was driving Imani home from a friend’s house a few weeks ago, and she sang freeform the whole way across town. “I’m riding in the car now, and I’m riding with daddy. And I love Jesus and this song is for Jesus. And I played at my friends house, and now I’m with daddy...” It went on and on, it was one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever heard. Do you remember doing that as a kid? Why don’t we do things like that anymore?

Why don't we do cartwheels anymore? Well, of course, we might hurt ourselves! Why don't we skip? Well, someone might see us! We are far too dignified for skipping. Why don't we dream big dreams? We might not reach them, we might fail! Maybe we already have. So we trade in the life of a child for the sophisticated life of a statue. We trade our big dreams for more manageable, more practical, reality sized dreams, and we bury the hurt and harden our hearts against the pain. The woundings that turn us into statues are so numerous and so varied it would take forever to go through them, but I think the end result is the same; it is easier being a statue. Statues don't bleed, they don't bruise, they don't hunger, they don't cry, they don't need, they don't want, they don't dream, they don't fear, they don't hurt. There is little expected of a statue, so its not as likely we'll let anyone down, not even ourselves.

The fear of what might happen can hold us back just as surely as it held those disciples in that locked room. There's no doubt in my mind... they were statues. They were frozen and powerless, stuck in a prison of fear. And then Jesus showed up. Then the risen Jesus showed up, and said “Peace! Peace! As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”

Jesus was not content to leave his disciples as statues.

It would certainly change our story a bit, if he had. Imagine, Aslan leaps into the Witch's castle, roars a mighty roar of victory and says “These statues are all mine now, load em up and take them back to MY castle.” Of course if they had all remained statues, the battle could have been lost. The witch might have won after all.

But Hallelujah! God didn't consider it too much work, or beneath His dignity, or too great a cost, and so we have new life. God wasn't content to merely snatch us from death and assert His claim on us. God wasn't content to merely line His heavenly temple with beautiful statues of good people in appropriate dress and proper postures of worship. God didn't save us so that we could lock the doors of the upper room and cower in fear while a world that was out of our control went its own way on the other side. God did not send his Son merely to save us. God sent Jesus Christ to empower us. God sent his Son that we might have life, and have it not “conveniently,” or “easily” or “comfortably” or “dutifully” or “peacefully.” God sent His Son that we might have life, and have it “abundantly.” That we might be truly, fully, completely who we were created to be. People in motion.

Jesus met his quaking disciples and said “Peace!” Then, John says, Jesus “breathed into them,” again, he in-spired them, and said “receive the Holy Spirit.” A new life, and Oh what a gift!

I know it's running late, but we need a moment to look at this. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control; the fruit of the Spirit. Who wouldn't want those things in their life? But they are not an end in themselves. They are foundations for a life in motion, they are fuel for following that particular dream that God has placed in YOUR heart, whether it is pursuing a big dream or a small dream boldly. There is a battle raging for this world, and God wants His people to enter it boldly, propelled by the Spirit and armed with their dreams, to make a difference in the lives of so many other statues out there waiting to be woken.

Jesus says “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.” You are sent to be Jesus in the world. Those things that Jesus did, he will now do through you. So what is your passion? What is your dream? How can you put it in motion for the Kingdom of God?

I think many of you know that for three couples in our congregation right now, that passion is adoption. Julie and I have been spending a good deal of time watching videos of kids from the orphanage we are adopting from. The last one had over 120 kids waiting to be adopted. From that group, we will be adopting 2, and there will be 2 more from elsewhere. Compared to the millions of orphans in the world, it's just a drop in the bucket. But every drop counts. Did you know that if just 1% of Christians in America adopted 1 child, every child in the foster care system waiting to be adopted would have a home, and 1 million children from the rest of the world would find homes? The drops add up. What's your passion?

For Linda Bremner, it was her son. He was diagnosed with cancer at age 8. When he started treatment, the cards and letters came pouring in from his friends and classmates. For about 5 days they came pouring in, then they trickled, then they stopped. His mother, seeing how those letters had been a lifeline for him decided to fill in the gap, writing every week and signing her letters “Your Secret Pal.” When he died 4 years later she found the letters squirreled away in his closet like a secret treasure. With them was an address book from a cancer camp he had attended. She took that book, and with her son in mind, wrote to every kid on the list. The response was enormous. She posted a sign-up sheet at the children's hospital and was inundated with names. When it became too much for her to do by herself, her family started to help, then friends and neighbors and others caught the vision. “Love Letters” now staffs sixty-five volunteers who write to more than 1,000 children each week.

What's your passion? God wants to take your passion and use it for His kingdom. God wants to take your dreams and use them to save and

inspire others who are lost in the darkness, who have been turned to stone by the hurt of this world. What's your passion? God wants to inspire it, and inspire you, to serve in His Spirit to the glory of His kingdom! Don't stay a statue, find your passion, and with the Spirit's help, get moving!