

## Slide 1

This presentation is not to exalt C.S. Lewis, but rather to exalt Christ who gave Lewis great gifts in order that He (Christ) could encourage and bless us through Lewis.

I want to give special recognition to Art Lindsley author of “Case for Christ”, and Will Vaus, author of “Mere Theology”. Most of the words in this presentation are theirs. Besides Mere Christianity (by C.S. Lewis), I would recommend these two books to you if you want to grow deeper in your faith through the writings and theology of C.S. Lewis.

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Here is our agenda for the morning.

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So who was C.S. Lewis ?

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C.S. Lewis was born Nov. 29, 1898 in Belfast, Ireland. The C.S. stands for Clive Staples, a name which he did not like. As a child, he renamed himself “Jack,” which remained his name throughout his life.

In later life, he described himself to a young admirer this way: “I’m tall, fat, rather bald, red-faced, double-chinned, black-haired, have a deep voice and wear glasses for reading.”

Lewis had only one sibling, a brother named Warren, who was three years older. His father was a solicitor. His mother, a clergyman's daughter. He had a happy childhood until the age of nearly ten, when his mother died of cancer. This had a profound and lasting impact on him.

His mother was a believer and he was raised in an evangelical congregation of the Church of Ireland (Anglican). However, as a teen, he gave up his faith and became an atheist.

Lewis fought in WW I and was wounded in action. He was sent back to England to recuperate and did not return to combat.

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Lewis attended Oxford University, where he earned three degrees. He became a tutor at Magdalen College, was elected a Fellow and was a tutor in English Language and Literature there for 29 years.

He became a Theist in 1929. Quote:

You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him Whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had come upon me. In the Trinity Term of 1929 I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed; perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England...The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation. Surprised by Joy, 228

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Lewis became a Christian in 1931. Helped to faith by Christian friends, J.R.R. Tolkein, Hugo Dyson and others.

Quote:

“ I have just passed on from believing in God to definitely believing in Christ – Christianity. My long night talk with Dyson and Tolkien had a good deal to do with it.” (Letter to Arthur Greeves, 18 Oct. 1931)

“I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken. I was driven to Whipsnade [zoo] on a sunny morning. When we set out, I did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo, I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought. Nor in great emotion.” (Surprised by Joy, 237)

Pictured here is Holy Trinity Church where Lewis attended regularly.

Lewis found in his faith the answers to life's questions and became a strong, committed disciple of Jesus and apologist for Christ.

Later, he would say, "I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." *Weight of Glory*, 24:92

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Writings: (Pictured here is Jack's typewriter)

Professional

The Allegory of Love

Preface to *Paradise Lost*

*English Literature in the Sixteenth Century Excluding Drama* (1954);

Christian

Pilgrim's Regress, Mere Christianity, The Screwtape Letters, The Abolition of Man, The Great Divorce, The Problem of Pain, Miracles, A Grief Observed, Surprised by Joy

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Lewis paid a high price to follow Jesus Christ at Oxford University  
Hated by many faculty  
Refused professorship on at least 2 occasions

Given Chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge University, where he taught from 1954 to 1963

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At Oxford, Lewis was often surrounded by a group of friends who referred to themselves as the "Inklings". They got together twice weekly, usually Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings. The morning meetings were often at a local pub – The Eagle and Child (or Bird and Bottle) – and the evening meetings in Lewis' room at Magdalen College. Since there was no formal membership, many people attended over the years, but some of the regulars included Charles Williams, Warren Lewis (C.S. Lewis' brother) and J.R.R. Tolkien.

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This is the Kiln's (Jack's home). Jack was a genius in many ways. One gift he had, or a "curse" as he called it, was that he was not able to forget anything he read. Sometimes Jack would be coaxed to play a "parlor game". A guest would be asked to pull a book from his extensive library and read aloud a few lines. Lewis would then proceed to quote the rest of the poetry or prose verbatim for

pages. One such event was recorded by Kenneth Tynan (a well known English dramatist and critic).

“Once after dinner, I was invited to have a glass of beer with him. He directed, “Give me a number from one to forty.” I said, “thirty”.

He acknowledged, “Right, go to the thirtieth shelf in my library.”

Then he said, “Give me another number from one to twenty”.

I answered, “fourteen”.

He continued, “Right. Get the fourteenth book off the shelf. Now let’s have a number from one to one hundred”.

I said, “forty six.”

“Now turn to page forty-six. Pick a number from one to twenty-five for the first line of the page.”

I said, “six”.

“So”, he would say. “read me that line.” He could always identify it – not only by identifying the book, but he was also unusually able to quote the rest of the page. This is a gift. This is something you cannot learn. It was remarkable.”

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"Addison's Walk," where Lewis, Tolkein, Dyson took the late night walk that led to his conversion

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Lewis married late in life to Joy Davidman Gresham, with whom he had a very happy marriage. She died in 1960

The story of Jack and Joy is told in the movie “Shadowlands”.

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C.S. Lewis died in 1963, on same day as John Kennedy and Aldous Huxley at the Kiln's. He was buried at Trinity Church, Headington Quarry

This is Lewis's tombstone in the church yard of Holy Trinity Church

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Why should anyone, believer or nonbeliever, study C.S. Lewis' case for Christ ?

Lewis' writings have had a greater effect on believers in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than any book other than the Bible.

He had a unique ability to combine reason and imagination.

He was a committed unbeliever for many years so he knows the arguments and feelings against Christianity.

He is one of the most brilliant people to have examined the Christian faith.

His views were tested and refined by his interaction with top opponents of the faith in his day.

His personal qualities made him one who was capable of warmth, loyal friendship and laughter. His writings engage but never try to coerce.

After careful examination, Lewis had this to say about Christianity:

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.”

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In his writings, Lewis does not develop his defense of faith in a systematic fashion. Rather he writes about the obstacles that once stood in the way of faith

for him. Because these are issues that are stumbling blocks for many today, they are worth examining before discussing how Lewis overcame each.

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In summary, some of the factors that led to Lewis' unbelief were:

Early pain over the loss of his mother:

Lewis' mother died when he was nine. He described his feelings like this: "With my mother's death all settled happiness disappeared from my life. There was much fun, many pleasures, many stabs of joy; but no more of the old security. It was sea and islands now; the great continent had sunk like Atlantis."

His father emotionally withdrew and decided to send both sons to a boarding school. Lewis later wrote: "With his uncanny flair for making the wrong decision, my father had given us helpless children into the hands of a madman." The boarding school's headmaster was later declared insane and the school closed.

Difficulties with prayer

During these difficult times, Lewis tried to pray every night. He felt all he was doing was saying words and not really thinking about what he was saying. The result was insomnia and nightly torment. He wrote about his prayers: "Had I pursued the same road much further, I think I should have gone mad."

The problem of evil in the world

Very simply, Lewis did not understand how an omnipotent and loving God could create a world in which there was so much evil that resulted in so much pain and suffering.

## Parallels between mythology & Christianity

Pagan religions and mythologies were very interesting to Lewis, but he knew them to be clearly just that: myths. The question for him was: Why wasn't Christianity just another myth? On what grounds should Christianity be considered true and all the other myths false?

## Indoctrination into rationalism

When he was 16, Lewis was tutored by a brilliant teacher named W. T. Kirkpatrick. He was an atheist and a rationalist. That means he believed reason should be the source of all knowledge and nothing should be considered true unless it could be rationalized (reasoned). This actually was of great benefit to Lewis because it caused him to choose his words and construct his arguments with great care. Kirkpatrick never attacked Lewis' belief, but his rationalism reinforced Lewis' unbelief.

## Tension between reason and imagination

Lewis' atheism which was derived from his reason, was at tension with his imagination. His atheism said the world is grim and meaningless place with no future after death. But within him, his imagination longed for more. While this tension for now was an obstacle to his faith, later imagination took a prominent place in Lewis' writings and both his fiction and non-fiction pointed to Christ.

## Disbelief in miracles

During his atheist years, Lewis simply assumed that miracles do not and can not happen and that it would be naïve and unsophisticated to believe otherwise.



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One by one, Lewis was to overcome each obstacle. Let's take a look at a few of these.....

Particularly,

The problem of evil

Christianity is just a myth

Miracles

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The problem of evil may well have been the greatest of all obstacles that stood between Lewis and the Christian faith.

Lewis' argument was this: An all powerful, all loving God would not create a world in which evil exists; Evil exists; therefore God does not.

But as he began to reflect further, he came up with this thought: "If the universe had no light, and all the creatures had no eyes, would they know it was dark?" (repeat). The answer is "no" because without light, there is nothing in contrast to light that could be called dark. Dark would just be normal. (not light or dark).

But where had Lewis gotten the concept of evil. Atheism provides no basis for it. (discuss) If evil was real, then there must be an absolute standard by which it was know to be evil. There must be an absolute good by which evil can be distinguished from good. Where could he find this ultimate reference point, a fixed point above all cultural and personal bias ? Didn't this demand a God as an adequate basis for absolute good?

In effect, Lewis' changed his argument to say that evil was in fact an argument FOR the existence of God and that God has permitted evil for good reason. In Problem of Pain, Lewis offers an explanation for why evil exists: They are:

Free Will: God did not create evil, but he created human beings with the capacity to choose evil. While the capacity to choose evil is not evil itself, it provides the possibility for evil to be chosen.

Natural Law: Lewis argues that in order for our choices to have real consequences we must make those choices in a stable and predictable natural environment. I.e., God could consciously intervene so that no evil consequences ever follow from evil choices, but that would erase the possibility of character formation. Such a world would be one in which wrong actions were impossible, and in which, therefore, freedom of the will would be void.

Soul Making: Lewis suggests that pain offers us an opportunity for victory or defeat. We must choose how we will face suffering: let it overcome us or rise above it. Pain shatters the illusion that things can satisfy us. Pain aids our ability to seek God. Suffering brings the possibility of real gain or great loss. Ravi Zacharias says: "Never confuse pain and suffering as lack of God's blessing, for through pain and suffering we come to know God better, and that is the greatest blessing of all."

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In 1916, Lewis said to his friend Arthur Greeves: " You ask me my religious views: you know, I think I believe in no religion. There is absolutely no proof for any of them, and from a philosophical standpoint Christianity is not even the best. All religions, that is, all mythologies to give them their proper name, are merely man's invention."

One night Lewis, Tolkien, and Hugo Dyson were having dinner at Magdalen College. Lewis said: “all myths are lies” to which Tolkien forcefully responded: “no they are not”. Tolkien’s argument was that God created the world and the human mind. And within this structure it should not be surprising that similar stories with similar values and story-lines emerge. Becoming a “sub-creator” inventing myths – is something central to our humanity. Tolkien argued that a good story is one in which there is a “eucatastrophe”. This is a story in which after a bad thing happens, it results in a good or better thing happening. (Snow White and the seven dwarfs is a good example: Without the poison apple, there would have been no opportunity to meet and receive the kiss of a prince).

Tolkien went on to argue that the gospel was the best “eucatastrophe” in history and was the story that all other stories pointed to. Tolkien argued that myths and legends were made up largely of truth. The crucifixion was the worst thing that ever happened to man kind, and the resurrection was the “eucatastrophe” or the best thing that ever happened.

Not long after this late night discussion, Lewis came to believe in God. I find it fascinating how God communicated the gospel through Tolkien to Lewis in a language that Lewis appreciated and respected most .. Literature.

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Lewis probably thought he had finally faced reality when he became an atheist. For a number of years he affirmed “naturalism” and fervently believed that miracles cannot possibly happen. So what changed Lewis’ mind?

In his book on Miracles, Lewis asserts that naturalism eventually self-destructs. The argument goes like this: In order for naturalism to be true it must account for everything under a naturalistic premise. Yet the one thing naturalism cannot

account for is the reasoning process which is necessary to establish naturalism. Lewis describes the problem like this:

“If I pose a mathematical problem and throw some dice, the dice might happen to fall into a pattern which gives the answer to my problem. ( $2+2 = 4$ ) But there is no reason to suppose that they will. Now in the chance view, all our thoughts are the results of processes as random as the throw of a dice..” (I.e. we have no basis in naturalism to trust our thoughts or our thinking ... thus we have no reason to trust a conclusion that naturalism is true.)

Lewis, having discounted naturalism (the belief that miracles cannot occur) as self-defeating; now addresses the three objections to miracles that someone might have:

They are impossible. Lewis says in Reflection on the Psalms: “I have never found any philosophical grounds that miracles don’t happen”. I.e., unless we are absolutely certain that no supernatural power exists, we can never be certain that miracles do not occur.

They are improbable. David Hume said: “it is always easier to believe that those who testify to a miracle are in error than that they are telling the truth because the laws of nature are firm and unalterable. I.e., there are billions of instances where people die and stay dead, therefore a story about one person rising from the dead should be discounted because of the overwhelming evidence of nature.” But Lewis says: “We only know the laws of nature are firm and unalterable if we know for certain that all reports of miracles are in fact false. And we can only know the reports are false if miracles have never occurred. In fact, we are arguing in a circle.” Arguing in a circle means one has to assume what one wants to prove in order to prove it. This is a meaningless argument.

They are inappropriate. David Hume argued that miracles are the invention of competing religions to give credibility to their views, therefore they are inappropriate. Lewis' response is first to admit that possibility that some miracle claims outside Christianity are true. Perhaps God would heal someone in a pagan religion, not to establish that religion's claims, but merely out of compassion. But then he goes on to say: "I claim that the Christian miracles have a much greater intrinsic probability in virtue of their organic connection with one another and with the whole structure of the religion they exhibit." In Christianity, miracles have decisive significance, converging on Christ and demonstrating that he is the one sent by God. Lewis considered the greatest miracle to have ever occurred to be the incarnation, God became man.

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Lewis was one of the most effective apologists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He lived 1 Peter 3:15 and was able to give a reason for the hope that he had to everyone who asked him, and he did it with gentleness and respect. This is C.S. Lewis' case for Christ.

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There are four prongs to Lewis' defense of Christianity:

The argument from longing

The argument from morality

The argument from reason

The argument from Christ

Lewis did not believe that one could prove the existence of God, but he did believe one could demonstrate a reasonable probability of God's existence and the truth of Christianity.

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According to Lewis, if a person diligently follows desire and resolutely abandons false sources when their falsity appears, that person will come out at last into the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given in our present mode of experience. The longing that all human beings experience for something that cannot be had in this world suggest that we were made for another world, or for Someone outside of this world, namely God.

Lewis says that being hungry doesn't prove that one will get food, it does prove that there is such a thing as food.

If we are really the products of a materialistic universe, how is it we don't feel at home in it? Do fish complain about being wet? If they did, wouldn't that suggest that they had not always been, or would not always be, purely aquatic creatures?

Lewis also calls attention to how we are perpetually surprised at time. "How time flies! Fancy John being grown-up and married! I can hardly believe it!" Why can't we believe it? The reason is because there is something in us that is not temporal.

The argument from longing is one of the most powerful arguments for the existence of the supernatural realm, and Lewis is perhaps the best conveyor of this argument in modern fiction and nonfiction.

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Lewis says we can observe from everyday existence that there is ultimate right and wrong. We observe this in the way people quarrel with each other: “I was there first!”; “What gives you the right to go to the head of the line?”; “I gave you a cookie so you should share your cracker with me.”; “You promised...” The point of quarreling is to determine who is at fault and you can’t determine this unless there is right and wrong.

Lewis observes that we offer an excuse for our behavior in a quarrel. An excuse is an attempt to show the person offering the excuse was not in the wrong. If we did not believe in a moral standard, why do we spend so much time trying to prove our behavior is right?

Lewis rejects the notion that right and wrong are merely instinct. Lewis says that if this were so, then we ought to be able to point to some instincts that are always right and some that are always wrong, and we cannot do that. Take our instinct to fight. Sometimes it is right to fight to defend self or family, but someone who fights all the time is considered a bully. There is some sense of right and wrong acting upon our instincts. Lewis says instincts are like keys on a piano, they are neither right or wrong, they just are. But the moral law is like a sheet of music (given from a master composer) that tells us which notes to play at what time.

Lewis also observed that there is a great similarity between the moral codes of numerous cultures. Some people say that different cultures or civilizations have different moralities. Lewis invites us to imagine a country where people are admired for running away in battle, or where a person feels proud of double-crossing all the people who have been kindest to him or her. People have differed with regard to which people you ought to be unselfish, but all human beings have agreed that you ought not to put yourself first. Selfishness has never been admired. Men have disagreed as to whether you should have one

wife or four, but they have always agreed that you must not simply have any woman you want.

Lewis calls this common morality the “Law of Human Nature”. He asserts that the existence of this law suggests that there is a Mind behind the universe, a Lawgiver who wants us to behave in a certain way.

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Lewis believed that our ability to do critical thinking (reason) was an argument for the existence of God.

Lewis argues that naturalism contains a great self-contradiction. In his book *Miracles*, he quotes Professor Haldane in support of his view as follows: “If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true ... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.”

If naturalists are right and nature is all there is, then this begs the question, from where does reason (critical thinking) come? Lewis points out that reason can only come from outside of nature. If nature is all there is, then there is no purpose behind the existence of the universe. If there is no purpose, then there is no reason. If there is no reason, then all arguments for or against naturalism are nonsensical and thus invalid.

In *Mere Christianity* Lewis writes: “Atheism is too simple. If there is no meaning to the universe, we should never have found it out. (because it takes reason to rationalize that a naturalistic universe has no meaning)

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In *What Christians Believe*, Lewis examines a few rival conceptions of God: atheistic materialism, pantheism, modernist Christianity, dualism, and the Christian idea of God.

Atheistic materialism (or naturalism) has already been discussed and found self-refuting when it comes to accounting for reason which is needed to arrive at the conclusion that atheistic materialism is true.

Lewis rejects pantheism outright. The pantheist says that if you could only see cancer or a slum from the divine point of view, you would realize that it also is God. Lewis calls this “damned nonsense”. He rejects pantheism because it flies in the face of our deep seated sense of right and wrong.

Lewis rejects modernist Christianity because it is too simple. This conception of God asserts that there is a good God in heaven, therefore all is right with the world. This leaves out the terrible doctrines of sin, hell, the devil and redemption. Lewis maintains it is no good asking for a simple religion because real things are not simple.

This leaves only two conceptions of God that face all the facts: dualism and Christianity. What are the facts? That the universe contains much that is obviously bad and apparently meaningless, and there are creatures like ourselves who know that it is bad and meaningless.

Dualism is the belief that there are two equal and independent powers behind the universe, one good and the other evil. However, the question that must be asked in regard to dualism is: “Why do we call one power good and the other evil? If there really is good and evil, then by what standard are we judging? Whatever the standard, it has to be higher up than either the good or evil power. That means there is a God above the good and evil power and dualism falls apart.

Thus...the only conception of God that makes full sense of the universe is the Christian one. Christianity maintains that God created everything good and then some of his creation chose to set up on its own, thus becoming evil. The difference between Christianity and dualism is that Christianity believes that God created the Dark Power, or the devil. Christianity agrees with dualism that the world is at war. But Christianity believes the world is “enemy occupied territory”. Christianity is the story of how the rightful King of this world has landed here in disguise and is calling on us to take part in his plan of sabotage against the Dark Power.

This all leads to Lewis’ Case of Christ or christological argument for the probability of Christianity:

Among the Jews there turns up a man who goes about talking as if he was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says he always existed. He says that he is coming to judge the world at the end of time.

Such claims as Jesus made would not be unusual among pantheists, who believe that everyone is a part of God. But Jesus, being a Jew, would not have had this pantheistic concept of God in mind. What Jesus was claiming was shocking because he was claiming to be the One outside the world who created it and was wholly different from any part of his creation.

Therefore there are only three alternatives: either Jesus was a madman, something worse, or the Son of God. (Lunatic, Liar, or God)

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Lewis believed that one’s theology should be able to stand under thoughtful intellectual challenge and should best describe our world as we experience it. That is, our theology should be coherent. We have already seen how Lewis

turned the problem of evil from being an obstacle to belief, to being an argument for the existence of God. Now we look at several other common challenges to the Christian worldview and examine Lewis' response to each.

We will look at Lewis response to the statements:

Christianity (religion) is just a psychological crutch (wish fulfillment);  
Christianity is arrogant and exclusive to claim there is only one way to God;  
Jesus may have been a good, moral teacher, but he was not God.

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When he was an atheist, Lewis thought that God was something humans invented to cope with the uncertainties of a confusing and often dangerous world. God was a psychological crutch or the result of wish fulfillment. Later in life, Lewis addressed this argument with four counter-points:

Some things we wish for do exist. Lewis argued that wishing for something does not mean it does not exist. When we are hungry, we wish for food, when thirsty, for water, when tired, for sleep. But what about the more abstract desires? What about our longings for meaning, dignity, immortality, and spiritual experience? Are these yearnings in our heart erroneously and we must outgrow them; or are these in our conscience because we are made in God's image. Lewis contends that creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exist. Hunger points to food and sexual desire points to sex. He said: "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."

The theory that religion is only wish fulfillment rests on the assumption that we can not trust our thought processes to be rational. This is self-refuting. If we cannot trust our thought processes to be rational, if they can mislead us into

thinking that God exists when He does not, then how can we trust our thought processes to be certain that believing in God is wish fulfillment. In fact, how can we conclude or believe anything including the atheistic worldview? Here is what Lewis wrote about Freud and Marx: “The Freudians have discovered that we exist as members of some economic class. Thoughts are ideologically tainted at the source. Now this is obviously great fun; but it has not always been noticed that there is a bill to pay for it. There are two questions that people who say this kind of thing ought to be asked. The first is, are all thoughts tainted at the source or only some? The second is, does the taint invalidate the tainted thought in the sense of making it untrue or not? If they say that all thoughts are thus tainted, then of course, the Freudian and the Marxian are in the same boat with all the rest of us and cannot criticize us from the outside. They have sawn off the branch they are sitting on. If on the other hand, they say that the taint need not invalidate their thinking, then neither need it invalidate ours. In which case they have saved their own branch, but also saved ours along with it.”

Another problem with the “wish fulfillment” theory according to Lewis is that some religious views are contrary to our wishes. Many teachings that are basic to theism and to Christian faith in particular run counter to wish fulfillment theory. We have to take up our cross daily; we have to love our enemies; we have to love our neighbor as ourselves; to be the greatest, we have to be the least; in order to lead we must learn to serve; and in order to live, we must learn to die daily to our desires. Who would wish for divine judgement or hell (except perhaps for our enemies); which there most certainly is if there is a God. “Who would wish for this ?” is Lewis’ point.

Lewis then turns the table on those who criticize Christianity and Theism as wish fulfillment; he says that Atheism is a desire to kill God and be free without any accountability to a higher power. Atheism is an opiate of the conscience; an attempt to escape moral guilt for sin. While some people use drugs or sex to dull

the pain of guilt, they could just as easily use atheism. In fact, it can be argued that atheism is wish fulfillment, wishing away morality or responsibility or the idea of letting anyone else control their lives.

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The number one or two objection of nonbelievers is that Christians are narrow-minded and arrogant to claim that Christ is the only way to God. To this argument Lewis responds:

In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis asserts that a commitment to Christ does not necessitate the denial of truth in other religions. He writes: "If you are a Christian you do not have to believe that all the other religions are wrong all through. If you are an atheist, you do have to believe that the main point in all religions of the world is simply a huge mistake. If you are a Christian, you are free to think that all these religions, even the queerest ones, contain at least some hint of truth." Lewis' point then is who is in fact narrow minded, the person who believes all religions have some truth in them but one may be more true than the others, or the person who believes the main point in all other belief systems except their own is a huge mistake? His argument is that Christianity is not narrow and arrogant, but rational and true.

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Many people who deny the deity of Christ, in their attempt to demonstrate their tolerance towards Christians will say: "I believe that Jesus was a good person or

a great teacher.” Lewis argued that Christ cannot be simply a great moral teacher and nothing else. In Mere Christianity he wrote:

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was really a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic, on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg, or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Christ said he was Lord, God incarnate, before Abraham was, “I am”.

If His claims are false, he either knew they were false or he did not know they were false.

If he did not know his claims were false but claimed to be God anyway, he is a lunatic;

If he knew his claims were false but claimed to be God anyway, he is a liar;

But if His claims are true, then He is most certainly Lord !

Lunatic, liar, or Lord ... that is your choice of what to do with Christ; A good, moral teacher is not one of the options.

Lewis' journey from atheist to theist to Christian was remarkable. Although Lewis was not a professional theologian, he did consider himself and every Christian to be an amateur theologian. He maintained that anyone who wants to think about God at all should like to have the clearest and most accurate ideas about him that are available. He believed that was what theology should provide, and therefore every Christian ought to be interested in it.

Lewis says theology is like a map. If you want to get further in the Christian life, you must use that map. You won't get eternal life by just feeling the presence of God in flowers or music. He explains that theology started from people experiencing God and writing down their experimental knowledge of him. This theology is very helpful because it provides us with the combined knowledge of many Christians' experience of God over hundreds of years.

I want to express my thanks again to Art Lindsley (author of *C.S. Lewis: Case for Christ*) and Will Vaus (author of *Mere Theology*) who are responsible for most of the words in this presentation. We have all been inspired and motivated by the life and works of C.S. Lewis to become better at articulating, defending and living faith in Christ in our public and personal lives. I hope your experience this morning has been no exception.

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To close, I would like to offer an invitation in the style and words of C.S. Lewis:

“All human beings believe there is a right way to behave. They do not in fact behave that way.”

The “way to behave” is God’s moral law.

That we know the law and choose to break it is called sin.

Romans 3:23 says “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”

Romans 6:23 says “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

But Romans 10:13 says “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

If the words of C.S. Lewis have caused you to want to know more about God and the redemptive work of his Son, Jesus Christ, please see me after this presentation or contact me.





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*Discipleship of Heart and Mind*

*The mission of the CSLI is to develop disciples who can articulate, defend and live faith in Christ in public and personal life. ~~Along~~ In partnership with area churches, we train believers in disciplinemaking, apologetics, and evangelism to serve Christ in their own congregations and in the marketplace.*

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