

Good to me. The fourth in a series based on The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Preached at St. Giles Presbyterian Church, Prince George, BC on December 17, 2017 by Rev. Herb Hilder.

Lessons: ISAIAH 53:3-6

COLOSSIANS 1:15-20

Midway through TLWW we first hear the name of Aslan and that he is on the move.

With the mere mention of his name there comes over the children, *that strange feeling – like the first signs of spring, like good news...* (p. 74)

Beaver follows up with one of his old rhymes

Wrong will be right, when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane, we shall have spring
again (p.75)

Lucy's question about Aslan being safe results in Beaver's book and movie tag line response

*Safe? Who said anything about safe ? **Course he isn't safe. But he's good.***

Shortly after the Beavers and the children are forced to flee the beaver dam but they successfully stay one step ahead of the White Witch's secret police. To the point that they bring the children to meet Aslan.

It is clear as the children enter Aslan's camp; preparations for a battle are in full swing.

This morning's film clip has the 3 children coming to meet Aslan.

Don't you just love the beavers in this clip?

The scene of Peter, Susan and Lucy meeting Aslan is highly charged, As it should be

For they stand before the King of the Wood and the son of the great Emperor beyond the sea.

Disney has portrayed Aslan very well

A lion with a magnificent and radiant mane

And the voice is perfect – Irish actor – Liam

Neeson – calm, clear, sympathetic, but don't mess with me.

It is a scene so well fitting of the Beaver's comment about Aslan back in the beaver dam

'course he isn't safe. But he's good.

After welcoming each of the children by name,

Edmund's predicament is outlined

Aslan promises to help, but it will be difficult. The end result is uncertain.

Now I know TLWW is not an allegory

C.S. Lewis did not write the book to evangelize little children about Jesus.

This book is not some religious tract.

Yet, it is with Aslan that the allusions to scripture move very close to allegory.

Years ago, a parishioner approached me and asked
“have you read this book? – I just have”

In his excitement he initially did not show me
book’s titled cover.

It’s a great book he continued, about a lion named
Aslan in a magical land called Narnia.

As I read this book, my dim memories of church
school – specifically the stories of Jesus approaching
the crucifixion came back

And so after I finished reading this book, I went
back to the Bible and looked up those stories of my
Sunday school days,

They are great stories aren’t they?

And I came to have a fresh and more current
appreciation for Jesus as I read those stories.

But, he continued, I would not have gone back or
looked up those stories of Sunday school if I hadn’t
read this book!

Isn’t that exciting!!!! A book written for children,
Re-igniting my wanting to know more about Jesus
in my life right now!

What’s the title of the book I asked – though I
knew the answer

Oh. Sorry – The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
written by a Brit called C.S. Lewis. Do you know
him?

Aw – not personally, but I know the book
very well,

For my experience upon first reading of TLWW only about two years ago was similar to yours. It sent me back to reading the stories of Jesus in a fresh and new way.

It's a great book isn't it?

He and I re-visited that particular conversation many times – especially during Holy Week and Easter.

It was one of those seminal conversations we all have in our lives – conversations that are major touch points in our lives that always with us.

As Aslan's actions in TLWW energized and really drove both my parishioner and I back to a fresh way of seeing the stories of Jesus

I think the same thing can happen to any of us

Fresh perspective, age appropriate consideration of the Gospel!

This is necessary, because while many of God's people have matured in so many areas of their lives

They have to borrow from St. Paul, **put away childhood things'**

Nevertheless, many of these same mature individuals may still picture Jesus exclusively as Gentle Jesus meek and mild

Ask them to describe Jesus in their lives now and what comes back too often is akin to the Sunday School posted paintings and drawings, and the film strip projections of my childhood – a beatific man

with stringy hair, centered in sepia or light brown wash background.

This Jesus is passively gazing heavenward.

A bit wimpy looking

Now hear me,

There are seasons in our lives when we will return to such an image of the Risen Lord of time and history

Sort of the religious equivalent of comfort food.

However,

I contend to make that the default picture or perspective of Jesus – all the time – leave us with the impression that Jesus cannot really help us with the problems, the temptations, the struggles, the issues of what my girls call ‘adulging’

We need a more mature understanding and concept of Jesus – akin to that of the Four Square Gospel credo – Savior, Redeemer, Healer and Soon Coming Lord.

We need to remember then that Jesus isn’t safe, but he’s good.

We need to take seriously and ponder upon scripture like that read by Kate from Paul’s letter to the Colossians

This is not light stuff Paul speaks about.

Remember Paul wrote the Colossian letter from a Roman jail in order to counter or refute heretical teachings that were being taught to believers in Colossae – the specific heresy was

called Gnosticism – a heresy that denied Jesus’
unique relation to the Father,

Jesus was among several angelic
intermediaries between God and man

It was a heresy that taught that Jesus was not pre-
eminent.

Paul then begins in verse 15

**He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God
The first born of all creation**

Jesus is the exact representation and revelation of
God – IMAGE

In his essence, God is invisible – yes?

But Jesus Christ has revealed him to us

That is – it is only in Jesus Christ and him alone that
the invisible God is perfectly revealed.

FIRST BORN – refers to status and priority to all
creation

**¹⁶for in him all things were created, in heaven and
on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or
dominions or principalities or authorities – all
things were created through him and for him.**

Here Paul affirms Jesus’ role in creation. “All
things really means everything – heavenly and
earthly entities,

Visible and invisible realities

**He himself is before all things and in him all
things hold together (vs. 17)**

Again, another affirmation that Jesus Christ is God. To make Jesus Christ less than God is to dethrone him.

So when you and I think about that baby in Bethlehem,

You must realize that that baby means nothing to you beyond that of a little baby born 2000+ years ago,

Lest you forget:

It is *that baby in Bethlehem in the manger who keeps the whole universe together!* says Paul.

Then Paul changes gears slightly.

He moves from the grand, sweeping affirmations for all people and for all time to – the eternal- to an object in time – the church.

For there was a time when there was no church With Jesus says Paul, you have the beginning of the church.

Here ‘church’ clearly refers not to any local congregation but to the worldwide Christian community.

The church had its origin in Jesus,

And today it operates under His and no one else’s leadership

As Head of the Church, Jesus Christ supplies it with life through the Holy Spirit.

He gives gifts to men and women and then places those gifted people in His church that they might serve Him where they are needed.

We see this so clearly in faith communities,
 including this one, all the time
 Gifts of mercy, serving, teaching, leadership,
 healing, intercessory prayer, administration, helps,
 discernment
 Sometimes we may even be humbled to see gifts of
 prophecy, tongues and the interpretation of
 tongues.

As a parish minister who has served in a
 variety of church situations,
 I never fail to marvel at those times when peoples'
 spiritual gifts work together to build up a particular
 faith community to more faithfully serve Jesus in
 that community.
 How people who have a particular gift emerge at
 the right time (Kairos) to accomplish a work that
 lifts Jesus up,
 That glorifies Him

That can only happen when we take seriously
 claims and promises such as those affirmed by St.
 Paul in his Colossian letter.
 And taking seriously means among other things
 moving well beyond the idea that Jesus is only
 gentle, meek and mild

Truly

**¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the first-
 born of all creation; ¹⁶ for in him all things were
 created, in heaven and on earth, visible and
 invisible, whether thrones or dominions or**

principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

For like Aslan, Jesus too is *...not safe, but he's good*.
And what do you think about that? Choose your words to answer wisely!