

C.S. Lewis Reading Day: Let's Celebrate Being Made For Another World

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." - C.S. Lewis

We're going to pause our regularly scheduled programming this week because today happens to be C.S. Lewis Reading Day, and C.S. Lewis happens to be my favorite author.

Now, I recognize this might be less exciting for some of you than it is for me. In fact, there is a possibility you didn't know such a day exists. Yet, even if you're not a fan of Lewis, or sadder still, you have never had the pleasure of reading any of his works, I want to pause with you for just a moment to appreciate the far more significant reminder Lewis' life represents.

Most known for his *Chronicles of Narnia* series, C.S. Lewis was an Oxford don, prolific writer, and incredibly influential Christian thinker. His fiction has captured countless imaginations, and his nonfiction has inspired and challenged countless more.

As a lover of words, I am stretched by his command of and love for the English language. Everything he wrote was a master class in expression and thoroughly enjoyable to read.

As a lover of stories, I am transported to places in his books I want to keep visiting. Not only did his *Chronicles of Narnia* open up a world full of wholesome wonder and relatable struggles, but his *Space Trilogy* and *The Great Divorce* (my personal favorites) forced me to step outside our world to consider penetrating realities.

Most importantly, as a lover of Jesus, I am inspired by his commitment to our Savior and the skill with which he communicated profound and difficult truths. *Mere Christianity*, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Four Loves*, *The Abolition of Man*... He did not shy away from addressing both the heart and the mind, not as an intellectual giant (though he was undoubtedly one), but as a fellow captive who has experienced rescue. He approached his readers knowing belief in Jesus wouldn't come easily. It would push against everything within them. Yet, that push was necessary, and that step absolutely restorative.

In his essay "On Obstinacy in Belief", he wrote: "In getting a dog out of a trap, in extracting a thorn from a child's finger, in teaching a boy to swim or rescuing one who can't, in getting a frightened beginner over a nasty place on the mountain, the one

fatal obstacle may be their distrust.... We ask them to believe that what is painful will relieve their pain, and that which looks dangerous is their only safety. We ask them to accept apparent impossibilities: that moving the paw farther back into the trap is the way to get it out—that hurting the finger very much more will stop the finger from hurting, that water which is obviously permeable will resist and support the body... that to go higher and onto an exposed ledge is the way not to fall... If human life is in fact ordered by a beneficent being whose knowledge of our real needs and of the way in which they can be satisfied infinitely exceeds our own, we must expect... that his operations will often appear to us far from beneficent and far from wise, and that it will be our highest prudence to give Him our confidence in spite of this.”

Lewis knew the truth wouldn't always be easy or comfortable, but he also knew how desperately it was (and is) needed.

Ultimately, what makes Lewis so special to me is that Lewis has pointed me again and again to *Jesus*. Reminding me that I was, in fact, made for another world. That world is not Narnia or Perelandra or any other fantastical realm. That world is far greater.

As Jesus was nearing the cross, He prayed for believers. In that beautiful prayer, He said: *“I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world”* (John 17:14-18 ESV).

In these few short verses, He reminds us this world is not where we're meant to be forever, but it is where He has sent us. Why? That more might hear the saving and sanctifying Word of God and come home too. We were made for something beautiful. Eternity with Jesus is far greater than we can ever even desire. And yet, for now, we have been placed in these particular places with these particular people for a particularly profound purpose. We are to shine the light of Jesus to a world stumbling in darkness. We are to point to hope in a place overrun by hopelessness. We are to declare His love and rescue to the lost and perishing.

Lewis is special not because he made much of himself, but because he made much of Jesus and pointed others to Him so well.

So... Happy C.S. Lewis Reading Day!