

Jesus and the Bird Cage aka The Empty Bird Cage

Paul Harvey

Boston preacher Dr. S.D. Gordon, placed a beat up, bent, rusted old bird cage beside his pulpit. Several eyebrows were raised and, as if in response, Dr. Gordon told this story.

I was walking through town yesterday when I saw an unkempt, unwashed, little lad about 10 years old was coming up the alley swinging this old caved in bird cage with several tiny birds shivering on the floor of it. I asked the boy where he got the birds. He said he trapped them.

I asked what he was going to do with them. The boy said, "I'm gonna' take 'em home and have fun with them. I'm gonna' tease them and pull out their feathers to make them fight. I'm gonna' have a real good time."

I said to the lad, "Sooner or later you'll get tired of them. Then what are you going to do with them?"

The lad said, "I have some cats at home. They like birds. I'll feed them to my cats."

"How much?" I asked him, "Son, how much do you want for the birds?"

The boy, surprised, hesitated and said, "Mister, you don't want these birds. There just plain old field birds. They can't even sing. They aren't even pretty."

The preacher said, "Just tell me. How much do you want?"

The grubby little lad thought about it. He squinted up one eye. He calculated and hesitated and said, "Ten dollars." To his surprise, I reached into my pocket and handed the boy a ten dollar bill and took the cage. In a flash, the boy was gone.

In a sheltered crevice between buildings, I opened the door of the cage and, tapping on the rusty exterior, encouraged the little birds, one at a time, to find their way out through the narrow door and fly away.

Thus having accounted for the empty cage beside his pulpit, the preacher went on to tell what seemed, at first, like a separate story.

One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. Satan had boasted how he'd baited a trap in the Garden of Eden and caught himself a world full of people.

"What are you going to do with all those people in your cage" Jesus wanted to know.

The Devil said, "I'm going to play with em' and tease em'. I'm gonna' make them marry and divorce and fight each other, I'm gonna' teach them how to abuse and hate each other. I'm gonna' teach them how to drink and smoke and curse. I'm going to teach them to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I'm going to have fun with them!"

Jesus said, "You can't have fun with them forever. When you get tired of playing, what are you going to do with them?"

Satan said, "kill them. They're no good anyway! I'll kill them!"

Jesus said, "How much do you want for them?"

Satan said, "You can't be serious! If I sell them to you, they'll just spit on you. They'll hate you. They'll hit you and beat you. They'll hammer nails into you! They're no good."

Jesus said, "How much?"

Satan said, "All of your tears and all of your blood. That's the price."

"Done," said Jesus. Jesus took the cage, and paid the price, and opened the door.