

The Difference between Zoos and Taxidermy Shops

Until I was nearly through high school, I wanted to be a taxidermist. Growing up in my father's shop allowed me to see the nicest bucks, the largest fish, western mammals, and even African game.

Although I helped Dad with every aspect of his work, I was not an artist. Anyone can do taxidermy, but to make animals look alive, it takes artistic skill and my father was the best. I was not so I did not take over his business.

I have many animals dad mounted and they still look as lifelike today as the day he finished them. But they are not living. Even the best taxidermist returns dead animals to customers.

This reminds me of what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:5 where he foretold a time when people will have a form of godliness, but will deny God's power.

When taxidermists mount specimens, they use manikins called "forms." When a deer head is mounted, a polyurethane head form of the appropriate size and position is chosen. The antlers are then set on it and the taxidermist models clay eyebrows and sets the glass eyes.

The hide is then stretched over that form and positioned. Once the artist is satisfied, he or she secures it with paste, staples, and needle and thread. The ears are set, the lips are tucked, and then it must dry before finishing touches are added.

But all that work only produces a life-like specimen. It has a form of life but there is no power. It has glass eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear, and a mouth but cannot speak.

Sadly, that describes some religious institutions. They may have once been fully alive, but either apathy, neglect, or outright heresy killed them and all that remains are lifeless forms. Jesus diagnosed the Ephesian church in Revelation 2:4 as having lost its first love.

Some teachers and pastors explain away Biblical miracles. Some even say that Jesus was not born of a virgin, did not live a sinless life, and did not rise from the dead. These teachings may appear godly but deny God's power and produce churches that look more like taxidermy shops than zoos. The difference is life!

Becoming more personal, when we refuse to love our spouses, neighbors, and even our enemies because it's too hard, we deny God's power to enable us to do so. When we excuse our lust, gossip, or sexual sin by saying we were born that way, we're denying that God is powerful enough to transform us.

We were all born with sinful desires, tendencies and attitudes. We inherited our sinful nature from Adam. We can't resist sin by ourselves, which is why God gives His Holy Spirit to empower Christians to do so! But we have to let Him!

Let us not be mounted onto some lifeless form, but let us be born again! If you never have, invite God to give you your life through Jesus that you might be fully alive.

George Bowers – Executive Board member

Prayer Request

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

Heavenly Father, we thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to the world, not only to be our Savior but “The Vine” that supplies everything we need to accomplish Your perfect plan and purpose. We pray for You to help us be faithful in staying connected to and nourished by “The Vine” so we can bear much fruit for Your kingdom. Help us to sow the seeds that produce the everlasting fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. ***Galatians 5:22*** Father, we pray: “Your Kingdom come, Your will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” ***Matthew 6:10***

Please pray for the following congregations and pastors:

- Iglesia Christiano El Shaddai in Johnson City, TN and Pastor Paul Waroe
- Kabere Congregation in Rwanda Africa

CBC Prayer Committee