

The Lord Jesus said ... "My Sheep

Sadly, the high suicide statistics do not come as a surprise in this day of "enlightenment." If life has no meaning, suicide becomes a very reasonable option. Why endure hardship, suffering, and grief when inevitably, one ceases to be?

But, is it true? Does the presumption make sense? Frantic scientists are eager to "prove" there is no God and mankind is some product of "the primordial ooze." Christians are equally frantic to prove that God does exist and mankind is a conscious act of creation by Him.

The one question that is often missed by Christians is, Why? What is the point of it all? Scientists and poets give their answer. They say there is no point at all. "Now the answer ... is plain," says W. Somerset Maugham, "... there is no reason for life and life has no meaning." Christians must learn to answer this most basic question asked by a most hopeless world.

If mankind was created by an intelligent Creator, the Creator must have had an intelligent reason for creating. This reason would then be nothing short of "the meaning of life."

Purpose Revealed in the Creation Story

The meaning of life can be found in the creation story. God first created the entire universe and the first man, Adam. But, notice that God did not create man and woman at the same time. In fact, after creating Adam, God makes the very interesting statement, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet [suitable companion] for him" (Gen 2:18).

But, He does not create the woman immediately after making this statement. First, he presents the animals to Adam to name, and then after this He makes the woman. Why the delay? Why didn't He simply create both sexes at the same time?

The reason for this delay is revealed in the text. God was doing something far more important than to simply give Adam a "helper" and the animals names. He was revealing the very purpose for the existence of every man, woman, and child who would ever have breath.

hear my voice, and

"And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.'

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; **but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.**

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:18-24).

Notice how the end of verse 20 reads, "But for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him." This reveals God's purpose in presenting Adam with the animals to name. It was so God could demonstrate that the animals were inherently different from Adam, and were therefore not suitable to be his companion.

Imagine. All the universe and Adam have just been created. Everything is completely new and Adam has no experiential knowledge of anything. As with a child, we can have no expectations from Adam as far as what is normal or sensible to him. Nothing yet is.

God then views the scene and states that it is not good that Adam should be alone. But before the woman is created, He brings the animals to Adam.

It is not hard to imagine God reaching into the water and pulling out some small, slimy thing and handing it to Adam. Perhaps Adam looked into its lidless eyes and said the equivalent of, "It shall be called fish." Then maybe Adam looked at the fish expectantly. Will the

they follow me" John 10:27

fish be a suitable companion for him? At this point in human history, the answer was not obvious. Adam had never seen a woman. He just knew that God did not want him to be alone. Certainly Adam would not be long holding the fish before he knew a fish could never be his companion. Very simply, fish was not *like* man.

Then perhaps came an ostrich, a cow, a lion, a bear, a chimpanzee, all the way up to the "highest form of life" below the man, a cro-magnon perhaps (if such animals ever in fact existed). With each animal, no doubt, the evaluation for Adam became just a little bit more difficult. The ostrich is not a fish. It does breathe air though like Adam. It also walks on two legs like Adam - but it isn't *like* him.

With each animal, there are some characteristics that are like the man's but never enough. Scientists assert that the cro-magnon walked nearly erect. They say it looked very much like man. They say it made sounds like man. They say it liked to eat what man does. They say it slept in the same places man did. But, alas, (if it ever existed) it fell short. It was not *like* the man.

In the end, "for Adam, there was not found an help meet for him." The chasm of difference between the animal and the man was too wide to cross. There could never be a close, intimate relationship between the man and an animal with mutually full, satisfying fellowship (1 Cor 2:11). What then was God's solution?

It was not good that the man should be alone, but there was nothing in the creation suitable to be his companion.

The solution: God made a woman.

Woman was not made from the earth as was Adam, but from the very flesh from the side of the man himself. Now God joyfully made one last presentation to Adam. What a sight it must have been for Adam to finally see one *like* himself. This was no fish; this was no chimpanzee; and this was no cro-magnon.

This was another human just like he was. This human spoke like he did, walked like he did, laughed like he did, felt like he did, enjoyed what he did, and thought

(1st "I will" of Bible) "I will make

how he did. She was unique and unlike any animal. She was a human *just like* Adam, and he names her saying, "she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."

Adam now fully understood the criteria for one to be a suitable companion: "an help meet." "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:25). The man was no longer alone.

The Eternal Purpose

This account is important when considering the "meaning of life." Why did God create man to begin with? What is the point of it all?

There is a point to man's existence; there is a reason for it all! "And God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness..' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:26-27). God, in the *manner* of His creation, illustrated with what He, Himself, was faced.

It was not good that man should be alone. But, before mankind was created, could it be that it was not good that God should be alone? Did He too desire a counterpart for fellowship and spiritual delight?

For the man, a fish or a chimpanzee could never be a suitable companion. Man's companion had to come from man. She had to be like him - not just *look* like him. So too with God. The universe had been created with the earth and the stars, God naming everything Himself (Gen 1:5; 1:8; 1:10). Could a planet ever be a companion to God? Ridiculous thought! "All principalities and powers in heavenly places" had been created (Eph. 3:10). Could the "anointed cherub" be God's companion (Ezek 28:14)? No, not even the most beautiful of all angels could be a suitable "help meet" to God.

So, just as God solved the man's problem by creating a woman *out of man*, so also He solved His own "problem." He created a companion *like* Himself for Himself: mankind. This creation was no star or planet, and it was no cherub. This was a being created in the *image* and *likeness* of God. Man then exists for God. God created man to be His "help meet" - His companion. And man was created suitably to fulfill that role.

What a beautiful scene it was as God "walked" with man in the garden, each enjoying the fellowship of the other.

The Purpose Interrupted

Indeed, when man rejected the Creator in the garden through his blatant disobedience, he rejected the very purpose of his existence. He hid in the trees and denied God His companionship. He abandoned all meaning in life. Still today, man in his continued rejection of his Creator is without purpose.

Shakespeare's Macbeth begins to make sense when he says, "Life is a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." When one assumes that there is no intelligence behind this universe and the existence of man, then there can be no purpose; and without purpose, there can ultimately be no significance to anything – no meaning of life at all.

But, this is not so. And despite man's rejection and abandonment of God, God has not abandoned man. It is man that has remained the focus of God throughout human history. The Old Testament Scriptures are filled with illustration after illustration of how God would in the fullness of time righteously solve His "problem." How would He get this companion back? And most importantly, how would He do it with the man *wanting* to come back? For this is true love.

Religious philosophy is often quick to conclude that "God, being a God of love, would never allow an individual to go to hell." But, if in fact He is a God of love, He would never force an individual to have affection for Himself. His love for the individual would not allow Him to force that individual into a relationship. Hell and the lake of fire is the complete absence of God.

Individuals on this earth enjoy the blessings of God every moment of every day, whether they desire His companionship or not. "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mat 5:45). This will not be the case for those individuals in the lake of fire. Torment indeed! Everlasting separation from the God they rejected – and all His blessings!

In this respect, God is like a young man trying to win the affections of a young lady. If such a young man genuinely loves the woman, he will do everything

within his power to convince the woman that he is worthy of her love. If in the end he fails his goal, the young man will not force the issue. It is his love for the young woman that will prevent him from pursuing her after he has been rejected.

Likewise, God seeks to win the affections of man, not force a relationship like some deranged stalker. If, in the case of some individual, He fails to win that heart, then graciously He will withdraw. It is the individual who has rejected God's love.

Religion also teaches men that they are sinners who need to prove themselves worthy of God's love through works and charity and prayer and any number of things. It teaches men that God is like some fickle schoolgirl who likes you one minute and hates you the next.

Religion drives men to attempt to win the heart of God, when in reality, it is God who is seeking to win the heart of man. Man already has the heart of God!

The Eternal Purpose in Christ (Eph. 3:11)

How is it then that God wins hearts? Very much the same way a young man wins the heart of a young woman: he demonstrates his love for her. "For God so loved the world, **that he gave** his only begotten Son..." (John 3:16); "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died** for us" (Rom 5:8); "...Christ also loved the church, and **gave himself** for it" (Eph 5:25); "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and **sent his Son** to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10); etc.

God demonstrated His love to man by sending His dear Son to die in man's place: to be separated from God *instead* of man; to be made sin *for* man. It is the truth of this fact that wins hearts to God. Religion certainly understands the problem of man's sin: how it causes a separation between God and man. Religion, however, rejects the solution for that problem which is a restored relationship with God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

After Adam's transgression, man was no longer a suitable companion. Man was no longer "an help meet"

to God for he rejected God. God was again alone. But, in that great expression of God's love for man, the Lord Jesus took our sin upon Him, becoming sin (2 Cor 5:21).

While hanging upon the cross, He died in man's place. He suffered the separation from God deserved by all (Mat 27:46). And in that "deep sleep" of death "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his *side*, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19:34). It is upon this fact, that He shed His own blood, that the hearts of men are won: He *died* for me.

His side was opened and the "help meet" was created: a bride fully cleansed having *His very life* in the Spirit by His resurrection (three days later). Now there is once again a suitable companion for God: one *like* Him; one being conformed to His *image* (Rom 8:29); one who now chooses to love the Creator, because the Creator has proven that He is worthy to be loved. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

The "scientific" conclusion is wrong. The poet and philosopher's conclusions are wrong because their basic assumption is wrong. There is a God, and there is a purpose – a very real meaning of life. God created man for Himself, to be His companion.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ... "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:25, 30-32).

Now consider the great significance and meaning of life. It is nothing short of eternal, intimate companionship with the great God of creation in and through the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is coming a day called "the marriage of the Lamb." May we now love and serve Him for *His* pleasure.

J. Wilbur

Chronicle #7 of 'The Christian Life' series looks at the principle entering in to God's rest

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The Chronicles of the

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The Meaning of Life

What is the point? Why all of this? Why am I here? For countless ages men have desperately asked these questions. And for ages men have tried to answer them.

Over the centuries, poets and philosophers have come to the overwhelming conclusion that there is no point to life at all. The basic reason for this is that on the whole, they start out by assuming there is no God. Bertrand Russell said, "Man is cosmically unimportant, and ... a (God), if there were one ... would hardly mention us (in a history of the universe)." The "revelation" then of life being meaningless is therefore not surprising. If there were no Creator of this universe, then there could be no purpose for it or the life of any man.

Also, in the scientific community there are a great many almost frantic to prove these poets correct. In their so-called "quest for truth" they make the same base presumption: that there is no God. They then proclaim their results in light of this, making conclusions which of course agree with their original presumption.