

*Even so we also should walk in newness of life*

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C. S. Lewis reminds us in his book *Mere Christianity* that *The real problem of the Christian life comes where people do not usually look for it. It comes the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. Standing back from all your natural fussings and frettings; coming in out of the wind. We can only do it for moments at first. But from those moments the new sort of life will be spreading through our system: because now we are letting Him work at the right part of us...When He said, "Be perfect," He meant it. He meant that we must go in for the full treatment.*

Letting the life of Jesus, *that other voice, that larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in*, to our own lives is the major theme of the Trinity Season. This season is meant to be a season of growth and pruning into Christian maturity, therefore the color for our vestments and altar hangings reflect this spiritual truth and are green. We are called this Trinity Season to grow more and more like Jesus, and for this reason, the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for this season have much to teach us, but especially for our day to day lives as we strive to follow Him. This Sunday we continue in this journey, and we are reminded particularly of our identities in Christ which we were given at our Baptisms. At our Baptisms we were made members of Christ's Church, we were marked and set apart, we have *been baptized into Jesus Christ, into his death and resurrection*. Through Baptism we

share in the death and resurrection of Jesus, and we look forward to being like Him in heaven. We emerge from the baptismal font *dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord*. We, who are baptized, have been called into a new way of life, into a life that imitates and follows the teachings of Jesus Christ, the One, whom C. S. Lewis refers to as that *other voice, that other point of view, that stronger, and quieter life* who longs to live in us.

And even though we are sinful, we are reconnected with that *other voice, that other point of view, that stronger and quieter life* through the Grace of God in His Sacraments. But for this to be effective it requires a relationship with Jesus Christ and knowledge of the Gospels. This is the common thread that runs through the prayers and Scriptures that we have heard this morning. In the collect for this morning we pray that *we loving [God] above all things, may obtain [His] promises, which, exceed all that we can desire*. And this is what Jesus means when He says in the Sermon on the Mount, *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven*. Here Jesus also comments on the practices of the Scribes and Pharisees. They who were so concerned with external ritual ignored the deeper spiritual meaning of God's will for all mankind. So, as Moses had given the Old Law from Mount Sinai which had been perverted into hundreds of ceremonial rites, Jesus gives the New Law in the Sermon on the Mount. There He gives a Gospel to live by that can cleanse us from the inside out and transform us, *the promises which exceed all that we can desire*. We exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, the empty external and superficial righteousness of the Pharisees, by applying the Gospel to our lives and hearts, and by doing everything out of love and glory to God.

Our Gospel lesson for this morning gives us that part of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus said, *Ye have heard it said, Thou shalt not kill...* up until the time of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount most may have thought that this sixth commandment was pretty cut and dry. But Jesus goes further and says that murder is not merely about literally murdering one's neighbor. When Jesus says *whosoever shall be angry with his brother without a cause*, He is referring to sinful anger, the anger that arises from impatience and wounded pride. He who is angry in this way *shall be in danger of the judgment of Heaven*. *Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca:* that means whosoever shall say to another, you are worthless, *shall be in danger of the council*, the council of the Heavenly Court. Then Jesus says, *whosoever shall say thou fool:* shall not just be in danger of judgment by heaven, but in danger of hell fire. *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the altar...first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.* And what greater gift do we bring to this altar than *ourselves, our souls, and bodies*? The Law of Moses required the sacrifice of a spotless lamb. Today, Jesus, who was and is that perfect sacrifice without blemish for us all, calls us to sacrifice ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to give ourselves completely to Him, for Him and His heavenly kingdom. But we cannot be a pleasing sacrifice to God if our hearts are spotted and leprous with the sins of anger, pride, murder, and un-charitableness in thought and deed.

For the good of our own souls and for the good of our brothers and sisters, we must allow the life of Jesus Christ to transform us. We must allow Jesus to tend and prune us, as C. S. Lewis writes, *to give us the full treatment*, so that we can grow more and more like Him. So that we may grow better at *listening to that other*

*voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing.* We have been given the wonderful opportunity to live a sacramental life, constantly being brought further and further into the life of Christ through the grace of God by Holy Communion and Confession and all the Sacraments of the Church. We can experience the peace and goodness of God through these Sacraments. God can transform our lives through these Sacraments if we let Him. But we have to let God in; we have to welcome God into our lives and push all our wishes and hopes, *our fussings and frettings* out of the way, trusting that *His promises exceed all that we can desire.* This even means allowing God to push our fears and anxieties out of the way too. This is what was vowed when we were Baptized, and we renew it every Sunday when we receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ through Holy Communion. Truly, even in the chaos of our world, this is the only way to live, the only way to find true peace and fulfillment in a world full of anxiety and fear, *that He may evermore dwell in us, and we in Him.* Amen.