WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 120
What God Did to Destroy Our Evil Nature
by Ernest O'Neill

We're talking on this program about the meaning of life. We've got quite far in our discussion, so if you find that some of this is too difficult to understand, I do encourage you to write to me and I'll send you some of the cassettes of the previous broadcasts. It'll help bring you up-to-date to where we are today. The point we are discussing now is the old evil nature that all of us find rises within us from time to time and which makes us lose our temper.

We're discussing how that came about. We've been saying that it came about, because most of us live as if there is no God, as if there's no Maker. Most of us live as if the only way we're going to get any attention in this world is if we force other people to give it to us. So, we've become absolutely dependent on other people's approval or other people's criticism. The result is this leads us into "man fear" and that, in its turn, leads us into envy and jealousy of other people who seem to be getting more attention than we are.That, in turn, leads us into pride, when we do get a little attention.

It's the same with our financial and material security. We are utterly dependent on what we can grab of the material possessions in this world for our security. We've given up believing that there is a Creator who looks after us as he looks after the birds and the lilies of the field.

So, we get irritated and we get greedy when we don't get enough of these possessions. As a result, we have developed within us an old nature that is absolutely opposed to the nature that wants to believe in the Creator of the universe. It's this nature that rises

up in futility and frustration, because it doesn't matter how many possessions we get, it doesn't matter how many people's approval we get, we never seem to have as much as the Creator of the world would have given us Himself.

So, we find ourselves with this old nature rising up in frustration and futility and bad temper and irritability and impatience when it doesn't get from the ordinary, poor human beings around us the attention and the praise and the satisfaction that it really can only get from the infinite, one, Significant Other in the universe.

So, this nature has developed within us and we seem unable to control it. You know that. When you lose your temper, you feel that it's an animal within you. You can't recognize it even as yours. At times you say, that couldn't be me. I couldn't say those things. I couldn't feel like that. But you do. It seems impossible for it to be you, but it is you. It's part of you.

What has been done to deal with that? What we have shared is that the Creator himself, the Maker of the universe, knew that you and I would exercise our free wills as we have.

If you say, "Oh, how did He know that?" He has an infinite mind. He can see further than the greatest mainframe computer that we have or ever will create. He could foresee all the contingent circumstances and contingent decisions that you would make with your free will. He was able to see that we would develop within ourselves as a human race, a nature -- an evil, old, selfish nature -- that would actually prevent us from exercising our free wills to depend upon Him.

We would come into a position where we were no longer free. You must admit that you know that yourself. It seems at times that you're not actually free to do good. You're not free to do what you think you should do. That's why you call out at times, "I can't

do it; I don't understand my own actions, because I don't do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." So, we do. We at times do the very thing we don't want to do.

It's because it's this old nature that has become so strong that our wills are no longer free. The Creator knew that would happen. So, at the beginning of the world -- and you remember that there is no such thing as time -- outside this time-space world, even old Einstein showed us from a human point of view, just from the basis of intellect, time is just a temporary creation for this time-space world; timelessness is real eternity; timelessness is reality; timelessness is one great eternal moment.

And that's really what we are in. It is one great eternal moment. In that one great eternal moment, our Creator conceived of our creation, conceived of us having free wills so that we would be able to love Him, conceived of those free wills being used to depend on others rather than on Him, conceived of the evil, contorted, perverted nature that that would produce in us, conceived of the fact that that nature would prevent us, in turn, from exercising our free wills any longer, ...and, at that same moment, conceived of the destruction of that free will and of that old nature in His Son in a mighty act of destruction before the world was ever made and the recreation of a completely new nature with a completely new and free, free will. That is the one we were born with into this world.

If you say to me, "Well, why is this old nature so rampant and so alive?" The Creator made available to us the two natures. That's why you feel some good things at times. That's why you actually do good actions at times. That's why even the cruelest men, even the Hitlers of the world, even the Stalins of the world, do some good actions.

The Creator allowed some of that good nature to be expressed through us to enable us to know that it was there, available for us, if we wanted it. But He also allowed that old, evil nature to continue within us so that we would see what the results of our free choice would be if we continued to choose in that way. So, it is a miraculous situation that we find ourselves in this present life. We find ourselves not only able to make the choice, and to choose to depend on our Creator, rather than this world of things and circumstances and people, but we are also able to look at what the results of that choice of something other than God would be.

We can see it all around us. You can see it. We can see it in our present world. We can see all around us the results of choosing the world of circumstances and people and things, rather than God for trust. We can see that all around us. So, it is a wonderful expression and a wonderful scenario, a wonderful experiment in which we can see the results of choosing one way and see the results of choosing another...and yet gloriously be free to make the choice once more for ourselves.

If you say to me, "Well, how could that be? How could that evil nature continue?" Very easily! You know that some of the light we see as stars are not stars at all. The stars have died centuries ago. The light is just travelling towards us; it's on its way. The star actually was destroyed centuries ago. And so it is with your old, bad-tempered nature, your old selfish nature. That has been destroyed centuries ago. It is dead and done for. That's why it brings such sadness.

It brings the sadness that reflects the fact that God has condemned it to death. It is dead, but yet the light of it and the effects of it are still travelling in your life in this part of the universe. But actually it itself is dead. The moment you agree with that and the moment you depend on that and the moment

you live according to that, actually it is dead in your life. No more of those shadows continue.

It's a little like the situation in Hiroshima, you remember. You remember the situation when the first people went into the streets there in Japan after the explosion of the bomb. They saw a person standing in the street, apparently completely alive. They went up to them, and touched them and suddenly the thing just disappeared. It was like a cinder. They had been burnt so suddenly and so instanteously, that they had been burnt to a cinder, yet the cinder retained the shape of a person. But the moment you put your finger upon it, the whole thing sank into ashes.

That's what it's like with your old nature. It's already destroyed. It's been destroyed by your Creator in His Son Jesus from before the foundation of the world. The moment you believe that, the moment you act accordingly to it, that moment the whole cinder appearance of that evil nature disappears and is overcome and destroyed. That's why it's possible to live the way we were meant originally to live, because of the mighty act by which God destroyed our old self in His Son Christ.

That's the meaning of the expression of that death in Calvary in 29 A.D. It's the truth that is expressed in the Bible, you remember, in Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self was crucified with Him." That is so with you. You can actually live free from that nature, because of what the Creator has done in His Son Jesus for you. You can begin this very day. Let's talk a little more tomorrow about it.