

“The Tables Get Turned”  
John 1:1-14

- I. Introduction – Today brings us to the fourth and final week of our series “Finding Our Way Through Narnia.”
  - A. We’ve seen virtue (in the person of Lucy), we’ve seen sin (in the person of Edmund), and we’ve seen evil (in the person of the White Witch).
  - B. Today [*best of all*], we see Jesus (in the person of Aslan).
    - 1) Lewis chose a lion to represent Jesus as the strong, conquering King.
    - 2) It picks up on the Biblical theme of Jesus as the Lion of Judah.
  - C. Aslan is the Christ figure of the Narnia novels.
    - 1) Lewis makes it clear that Aslan is there at the creation of Narnia.
    - 2) The citizens of Narnia are all waiting for his return so that he can restore the beauty and glory of the land.
    - 3) There’s only one hitch in the plan.
      - a) Edmund’s betrayal of his family demands the payment of death.
      - b) And Aslan offers himself up in Edmund’s place.
    - 4) Aslan dies upon the stone table, but is soon resurrected.
      - a) And thus begins a new golden age for the land of Narnia.
      - b) Since Aslan’s return from the grave, death begins to work backwards.
  - D. The parallels between Aslan and Jesus should be readily apparent.
- II. Aslan’s coming means ... life for the land of Narnia.
  - A. The land has been shrouded in the death of Winter since the coming of the White Witch.
    - 1) But Aslan’s coming begins to change all that. The White Witch’s dwarf says, “This is no thaw. This is spring. Your winter has been destroyed I tell you.”
    - 2) And Father Christmas tells the children, “Aslan is on the move. The witch’s magic is weakening.”
  - B. It also means that all those who are prisoners of the White Witch will be set free.
    - 1) After his return, Aslan goes to the Witch’s castle and frees those held in bondage there.
    - 2) It says that the lion bounded up to each statue and “breathed” on them. And they were free.
- III. Aslan’s coming means ... forgiveness for Edmund.
  - A. Edmund’s betrayal is what makes Aslan’s death necessary.
    - 1) Aslan calmly and decisively offers himself in Edmund’s place.
    - 2) This is the only way to find forgiveness and life for Edmund.
    - 3) As the Witch says, “the deep magic must be satisfied.”
    - 4) Aslan satisfies it with his death.
  - B. After his return Aslan speaks privately with Edmund.
    - 1) Aslan says to the others, “Here is your brother and – there is no need to talk to him about what is past.”
    - 2) This is an unconditional offer of forgiveness and a restoration of Edmund’s relationship with his sisters and brother.
- IV. Aslan’s coming means ... death.
  - A. The price of Narnia’s restoration to its former glory was Aslan’s death.
    - 1) The price of Edmund’s forgiveness was also Aslan’s death.

- 2) The cost was extremely high. Aslan was called King of the Wood, the Great Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea. He was the King of Beasts, the Great Lion.
- B. Aslan didn't consider the torture, mockery and abuse he suffered at the hands of the White Witch worth mentioning when compared with the benefit – Edmund lives and returns to his family.
- V. The parallels to the life of Christ are remarkable and I can assure you, completely intentional on C.S. Lewis' part.
  - A. In a letter to a friend Lewis said, "In reality however [Aslan] is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, "What might Christ become like, if there really were a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in that world as He has actually done in ours."
  - B. The only hope for Narnia and for Edmund is Aslan. Only Aslan – the one who created Narnia -- can deliver it from the power of the Witch
    - 1) Only Jesus – the one John 1 says was present at Creation – can deliver our world and ourselves from the power of the Evil One.
    - 2) 1 John 3:8 says, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."
- VI. Jesus' coming brings ... life.
  - A. Genesis 3 describes the way the land itself is corrupted as a result of Adam and Eve's sin.
    - 1) Genesis 3:17-18 says, "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you and you will eat the plants of the field."
    - 2) But the coming of Christ changes all of that; creation gets re-routed and the tables get turned.
    - 3) "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest." – Isaiah 11:6-8.
  - B. In Jesus the restoration of creation begins. Jesus brings life.
    - 1) "The thief comes only to kill and steal and destroy; I am come that they may have life, and have it to the full." - John 10:10.
    - 2) Jesus said "I am the bread of life." – John 6:48.
  - C. Do you want a life that is full, exciting and joyful?
    - 1) Do you want a life that is more than the life of an "ordinary person?"
    - 2) There's only one place you can find it and that is with the giver of life – Jesus!
    - 3) You can look a lot of places and you can find substitutes that satisfy for a season, but real life [full life] can only be found in Jesus.
- VII. Jesus' coming brings ... forgiveness.
  - A. Aslan talks privately with Edmund and re-introduces him to his siblings with a caution that they not mention his past transgression.
  - B. Likewise, Jesus brings forgiveness to us and restores our relationship with Him.
    - 1) The Bible contains a vivid example of this in John 21:15-17.
    - 2) Jesus is face to face with Peter who had denied him three time and gives Peter the chance to right that wrong and experience forgiveness.
    - 3) For each of the betrayals there is a corresponding "I love you."

- C. I believe that forgiveness is universal. I believe it was offered to all of humanity then and I believe it is still offered to all of humanity today.
    - 1) I believe that Jesus would have been willing to even forgive Judas.
    - 2) It just would have taken genuine repentance on Judas' part and Jesus would have received him with open arms.
  - D. Jesus forgave Peter after his three-fold denial and rejection.
    - 1) He forgave each of the disciples who fled his side after that night in the Garden of Gethsemane.
    - 2) And he would have forgiven Judas, if Judas had only repented.
  - E. Given all of that, do you think Jesus can forgive you?
    - 1) We think of our sin as so terrible, but stacked up against Judas how bad can it be?
    - 2) And Jesus is still ready to forgive.
    - 3) We think we're not all that bad, like Peter we're just trying to get by and save our neck. We get lost a bit, and compromise here and there but our hearts are in the right place. [Every time we sin, we deny the Lord]
    - 4) Jesus is ready to forgive.
      - a) Will come to him in repentance like Peter?
      - b) Or will you refuse to come to him at all like Judas?
- VIII. Jesus' coming brings ... redemption.
- A. And this is the coolest deal of all.
    - 1) We don't just get life; although that would be enough to get excited about.
    - 2) We don't just get forgiveness; even though that would be nice.
    - 3) We get redeemed.
  - B. Redemption [or to be redeemed] means that God puts his stamp of approval on us and claims us for his own.
    - 1) He changes us, conforms us into his own image.
    - 2) The Bible says that we are made into new creatures: we are literally re-created before God.
    - 3) Ezekiel 36:26 says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."
  - C. For thousands of years, human beings lived under a system where we tried to achieve righteousness by our good works and deeds.
    - 1) That's a flawed system because the people trying to make it work were flawed; human beings were shot through with sin.
    - 2) Our only hope was for someone to come and set us free from the tyranny and slavery of following the rules.
      - a) That's what Jesus did on the cross.
      - b) In TLTWTW, Aslan dies on a stone table that for many people resembles an altar of sacrifice. When he returns from the dead, the table is shattered and broken.
      - c) Lewis intended that the Stone Table not resemble an altar of sacrifice, but instead represent the stone table(t)s that God gave to Moses.
    - 3) That was how Lewis showed that the Law was destroyed and was replaced by Aslan's gift.
  - D. If you haven't experienced God's gift of redemption through Jesus Christ it must be hard to understand how completely freeing it is.
    - 1) You can't earn it, so all of the pressures off.

- 2) You can't be "good enough", you just have to trust that Jesus was "good enough."
- 3) At the end of the book, Lucy asks Susan, "Does [Edmund] know what Aslan did for him?"

- IX. Do you know what Jesus Christ has done for you?
- A. Do you know the life he brings? The love he wants you to feel?
  - B. Do you know the power of his forgiveness? Do you know how it feels to be that clean?
  - C. Do you understand the change that happens with your redemption? Do you get it that everything changes for the better?
  - D. Do you know that you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, "that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." 1 Peter 2:9.
  - E. I pray that today you do.