

Let's pray. Heavenly father, we are grateful for stories, and stories that charm us and also inspire us. We are grateful for story writers, we have been looking at one story writer who has meant so much to each of us, C. S. Lewis. And thank you, thank you for... we've been able to read together and think about it together. So, bless us tonight as we look at the stories we love to hear. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

First of all, I want to say before I go any further... the stories we're going to talk about tonight, the Chronicles of Narnia really deserve to be read aloud. They're written in short sentences... Lewis always said: "write for the ear, don't write for the eye". It certainly is true for the Chronicles of Narnia. As you saw last week, it's also true for the Screwtape Letters. You know, John Cleese has the whole Screwtape Letters on tape. If you want to hear one of the great English actors and comedians, he's the creator of the Monty Python and the Flying Circus. And John Cleese, who I think it's one of the funniest guys in comedy has put all these screwtape letters on CD and you can just... if you realize, it just sounds so wonderful to hear him read aloud. Can I give an ad? I'm living in an apartment house, the church has rented for me right next to the Bethesda Theatre, and the Bethesda Theatre right now has a wonderful show... I saw last Saturday, it's called "Pluck". It's about the little orchestra that played in the Titanic while it sank. These three young men... well, two men and a woman, I shouldn't give it away. They're incredible musicians, and it's a hilarious, and sensitive and tender show. It would be great for the whole family, I saw it, I just think it's terrific so... since I saw that show, I think it's worth seeing. It's a wonderful show, you'll get a big kick out of it. And kids will enjoy it too. You have to explain the history of the Titanic to make sure you understand, they have a lot of film footage in the show about the Titanic so it makes sense.

Anyways, these stories should be read aloud. And when they're read aloud, I don't think it should be interpreted to kids when you're reading them. I think you should let the stories flow over their heads and through their heads and through their lives. And I don't think what you should do with the Chronicles of Narnia is read it and say: "ok now, you see all the biblical allusions there, and you see..." don't do that! Don't worry, the kids themselves will do that for you. But let the stories flow as a story. In fact, I will say the same thing with Lord of the Rings, I will say the same thing with any story: let the story come over you. And that's my advice. And the Chronicles of Narnia are so marvelous to read aloud. They're wonderful to read, if you have someone who can read in the car without getting car sick. And that was my wife, my wife could read without getting car sick, so we have so many stories read to us while we drive our car in all those years our kids were growing up. To hear these stories being read it's such a wonderful, wonderful experience. So, and we developed a little trick in our family. I love to do the dishes anyways, so in our vacations I said: "kids, shouldn't you be doing the dishes? Aren't children supposed to? If I do the dishes, while I'm doing the dishes, you'll read loud, and when the dishes are over, then you can leave. They couldn't go out and play until the dishes were done". So, since

I like to do the dishes anyways, they all lay around the floor and read, and that's how we educated all of our kids into having stories read.

After a while, you can imagine what happened. After the dishes were done, they are legally able to leave. Because... they only had to stay until the dishes were done, because they had to do that anyways. But you know what happened? The dishes would all be done, and the kids would say: "hey, mom, one more chapter, please". And that became a famous line in our family: "one more chapter, please, one more chapter". The story begins to take over. The story gets a hold of your life. That's how you can get your kids and adults into having a story read aloud.

Alright, let me say, first of all, read a couple of things that Lewis wrote about the stories. He didn't say too much about the stories he wrote, but in answers to the letters, he did say this: in 1962, he wrote this to a friend: "I turned to fairy tales because that seemed the form which certain ideas and images in my mind seemed to demand. As a man might turn to fugues because the musical phrases in his head seem to be good fugal phrases. When I wrote the Lion, from The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, I had no notion of writing the others". That's good that that's all clear. "Writing juvenile stories for children, certainly modified my habits of composition. Thus, it imposed a strict limit on the vocabulary, it excluded erotic love, it cut down reflective and analytical passages and it led me to produce chapters of nearly equal length for the convenience in reading aloud. All these restrictions did me great good, like writing in strict meter". That's an interesting comment that he made. And then a letter he wrote to a little girl. A girl wrote him a letter in 1959 and asked him what the significance was of who Aslan was. She said: "did you know what Aslan was going to do when you wrote it?". He said: "I don't think I saw what Aslan was going to do, and suffer. I think he just insisted on behaving in his own way". This, of course, I did understand, and the whole series became Christian. But it is not as some people think, an allegory, I didn't say... let us represent Christ as Aslan. I say, supposing there was... this is a famous line from Lewis, when he explained his theological intention. "Supposing there was a world like Narnia, and supposing, like ours, it needed redemption. Let us imagine what sort of incarnation, resurrection, Christ would have there. I wonder what the redemption would be like, given a place like Narnia". And then he says: "I think this is pretty obvious if you take all seven Narnia stories as a whole. In Magician's Nephew, Aslan, creates Narnia, in Prince Caspian, the old stories about it begin to be disbelieved. At the End of Dawn, Aslan appears as a lamb, his three replies to Ashta, remember I read Ashta aloud? Of the horseman's boy a few weeks ago, suggests a Trinity. Remember when he says: "who are you?" he says: "Myself. Myself. Myself". It's almost like Moses with the green bush.

In the silver chair, the old king is raised from the dead by a drop of Aslan's blood. Finally, on The Last Battle, we have the reign of Antichrist, the Ape, and the end of the world and last

judgement. Anyway, Lewis did give those reflections to a young school girl that asked him what he was trying to do in the chronicles. Well, he wrote *Lion*, the *Witch and the Wardrobe*. He wrote it, first of all, to Lucy Barfield, who is the daughter of his great friend, Owen Barfield. And that's why Lucy becomes the main character in the *Chronicles of Narnia*. And here's what he wrote to Lucy when he wrote *Lion*: "I wrote this story for you. In the beginning, I had not realized girls grow quicker than books. As a result, you're already too old for fairytales. And by the time it is printed and bound, you'll be older still. But someday you'll be old enough to start reading fairy tales again. We can then take it down from some upper shelf, dust it and tell me what you think of it. I should probably be too deaf to hear, and too old to understand a word you say, but I shall still be your affectionate godfather, C. S. Lewis". So, that's the introduction to *Lion*.

Alright, why are these stories so loved? The seven stories he wrote, starting in 1950, in the full maturity of his life, and why are they so loved? He once said to a friend: "I decided to write stories like I always wanted to read". And so, he started writing them. I'll make a reflection Lewis himself made in an article he wrote about *Hamlet*, in one of the collections of his essays he was, of course, a great literate critic, and he was one brilliant essay on *Hamlet*, the play, by William Shakespeare, in that he kind of goes through all the various deconstruction models of *Hamlet*: the Edipo complex model, the various models of interpreting and handling *Hamlet*, and he rejects them all, and then he says: "the one thing that they missed in all of these interpretations of *Hamlet*, specially the psychologized interpretations of *Hamlet*", and here's a great line from Lewis: what they missed in all of this is "that the play is above all else, interesting". In other words, it's a darn good story. And he said: they missed that! That's the key to *Hamlet*. It's a darn good story.

And Lewis wrote darn good stories. These are darn good stories. That's the first reason why the *Chronicles of Narnia* are loved. They're just darn good stories. Secondly, because it's a story of the marvelous. The marvelous story... that's a phrase he claimed: the stories of the marvelous. Both for his work and the work of others as well, in which we're invited to use our imagination and to wander beyond the word we think we know so well. Owen Barfield was analyzing his two friends, Lewis and Tolkien, he said: "Lewis is a man captured by his imagination, Tolkien is a man captured by language". And that's true, they were both captured by imagination, but language was the key for Tolkien. He created Middle Earth, he created a whole vocabulary, a whole language for the Middle Earth. Lewis was not so important on that, that wasn't so important for him. He was mainly, totally caught up with the stories of the marvelous, his imagination. Now, some people are bothered by this and I want us to cover this from the very beginning. Some people think that stories of the marvelous and stories that invite you to use your imagination to create myth and create magic and all this are dangerous for young minds. And some people say young minds should not be reading these stories of the marvelous or these stories like princesses, the *Lloyd Alexander* series, the *Taran Wanderer*, or the *J R Tolkien*, *Lord of the Rings*, with all the witches and magic and all of the things in it, and of course, *J K*

Rowling's Harry Potter. Some say you shouldn't read those, there's witchcraft and all that. I don't agree with those people at all. I agree with Lewis that more dangerous stories for kids are the so called realistic stories. It's more dangerous to watch the TV show "Friends" than to read the Chronicles of Narnia, or to read JK Rowling's Harry Potter. Because "Friends" has people living all kinds of reckless lifestyles with no consequences. And that's supposed to be realistic, that's supposed to be the way the world is. No, it's not. And yet, these stories create imagery that kids are able to work with and they're able to handle it, I do believe it's true.

Now, I'm going to read two things before we start the stories, that JR Tolkien wrote, and Lewis wrote, about fantasy stories. These are fantasy stories, or Tolkien called them fairy stories, fairy tales. Tolkien says: "from the moment I should say only this", this is in a great book, these are essays presented to Charles Williams, edited by CS Lewis, which has a great chapter by JR Tolkien on fairy stories, fairy tales, and then a great chapter by Lewis too, and also by Dorothy Sayers and others. Here's Tolkien's comment: "for the moment I would say only this: a fairy story is one which touches on or uses fairy (and that is: magic) whatever its own main purpose may be. Satire, adventure, morality, fantasy. Fairy itself may perhaps most nearly be translated by the word 'magic'. But it is magic of a peculiar mood and power. At the farthest pole from the vulgar devices of the laborious scientific magician, there is one proviso", now listen to this, this is a very interesting warning from JR Tolkien: "there is one proviso: if there is any satire present in the tale, one thing must not be made fun of, and that is the magic itself". You shouldn't tell a story in the Chronicles of Narnia and be making fun of the fact they walk through a wardrobe door. Whoever heard of walking through a wardrobe door into the winter? Don't make fun of that. That's the magic. That's the image of the magic. Don't mock it. Especially don't do that if you're reading it to a child and go like: "ah, this is so ridiculous! Santa Claus riding on a sleigh with miniature reindeers". Don't do that, let it stand. Don't deconstruct it. Read *The Night Before Christmas* and just open up to the wonder of it all. It's a great story. Let the story be the story, ok?

So, you must not make fun of the magic. How could miniature reindeers? How could Santa Claus get down a smoke stack? Let them do it. In other words: don't make fun of the magic itself. That must, in the story, be taken seriously. It must not be laughed at or explained away. Ok, that's JR Tolkien, it's a warning as you read his stories. Now, Lewis himself. Lewis spoke in a wonderful way: "the necessary condition of all good reading", Lewis said, "is to get ourselves out of the way". See? See, that's why adults try to demythologize Santa Claus in Clement Moore's "*The Night Before Christmas*", are making a big mistake. "The necessary condition of all good reading is to get ourselves out of the way. We do not help the young to do this by forcing them to keep on expressing opinions. Especially poisonous, is the kind of teaching that encourages them to approach every literary work with suspicion. It springs from a very reasonable motive: in a world full of sophistry and propaganda we want to protect the rising generation from being deceived. To forearm them against the invitations to false sentiment and

muddled thinking, which printed words will too often offer them. Unfortunately, the very same habit, which makes them impervious to the bad writing, may also make them impervious to the good writing. The excessively”, and now Lewis, who is a great illustrator, comes up with this marvelous illustration, “the excessively ‘knowing’ rustic”, you know rustic could be a boy from the country, “who comes to town too well primed with warnings against coney artists does not always get on very well. Indeed, after rejecting much genuine friendliness”, see, watching out for the coney artists, “and missing many real opportunities and making several enemies, he is quite likely to fall victim to some trickster who flatters his shrewdness”. And, as you know, the great pigeon drop con, that’s used from people to “the bank is trying to steal your money”, let’s test. I’m a bank inspector, I’ll help you test to see if you bank is... or, I thought my bank was stealing my money and then he goes an... that’s the best con there is to getting people to withdraw their money from the bank so that you can test to see if the bank is stealing, and then of course it’s the con artist who steals it. That’s called the pigeon drop. And so, the trickster flatters your shrewdness. So here, now this is vintage Lewis, listen: “no poem will give up its secret to a reader who enters it regarding the poet as a potential deceiver. And determined, therefore, not to be taken in, we must risk being taken in if we are to get anything. The best safe guard against bad literature is a full experience of good literature. Just as a real and affectionate acquaintance with honest people gives you a better protection against rogues than a habitual distrust of everyone”. Isn’t that vintage? That is great CS Lewis, from his book “Experimenting Criticism”, one of the last books Lewis wrote, by the way, before he died, is “Experimenting Criticism”.

Alright, so, there are stories of the marvelous, and Lewis says: let them come across you. Don’t be too clever in saying: ah, this couldn’t be, that couldn’t be... don’t do that. Just let the story flow. Alright, there’s two reasons, then, why these stories are so fun. One, because it’s a good story. Two, because it’s stories of the marvelous that actually stir up your imagination and get you to imagine a lion that can talk and a little mouse with a sword, who is a talking mouse. Lewis loved talking mice. A horse that can talk like Bree, and then all these wonderful things that are so improbable, and yet your imagination sees it happen. Three, because the characters we meet who catch our attention, we care about. I always say that’s one of the marks of any great story, is that there are no throw away characters. The characters interest you. The characters that you meet actually do stir you up and become interesting to you. And that’s true in the Chronicles of Narnia. It’s true in the Lord of the Rings too. Four, because the emotional and even spiritual feelings that we discover while we’re reading, we care about. Courage, fear, loyalty, truth telling, betrayal, and then the healing of brokenness. All of those things we see happen in great stories, we care about those things, we care about every one of those things, and so that makes a story we like. And then five, and here is the biggie: because CS Lewis and also JR Tolkien and also JK Rowling, in Harry Potter, and Lloyd Alexander, who is one of my favorite writers of stories for children and adults. and Mark Twain, who I think it’s America’s greatest writer. They dared to confront the two most important themes in literature: the problem of evil and the possibility of good. The power of good, the power of evil. And they’re confronted. Lewis sees the complexity of what Tolkien called the “catastrophe”. Remember, that first night we were together with Lewis and I told you how he became a Christian. Because Tolkien told him: in all good stories, there’s got to be a sense of catastrophe. And “eucatastrophe”. In Greek, putting “eu” in front of a word

means good. Good catastrophe. And the good catastrophe is stronger than the catastrophe. In every great story, good is more powerful than evil.

All that came from the bible, where Paul said in Romans 5: “Where sin increased, the grace of God increased more”. You know, that is good news, folks. Not that there isn’t evil. And not that evil isn’t powerful. Sin increases, it’s accumulative. There’s accumulative power in evil. But the accumulative power of grace is greater. I think that’s one of the greatest sentences in all of the bible. In fact, Carl Barton said chapter 5 Romans is the most important chapter in the whole bible. “Where sin increased, the grace of God increased more”. Wow. And Lewis saw that. Tolkien saw it. That there is the problem of evil, has to be faced, the catastrophe is complex. It’s never simple. And the reality of ultimate good, which is stronger, it’s also complex. So, let me before we let Lewis speak for himself, I’m going to have a wonderful reading for you tonight, in which you’ll see some of these things. But now I want to take you on a journey through the Chronicles and some of the other things Lewis also wrote, and show you how he worked with these.

First, the human and cosmic crisis is not uncomplicated. And there is a spectrum. There’s a graduated scale, and Lewis saw that regarding the problem of evil. He faced the problem of evil. All the great writers do. Of course, the great Russian writers, Victor Hugo in *Les Miserable*, all great writers have to cope and face the problem of evil. In the Chronicles of Narnia, you meet it right away when you enter Narnia in the Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe. And the first sign of evil is what we might be called garden variety, biblical understanding of sin, which is seen mainly as Hamartia, the Greek word for sin, the common word for sin, literally means to “miss the mark” or “to be weak”, “weakness”. We see that weakness, we see it in Tumnus himself. Tumnus is the first character in Narnia we meet, and we discover Tumnus is a good guy, good faun, but he is weak. He’s frightened. Right away, he knows that the Winter Queen has told him to report any of the Sons or Daughters of Adam that might show up in Narnia. And he recognizes little Lucy as a Daughter of Adam, and so right away he decides to give her some tea, that has something in it that’s going to make her go to sleep, then he can betray her and give her over to the Wicked Queen. But he can’t follow through with it. But that weakness, that’s another variety of sin. In the bible, the common word for sin, Hamartia, is to miss the mark, it’s just weak. Lewis saw that, and it’s interesting that his first character and the first sign of evil is in Tumnus himself. Then, it begins to graduate. It moves up.

By the way, in other writers, I think in Joseph Conrad, one of my very favorite of all, I’ve tried to read all of Conrad’s works, who’s a tremendous writer, he’s Polish, he wrote in English but he wrote beautiful English, and one of his greatest novels is *Lord Jim*. It’s interesting to me that this Polish writer in *Lord Jim*, the main character is a young, red headed Scottish boy who’s the son

of a Presbyterian minister. Why would this Roman Catholic, Joseph Conrad, one of the greatest writers of the last century, why would he choose as his main character in *Lord Jim* a Presbyterian boy, red headed kid from Scotland? But as you know, he's a sailor in the far east, and he's on a ship to Patna, and on that ship he's the second officer, and the captain in the ship carried a bunch of Chinese workers that are being transported. And the ship goes through a storm, a terrible storm, and of course, he wrote typhoon, he wrote a lot of books about... You know, Joseph Conrad was at sea for a large part of his life. And in the storm, they realize the ship is in danger, completely falling apart. And so the captain and a couple of his officers decide to take one of the few life boats that are still secured and they take it knowing the ship is going to go down, and so they take the life boat and they come in to shore, they arrive safely at shore and tell the horrible story and in the horrible story, the ship to Patna went down, and there were many lives lost because there were so many Chinese workers on board the ship. We did all we could do, we could not save any of them. And here is Lord Jim, this young man, with the captain as they come in the shore, and you can imagine what happened the next day, when the ship came in. These Chinese workers were able to secure the ship and they brought it in without a captain, without a first officer. The officers, unlike the officer of the Titanic, who went down with the ship, they didn't. And the rest of the novel *Lord Jim* is this boy, who had the sin of weakness, he simply wanted to survive. So he abandoned the ship, and all the rest of that novel is this boy, and it's that line that Conrad puts in: "He could not go back to Scotland because he had contaminated the earth with his cowardness".

It's a sad, sad story, it's a sad novel, but its weakness, it's Tumnus who feels so much regret, he starts to weep actually when he realizes he's drugging this girl and he can't go through with it. But, it's weakness, and that's... Lewis portrays that in the *Chronicles*. And then there's the confusion of values, where sin begins to become more complicated. And we see that in *Edmund*, we meet Edmund right away, and Edmund is literally enamored and tempted with *Turkish Delight*. I don't even like *Turkish Delight* myself, but I have to admit in the movie it looks so good, the *Turkish Delight*. Because it's a wonderful confection, but it has perfume in it. I can't understand why the Turkish love it so much, because imagine having candy with perfume in it. It's an appetizer with perfume in it. But it does look awfully good in the *Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. And Edmund, he only gets one taste of it, he never gets any more from the Queen, but that was so wonderful, and the Queen was so beautiful, and you know, Swinton, who played that part in the movie, she was wonderful. She is so beautiful, wearing these huge robes, and she has a little ugly assistant, but she's absolutely beautiful. And he's totally enamored by her, and she hugs him and he gets warm in the sleigh for a moment, and his values are all confused. They're so confused that when he sees that Tumnus' house has been destroyed, he says: "He must have deserved it". His sympathy is dulled by this fact of confusion of values, that's what temptation does. Temptation confuses your values. So, then you choose, as Lewis says, you choose the lower value instead of a higher one, and you have an ever-increasing appetite for an ever-decreasing pleasure. Notice: he gets no more *Turkish Delight* after that. But yet, that confusion of values... Lewis saw that, the sin lures through a kind of journey, it lures a journey of complexity, so it goes to that. And then the preoccupation with myself becomes a huge portrayal of another level of human sin, where I become totally focused on myself, myself, myself.

Eustace, in the Voyage of the Dawn Trader is a perfect example of that. We meet him early on, and all Eustace can think about is himself. He makes fun of the Voyager of the Dawn Trader, he makes fun of Prince Caspian, who is so marvelous, he makes fun of the English children who were his cousins, and he is only thinking of himself. As a result, he kind of runs away from the ship and ends up going in a dragon's cave to get a bunch of wonderful gold that he found for himself, and he puts all those rings on his arm because he wants to keep all those rings, and then he falls asleep in a dragon's cave, not knowing the great stories that you should never fall asleep on a dragon's cave. Because if you fall asleep on a dragon's cave you will turn into a dragon yourself. And when he does, his arm hurts so bad, because the gold rings he put around his arm to take back now are so tight that it's cutting off his blood. So, Lewis is so marvelous, the way he portrays this gradual crescendo, this preoccupation with myself, making sure that I get my money, that I get what I want, and it has that growing intensity.

By the way, the superhero of the Chronicles is also not impervious to it. Lucy, in the magic book, when she gets to look in the magic book is Voyage of the Dawn Trader, she sees her friends back in England making fun of her. And she says: "Well, you won't have me to make fun of anymore". Again, she sees everything in terms of herself, and guess what happens? She hears the growl of Aslan, the Great Lion, and she realizes she is focused on herself and Aslan has to teach her a lesson that her friends are just being weak, but they still really are her friends. Because she saw that weakness, she can't focus everything on what she felt about how she had been let down by those friends. That's marvelous, that's a marvelous scene in Voyage of the Dawn Trader.

Then, human sins from Lewis to another level, and that's treachery and betrayal, what the bible calls wickedness. You know, the word wicked, which Paul uses in Romans is worse than just Hamartia. It's a more toxic decision to actually get even with somebody that maybe you should threaten. So, Edmund becomes a traitor to his own brother, Peter, and Susan and Lucy in Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe. And he decides that he will try to help the Winter Queen, because he's been so enamored by her he will try to bring them in so she can have them. And of course, he can't do it, he tries to do it, but... that is betrayal.

Then, there is the evil that's even worse than all of this, and that is Lewis' portrayal of cosmic evil. I already read you last week, because comments in Screwtape Letters about the devil. It's interesting, he sees the demons, the devil... that's very important. Lewis' theology I think it's totally in the biblical model. He's not dualistic, he doesn't see the devil as coveek with God, or having been eternal like God. No, the devil is a part of the creative order, but as a part of the



creative order at the cosmic level of creation, which is a mystery to us, that has gone against God. That's how I can find the devil as moral will against the will of God at the cosmic level of creation. Like, our sins are will against God at our level of creation, but the devil is a fallen angel. That's how the bible portrays the devil, and that's what Lewis does. And remember I wrote those quotations from Screwtape Letters last week where he makes that clear.

So, the cosmic evil, it knows the truth, and the truth center, and yet it chooses against that truth center. It's interesting, it knows the source of good, but has chosen against the source of good. Tolkien does the same thing in his portrayal of evil in the creator of the ring and against true good in the Lord of the Rings. So, this angelic will against the will of God is cosmic evil. And so, Lewis sees all that sort of gradient scale, and in the Chronicles of Narnia he gets all those kinds of problem evil portrayed. But, best of all, he portrays ultimate good. What Tolkien called "the good catastrophe". As noble, personal, concrete, totally good and more powerful than evil, but also not apparently so powerful to us when we first see it. Specially in the times of our temptation. But that personal good is seen in the great golden lion, Aslan, son of the Emperor. That's how he describes in the Chronicles of Narnia: Son of the Emperor from beyond the sea. Now, how do we notice and discover good? There's also a kind of a graduate discovery journey. We discover this ultimate good first, by our own wonderings and our own longings, and our questions and what we are yearning to find. Lewis saw that, it was true in his own life, that if you read his book "Surprised by Joy", he had a journey that he was searching for joy, searching for that meaning. So, that search itself is the beginning of the journey, and Lewis sees that, and you see that also in characters of the Chronicles of Narnia.

And then there are signs. Now, the signs are very interesting in Chronicles of Narnia. The first sign, when we enter Narnia, we realize it's winter. No Christmas, just winter for many, many years because of the power of the Winter Queen, who evidently has a complete grip of power upon Narnia, therefore has this total frozenness. By the way, it's interesting that he decided to make evil frozen rather than hot. He thought it was Dante at that point. The devil in Dante is cold, and not hot. We think of Dante's fires, but no, it's cold. Evil is cold. And Lewis saw that. So, you have the Winter Queen, is cold, but notice that coldness makes everything she does have more power. Her sleigh works beautifully on the cold snow, if you skied or anything, you know the colder the snow, the better the snow, the better it is for a sleigh. And so, on the first sign that Aslan is moving in the east is the fog. And it's interesting, that when it becomes to fog it becomes muddy and very hard on the sleigh. The sleigh has a very hard time moving when the fog is underway. And so, there's sort of a sign, there's a sign that good is coming, and the first sign is the fog. And then, another sign is the witness, given by these wonderful creatures, these talking creatures in Narnia. And he decided to let Mr. and Mrs. Beaver play that role. And Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, who are knowing characters. And I like, by the way, what the movie did. It seemed to me the movie had a huge challenge on their hands, what do you do with Mr. and Mrs. Beaver? And they decided to make them almost like little characters, very funny and very comic

characters in the movie, and I thought that was a very good choice. And they decided to take away from Mr. and Mrs. Beaver the best line in all of the Chronicles of Narnia, and decided to give that to the very end of the movie. Aslan is not a tamed lion, but he's good. They decided to save that great line, which is given to Mr. and Mrs. Beaver in the story, but they save it to the end.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, who are to bear witness to these children, that Aslan is moving in the East. "He's the son of the Emperor from Beyond the Sea, I tell you". And then Susan says: "It should be wonderful to meet him, who is he?" "Oh, he's a lion", "Oh, is he quite safe?" And they get to say: "oh no, he's not safe". But then the last line of the first story they don't get to get there: "he's not safe, but he's good". And then Lucy is like: "I don't know if I want to meet him, cause he's not safe". But he's wild, he's a wild lion, he's not safe. So, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver get to give witness, and so you get that sense of witness being given, and Lewis saw that, because in his own life, there were people who played a key role in bearing witness to him in his journey. Even Shasta gets to give witness in the Horse and His Boy, the passage I read to you from the Horse and His Boy on the first time. And in The Horse and His Boy, Shasta says: "Are you a giant?", now I let that pass by when we read it, cause I don't want to stop the story in order to interpret it, but when Aslan meets him on the path and he says: "are you a giant?". It's interesting how Aslan answers him, Aslan says: "You may call me a giant but I'm not like the creatures you call giants". Remember, Shasta grew up in Tashbaan, he grew up in a place of just sheer superstition. Spooky superstition. So, he doesn't have any background, but he knows there are these giants that he's worried about. There are giants in Narnia. And so, when Aslan meets him on the path, and he says "are you a giant?", and Lewis has Aslan answer: "you might call me a giant". Now, notice: he does not reject Shasta's words.

Lewis is very big on language, and Lewis is no fool. You think about it for a minute. The Hebrew bible, when it first introduces us to God uses three Hebrew words to identify God: Elohim, which is the Hebrew... the same word that in Arabic is Allah, so the Islamic world and the Jewish world and the Christian world, we worship the same God: Allah, Elohim. Elohim, El Shaddai and Adonai. The three great words used in the Hebrew bible to God, and they're translated as God. Elohim, Adonai, El Shaddai. Did you know all three of those words basically mean giant? So, Lewis says, you can call me giant. Notice: Aslan says that. Yes, it's ok to call God giant. The Hebrew bible does. But when God meets Moses at the burning bush, he doesn't call himself Adonai, El Shaddai or Elohim. What does he call himself? "I am who I am, I will be who I will be". That means, I speak for myself. So, when Moses goes to the children of Israel, what does he say? "The God of your fathers, met in the burning bush, and his name is Yahweh". He is. That's the third person singular to be verb. He is. He speaks for himself. And that becomes the holy name for God for the rest of the Old Testament. He is. It's from I am, you see. That's how God identified.

And notice, in the Horse and His Boy, he says: “are you a giant?” and he says: “you can call me the giant, but I’m not like the creatures you call giants”. There’s no word you can come up with that can capture what God is. Isn’t that marvelous? Yet, it is a weakness. It’s a weakness from the Hebrew bible, it’s a weakness from us, as to what God is. He’s giant, he’s big, he’s huge, wow! He’s awesome! Kids love using that word. Yes. Yet he speaks for himself. And he’s not captured by that word. There’s no word that can capture him. He is who he is. He speaks for himself. And that’s pictured in the gospel of John and all the statements of our lord in the New Testament, where John will say: in the beginning, there was the word, the speech, the word was with God, the word was God, and the speech became flesh and walked among us full of grace and truth. See, that’s who God is.

So, Lewis saw that and he puts it in his story. But he puts it in the most priceless way. “Are you a giant?” “Yes, call me a giant”. God lets us call him a lot of things. By the way, he’s not easily offended. He’s not easily offended. “Call me a giant, but I’m not like the creatures you call giants”. “Well then, who are you?” And then remember Aslan says to him: “Myself, myself, myself”. And then, finally, self-disclosure. The self-disclosure in Aslan makes himself known. Myself, myself, myself. Well, there you have it. That’s who we meet in these wonderful stories. And the stories take us on a journey. I have to tell you right now that I don’t agree with Douglas Gresham, who is the stepson of CS Lewis, who now is the controller of the CS Lewis’ state. And when he had the Chronicles of Narnia publishes, he decided to make Magician’s Nephew volume 1. So, if you buy the Chronicles of Narnia, you’ll get Magician’s Nephew as number 1. Volume number 1. It’s not, it’s volume number 6. Number one should be the the Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe. And I think you should read in the order that he wrote them, frankly. And I’m glad that when Disney decided to put the movies out, they started with Lion, Witch, and Wardrobe first. That’s the one to begin. And then you get the wonderful joy to getting to Magician’s Nephew, which I love, where the creation of Narnia occurs, and you get to see as a flashback, so to speak. The way Lewis does, he gives you a flashback to help you understand the creation of Narnia, this amazing imaginary world.

Ok now, I’m going to do a reading for you, before we close, from the Voyage of the Dawn Trader. All my kids have favorites, I love them all, but this is my daughter’s Ann, favorite, the Voyage of the Dawn Trader. In fact, we have a little boat, a little tiny 17’ boat, and we call it the Dawn Trader. It’s a pretty small boat, we call it the Dawn Trader. The Dawn Trader is a sail boat, it’s kind of funny how it happens, that a boy used this, he’s kind of a dead boy and he prevents children... they’re in the bedroom and they see a picture on the wall of a ship, and it’s a Narnian ship, and the kids say: “That’s a Narnian ship”, and he’s: yes, that’s so silly, what a funny looking ship it is. And then, you know, if you read the story, that picture on the wall begins to get bigger and bigger, and before you know it, this dead little boy there’s not much to brag about. He’s so

selfish, he's so self-preoccupied, he's so... and suddenly, he's on the ship, in the sea, with the rest of the kids and there's Prince Caspian and they're on the ship, and I want to tell you what he said. It was really not a very happy thing for him, because he gets sea sick right away, and he's not happy there, and he wanted to get back to England and you can't back to England in this... you're there now, and you know the kids stay there for an awful long time. Of course, they're happy to be back cause they know Narnia, but he doesn't. So, he's totally a bad little guy.

He makes fun of Reepicheep, the little mouse, he makes fun of everybody, and when the chores come, and they're supposed to do chores, as a matter of fact, the ship had a bad storm in, and they're in bad shape. So, they're all supposed to do their chores to help get the ship ready to get it sea worthy so they can go back to sea. And Caspian is trying to get everybody organized, to get the ship together, and typical of a guy like Eustace... do you know anybody like that? He decides to just go off and do his own thing. "I'll let those guys take care of the ship, I could care less. It's a boring trip anyway". And he goes up on this island, then he has quite an adventure. When he goes up on the island, he's walking alone, believe it or not, he comes upon kind of a wake area, and sees a cave, and there's a dead dragon in the cave. And in the cave, he sees tremendous gold. Absolute jewels and everything. And so he says: "Oh, my goodness, this is so good to be true!". So, he goes in the dragon cave and just loads himself up with all these... because he has to carry them all back, he didn't have a backpack, so he has to carry all this gold back with him. "Boy, this is so great! I got to find a way to hide it when I get back or else these greedy Pevensie kids will try to get these away from me. But I found all these gold, and then would you believe it?". He falls asleep in the dragon cave, and when he wakes up, his arm is hurting terribly. And he looks with one eye out and he sees: "I thought there was just one dragon here. There's a dragon over there". He looks out with the other eye: "There's a dragon over on that side. And this is scary". Because here he is in this cave, a dragon on one side, and a dragon on the other side. And so he says: "I got to make a break for it". And so he runs like mad down to the river, into the lake, and looks to the lake and finds that he makes a lot of noise when he runs. He looks at the lake, there's a shark. There's a huge shark. He looks at the lake and he sees the dragon in the lake. And he realizes that what he saw on the one side was not a dragon, was one of his wings. And on the other side, one of his wings. He has become a dragon. Like Lewis said, he didn't know the stories that when you fall asleep in a dragon's cave with dragon's lute, then... he had read a lot of stories. Lewis said: "if he had read more fairy stories, he would've known". You should never fall asleep in a dragon's cave, you turn into a dragon.

So, he turns into a dragon, and then of course he immediately becomes very thankful because he got his arms. He begins to feel bad about it. He could fly now, has a terrific appetite, needs to eat animals. So, he eats some animals, cause he's huge, and he flies down and finally, when the people on the ship, they're scared when they see him, but when they see him cry, a big tear come out of his eye, someone says: "you know, I think it's Eustace". So, he's now a dragon, but a good dragon, and so he actually helps them. He goes out and pulls a whole mass of tree and brings the

tree so they can make a new mass for the sailboat. And now, they all feel like, you know, he's a good dragon and he's Eustace, but he's a dragon. And now, they got to get sailing. What are we going to do with him? What do we do with Eustace? Do we take him with another ship behind us? Can he fly along with us? But then he'll get tired. And they even thought about strapping him on the ship, but he was so big, he was bigger than the whole ship itself. So they figured they couldn't strap him on the ship and they were all feeling very, very blue at the fact that they were going to have to set sail and they were going to have to leave Eustace behind, the dragon. Who's now a dragon, but still, he's a dragon.

So, one day, one night, Edmund, remember Edmund, from the Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe? Edmund is walking on the beach, and would you believe it? There is Eustace back to himself, on the beach. And that's where I want to start reading.

"Don't you know me?" said the other. "It's me Eustace."

"By jove," said Edmund, "so it is. My dear chap -"

"Hush," said Eustace and lurched as if he were going to fall.

"Hello!" said Edmund, steadying him. "What's up? Are you ill?"

Eustace was silent for so long that Edmund thought he was fainting; but at last he said, "It's been ghastly. You don't know . . . but it's all right now. Could we go and talk somewhere? I don't want to meet the others just yet."

"Yes, rather, anywhere you like," said Edmund. "We can go and sit on the rocks over there. I say, I am glad to see you – er – looking yourself again. You must have had a pretty beastly time."

They went to the rocks and sat down looking out across the bay while the sky got paler and paler and the stars disappeared except for one very bright one low down and near the horizon.

"I won't tell you how I became a – a dragon till I can tell the others and get it all over," said Eustace. "By the way, I didn't even know it was a dragon till I heard you all using the word when I turned up here the other morning. I want to tell you how I stopped being one."

"Fire ahead," said Edmund.

“Well, last night I was more miserable than ever. And that beastly arm-ring was hurting like anything-”

“Is that all right now?”

Eustace laughed – a different laugh from any Edmund had heard him give before – and slipped the bracelet easily off his arm. “There it is,” he said, “and anyone who likes can have it as far as I’m concerned. Well, as I say, I was lying awake and wondering what on earth would become of me. And then – but, mind you, it may have been all a dream. I don’t know.”

“Go on,” said Edmund, with considerable patience.

“Well, anyway, I looked up and saw the very last thing I expected: a huge lion coming slowly towards me. And one queer thing was that there was no moon last night, but there was moonlight where the lion was. So it came nearer and nearer. I was terribly afraid of it. You may think that, being a dragon, I could have knocked any lion out easily enough. But it wasn’t that kind of fear. I wasn’t

afraid of it eating me, I was just afraid of it – if you can understand. Well, it came close up to me and looked straight into my eyes. And I shut my eyes tight. But that wasn’t any good because it told me to follow it.”

“You mean it spoke?”

“I don’t know. Now that you mention it, I don’t think it did. But it told me all the same. And I knew I’d have to do what it told me, so I got up and followed it. And it led me a long way into the mountains. And there was always this moonlight over and round the lion wherever we went. So at last we came to the top of a mountain I’d never seen before and on the top of this mountain there was a garden – trees and fruit and everything. In the middle of it there was a well.

“I knew it was a well because you could see the water bubbling up from the bottom of it: but it was a lot bigger than most wells – like a very big, round bath with marble steps going down into it. The water was as clear as anything and I thought if I could get in there and bathe it would ease the pain in my leg. But the lion told me I must undress first. Mind you, I don’t know if he said any words out loud or not.

“I was just going to say that I couldn’t undress because I hadn’t any clothes on when I suddenly thought that dragons are snaky sort of things and snakes can cast their skins. Oh, of course, thought I, that’s what the lion means. So I started scratching myself and my scales began coming off all over the place. And then I scratched a little deeper and, instead of just scales coming off here and there, my whole skin started peeling off beautifully, like it does after an illness, or as if I was a banana. In a minute or two I just stepped out of it. I could see it lying there beside me,

looking rather nasty. It was a most lovely feeling. So I started to go down into the well for my bathe.

“But just as I was going to put my feet into the water I looked down and saw that they were all hard and rough and wrinkled and scaly just as they had been before. Oh, that’s all right, said I, it only means I had another smaller suit on underneath the first one, and I’ll have to get out of it too. So I scratched and tore again and this underskin peeled off beautifully and out I stepped and left it lying beside the other one and went down to the well for my bathe.

“Well, exactly the same thing happened again. And I thought to myself, oh dear, how ever many skins have I got to take off? For I was longing to bathe my leg. So I scratched away for the third time and got off a third skin, just like the two others, and stepped out of it. But as soon as I looked at myself in the water I knew it had been no good.

“Then the lion said – but I don’t know if it spoke – “You will have to let me undress you.” I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it.

“The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. You know – if you’ve ever picked the scab off a sore place. It hurts like billy-oh but it is such fun to see it coming away.”

“I know exactly what you mean,” said Edmund.

“Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off – just as I thought I’d done it myself the other three times, only they hadn’t hurt – and there it was lying on the grass: only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been. And there was I as smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me – I didn’t like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I’d no skin on – and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious and as soon as I started swimming and splashing I found that all the pain had gone from my arm. And then I saw why. I’d turned into a boy again. You’d think me simply phoney if I told you how I felt about my own arms. I know they’ve no muscle and are pretty mouldy compared with Caspian’s, but I was so glad to seethem.

“After a bit the lion took me out and dressed me -”

“Dressed you. With his paws?”

“Well, I don’t exactly remember that bit. But he did somehow or other: in new clothes – the same I’ve got on now, as a matter of fact. And then suddenly I was back here. Which is what makes me think it must have been a dream.”

“No. It wasn’t a dream,” said Edmund.

“Why not?”

“Well, there are the clothes, for one thing. And you have been – well, un-dragoned, for another.”

“What do you think it was, then?” asked Eustace.

“I think you’ve seen Aslan,” said Edmund.

Voyage of Dawn Trader.