A STUDY OF MERE CHRISTIANITY Lesson 5 Chapter 2.4 Chapter 2.5 PEACE THRU CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL	

CLASS FOUR CHAPTER SUMMARIES

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Dualism does not provide an answer for what we experience in our conscience about God's moral law.

2.3

Free will has something to say about the state we are in. God's plan of salvation through Jesus is the Christian answer to our questions about God's moral

BOOK TWO: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE CHAPTER FOUR: THE PERFECT PENITENT Outline: • Theory vs. Belief • The Reason for Repentance	
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THEORY VS. BELIEF

The central Christian belief is that Christ's death has somehow put us right with God and given us a fresh start. Theories as to how it did this are another matter. A good many different theories have been held as to how it works; what all Christians are agreed on is that it does work.

What does Lewis mean when he distinguishes between Christian theories and Christian belief?

MEALS AND MATHEMATICS

Α

man can eat his dinner without understanding exactly how food nourishes him. A man can accept what Christ has done without knowing how it works: indeed, he certainly would not know how it works until he has accepted it.

The pictures are there only to help you to understand the formula. They are not really true in the way the formula is; they do not give you the real thing but only something more or less like it. They are only meant to help, and if they do not help you can drop them.

THEORY VS. BELIEF

Lewis prefers the "theory" that Christ's atonement is like cancelling a debt that we owed. How do the following Bible passages inform our thinking on this point?

Colossians 2:13-14 Even when you were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ by forgiving us all our trespasses. 14 God erased the record of our debt brought against us by his legal demands. This record stood against us, but he took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Romans 4:4-5 Now to a person who works, his pay is not counted as a gift but as something owed. 5 But to the person who does not work but believes in the God who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness.

Matthew 18:21-35 (The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant)

Lewis writes, " fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms."	
Why is this distinction so important when it comes to understanding Christ's atonement?	

THE REASON FOR REPENTANCE

Lewis' striking descriptions of repentance:

- "Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent perfectly."
- "If you ask God to take you back without it [repentance], you are really asking Him to let you go back without going back."
- "We love and reason because God loves and reasons and holds our hand while we do it."
- "To what will you look for help if you will not look to that which is stronger than yourself?"

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BOOK TWO: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE CHAPTER FIVE: THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSION Outline: • The Christ-life • How it is received • Why we believe it • A warning attached to it	
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HOW IT IS RECEIVED

I cannot myself see why these things should be the conductors of the new kind of life. But then, if one did not happen to know, I should never have seen any connection between a particular physical pleasure and the appearance of a new human being in the world. We have to take reality as it comes to us: there is no good jabbering about what it ought to be like or what we should have expected it to be like.

WHY WE BELIEVE IT

In other words, I believe it on His authority. Do not be scared by the word authority. Believing things on authority only means believing them because you have been told them by someone you think trustworthy. Ninety-nine per cent of the things you believe are believed on authority.

A man who jibbed at authority in other things as some people do in religion would have to be content to know nothing all his life.

WHY WE BELIEVE IT

A live body is not one that never gets hurt, but one that can to some extent repair itself. In the same way a Christian is not a man who never goes wrong, but a man who is enabled to repent and pick himself up and begin over again after each stumble—because the Christ-life is inside him, repairing him all the time, enabling him to repeat (in some degree) the kind of voluntary death which Christ Himself carried out.

A WARNING ATTACHED TO IT

Do not think I am setting up baptism and belief and the Holy Communion as things that will do instead of your own attempts to copy Christ. Your natural life is derived from your parents; that does not mean it will stay there if you do nothing about it. You can lose it by neglect, or you can drive it away by committing suicide. You have to feed it and look after it: but always remember you are not making it, you are only keeping up a life you got from someone else. In the same way a Christian can lose the Christ-life which has been put into him, and he has to make efforts to keep it.

CLASS FIVE CHAPTER SUMMARIES

2.4

Christ's atonement is the core of Christianity. Through it, we have the basis and ability to repent.

2.5

God provides blessings (Baptism, Word, Lord's Supper) to help us receive and grow in "the Christlife."

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