



C·S· LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

November 2016 – *YOU HAVE WORK IN HAND*

In C.S. Lewis's book *Prince Caspian*, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy are called back to Narnia to put a young prince into his proper position as king. They must journey with the dwarf Trumpkin across a wooded area of Narnia to reach the prince, but become lost. Lucy, the youngest, sees Aslan in the distance showing the way to go, but the others do not see him. After talking it over, the group takes a vote and the majority decide to go the other way. Lucy follows along, "crying bitterly." That night Aslan calls Lucy away by herself and speaks with her:

"Lucy," [Aslan] said... "You have work in hand, and much time has been lost today."

"Yes, wasn't it a shame?" said Lucy. "I saw you all right. They wouldn't believe me. They're all so—"

From somewhere deep inside Aslan's body there came the faintest suggestion of a growl.

"I'm sorry," said Lucy, who understood some of his moods. "I didn't mean to start slanging the others. But it wasn't my fault anyway, was it?"

The Lion looked straight into her eyes.

"Oh, Aslan," said Lucy. "You don't mean it was? How could I—I couldn't have left the others and come up to you alone, how could I? Don't look at me like that... oh well, I suppose I *could*. Yes, and it wouldn't have been alone, I know, not if I was with you. But what would have been the good?"

Aslan said nothing.

"You mean," said Lucy rather faintly, "that it would have turned out all right—somehow? But how? Please, Aslan! Am I not to know?"

"To know what *would* have happened, child?" said Aslan. "No. Nobody is ever told that."

"Oh dear," said Lucy.

"But anyone can find out what *will* happen," said Aslan. "If you go back to the others now, and wake them up; and tell them you have seen me again; and that you must all get up at once and follow me—what will happen? There is only one way of finding out."

"Do you mean that is what you want me to do?" gasped Lucy.

"Yes, little one," said Aslan.

"Will the others see you too?" asked Lucy.

"Certainly not at first," said Aslan. "Later on, it depends."

"But they won't believe me!" said Lucy.

"It doesn't matter," said Aslan.¹



As Lucy talked with Aslan, she realized she hadn't followed his direction as she should have, but learned she still had "work in hand" to do. As we look back over our lives, it is not difficult to identify things we should have done but did not. The General Confession in The Book of Common Prayer includes the phrase "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done." But after we identify those things, and confess them to the Lord, what then? Can you think of things you have left undone for which you still have "work in hand"?

"Bear fruit in keeping with repentance."

MATTHEW 3:8 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Prince Caspian*, New York: HarperTrophy, 1994, pp. 134, 148-150.