



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

Attraction, Not Persuasion

So, I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:26-28, ESV)

The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until the full day. (Proverbs 4:18, ESV)

Yesterday I was playing golf in Jackson, Wyoming. I had just finished reading C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*, a book written in response to William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Although I haven't read Blake's book, I learned enough about its central idea to appreciate why Lewis felt compelled to answer it.

As I walked our course, two things kept catching my attention. The lupine were blooming in the natural areas beside the fairways. Every summer they return.

Year after year they quietly reappear, as dependable as the changing seasons. Botanists call them perennials because they keep coming back.

Lewis uses the word differently. He describes one of humanity's oldest temptations as perennial because it, too, keeps returning.

Every generation believes it can somehow have both heaven and hell. We convince ourselves we can follow Christ while still clinging to pride, resentment, control, greed, and the need to be right, or simply the desire to have our own way. The temptation blooms again in every generation.

Blake believed progress came through holding opposites together. Lewis believed Heaven and hell are fundamentally incompatible. Jesus agrees! Throughout the Gospels, He continually calls us to choose, not compromise.

That brought to mind the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16–22. Scripture says, "He went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that his possessions had him. The issue was never his money; it was what possessed his heart.

Then I lifted my eyes beyond the lupine to the Grand Teton Mountains. Lewis describes Heaven as "the mountains where the unchanging sunrise lay."

Standing there, I understood why that image had stayed with me. The flowers return every year. The

mountains simply stand. One reminded me of my recurring temptations. The other reminded me of God's unchanging Kingdom.

Lewis calls the redeemed the Solid People because they have become fully alive after finally surrendering their own way to God's. Perhaps that's what makes them so attractive. They possess a joy, peace, and freedom the ghosts cannot understand.

It made me wonder if that's what Jesus meant when He called us to be fishers of men. Perhaps it isn't merely about becoming better at persuasion but about becoming so surrendered to Christ that our lives naturally reflect Him.

Lewis's most famous sentence may also be his most challenging: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'thy will be done.'"

I realized Lewis wasn't describing only eternity. He was describing a decision I make every morning. Will I say, "Father, thy will be done"? Or will I quietly spend another day asking Him to bless mine?

Perhaps that's the Great Divorce Lewis wanted us to see. It isn't merely the separation of heaven and hell. It's the daily parting of our will from God's—or our joyful surrender to it.

Standing beneath the Tetons, surrounded by perennial lupine, I realized the Christian life isn't boring, restrictive, or joyless. It is the lifelong invitation to exchange what continually pulls us away from God for the One who has been drawing us to Himself all along.

Maybe the greatest witness we can offer our communities isn't a better argument for Christianity, but a life so transformed by Christ that others are drawn to Him because they see something beautiful in us.

Prayer: Lord, may our words, our actions, and our attitudes be so aligned with You that our lives maybe the first Bible someone reads. Amen

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