WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 128
Living Without God
by Ernest O'Neill

You're standing at the bus stop and the bus arrives. You move towards the platform to get on and then there steps in front of you an old lady with a heavy shopping bag. Immediately, of course, you think of your mother and you step right back and not only give her your place in the line, but you help her on. Then, as you're just preparing to step on yourself, a young guy steps right in front of you and pushes on.

Immediately, there rises up within you all the passions and feelings and attitudes that are exactly the opposite of what you felt when you were helping the old lady onto the bus. You find that confusion and contradiction within that most of us know so well in our everyday lives. That is, there is part of us that wants to be kind and generous, but on our own terms, to the people that we choose. And there is another part of us that wants to lose its temper, wipe everybody off the face of the earth, and get our own way, and look after ourselves no matter what it costs anybody else.

Most of us know that. We know that reality of a double nature or of that hypocrisy within us, or of that alter ego, or of that old self, or some of us call it our old nature, or our evil nature, or the bad self, or the part of us that we don't like. What we have been talking about is that double nature that we experience day by day in our own, everyday behavior.

You remember, we've been sharing that the Creator of the universe saw that we could only come to love Him, if we had free wills. But the moment He resolved that we had to have free wills, that same moment He realized that we could choose to use that

free will to live as if He didn't exist. If we did, in fact, do that, He knew we would feel like fiddlers on a roof. We would feel that we were on a space ship that was spinning around through space thousands of miles an hour, with no visible means of support, with five billion other little fleas on the surface of the earth at the same time,...

...that we would feel great, neurotic "angst" about our whole situation and as a result we would strike out against anybody who threatened our security. We would live our lives in a constant fear and insecurity that would produce an antagonism to others or a hostility and a preoccupation with ourselves that would create all kinds of anger and resentment and covetousness and superiority and inferiority.

In that same moment, He conceived that that would be bred into the human race down through the centuries so that when it came to your time and mine, we would find within us a nature that we could not possibly control. That, of course, is exactly what we have experienced. You know that that nature that rises within you against the young guy who stepped in front of you onto the bus, that nature is something you feel is far too strong and powerful for you to control. At times you think it's demonic.

It almost seems as if it isn't a part of yourself, except that you know it is you. That's because it's as old as the hills. In fact, it's older than the hills. It is as old as the human race itself, because the first men and women that lived took that attitude to the Creator of the universe. They conceived of the lie that there was no God and that they had only themselves to depend on.

That produced in them an "angst" that they have passed on, generation after generation, until it has come to you. It is a tendency toward evil, but is a strong tendency and the moment you align your will with that, of course, it gets stronger. It is not

true, in fact, that if you express impatience you lose your impatience. You don't. The impatience gets stronger. It's not true that if you express anger, you get rid of it. The anger gets stronger, because that is part of your own nature.

What we have been saying is that the Creator of the universe allowed that to continue to develop in us as a human race so that we would see the full consequences of that choice. He wanted us to have a real choice. He didn't want us to have no choice. He wanted us to be able to see what would follow if we determined to live as if there was no God, as if there was no Creator, as if there was nobody to depend on except ourselves.

So, He allowed that old nature to develop within us, and that's why we have the chaos that we have in our world today. It's the Creator who is allowing us to see what would happen if we live as if He didn't exist, if we have to protect ourselves from each other and cannot trust Him to do it. And, so, we have today that situation where we see what the consequences of living as if there's no God are.

Of course, what you and I say is, "Yeah, but we've seen that now but how do we get free of this? How do we get free of it? We've done our best to overcome it but we cannot. How do we get free of it?" Well, the truth is that the Creator, Himself, is the only one who can get us free of it, because it's built into our very natures. It's part of you. It's not just that you're angry at times. You are an angry man. It's not just that you're impatient at times. You are an impatient man.

It's not just that you're vicious at times. You are vicious. It's not just that you're lustful at times. You are lust. It has become part of you. You're in the same situation as a vacuum cleaner that has developed a flaw from earliest days. The only thing to do is to

send it back to the factory and have it remade. That is, in fact, what the Creator of the universe did with each one of us.

In timeless eternity, before the world was actually created, he foresaw all that would happen. Just as a great Cray computer can foresee what the need of oil will be in the 21st century, so our infinite Creator was able to see what you would become if you chose to live without Him. He put that into His Son Jesus...that evil self that you have become. He destroyed it in His Son before the foundation of the world.

That's what a certain verse in the old book called the Bible says. It says, "The lamb, Jesus, was slain from before the foundation of the world, and that our old self was crucified with Him." And so, that old nature that seems so real in you is actually only a ghost of what was. It is like a star that ceased to exist centuries ago, but the light continues to come toward our earth and we perceive the light with our radio telescopes. It's like that.

You perceive the dying embers of that old nature. But actually it has been destroyed. That's why even the perception of it brings with it such sadness and despair and guilt, because it has actually been destroyed. The new you, the new self that has been recreated in Jesus, is filled with innocence and cleanness and a deep trust in God and an ability to live free from anger and envy and jealousy and all the passions and lust that stem from the fearful angst that results from believing there is no God.

The real you is a you that has been created new. There are amazing verses in that old book called the Bible that state this clearly. One of them is found, if you ever want to look it up, it is found in a book called 2nd Corinthians. It's in the New Testament. 2nd Corinthians, chapter 4, and it's in verse 14. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all, therefore all have died." That's the fact.

Christ has died and all have died. You died with Him. The Creator of the universe put you into His Son, the representative man, and destroyed you in Him. If you have any doubt that that can take place, you know there's no doubt. If your mother had died, you would not here now exist. You are in a sense in your mother's womb from before the foundation of the world. And it is so in Jesus. You were made by Him.

What the Creator did was put you back into His Son, destroy you and remake you. That is what the gospel is. It's a fact. It's a fact in timeless eternity. Now if you say. "Oh, you mean it's just an idea. If I believe, it will have great dynamic power over me." No, no. It's not just an idea; it's an actual fact. It's a fact that you have been destroyed and have been remade new in Jesus, clean and pure and whole, with an ability to trust God instead of simply to trust yourself. It is a fact.

It's not just a figment of your imagination. It's not just an idea that has legs. It's not just the power of positive thinking. It's a fact of history. That's why Jesus died in history. He actually died in timeless eternity, but he died in history to demonstrate to you and me that it was a fact that our Creator had destroyed us and remade us in Him. So, the moment you set your faith on that -- faith is simply believing that and living in the light of it -- that moment you begin to live in reality.

Now, if you say, "How does that become real in me?" I'd like to share that with you tomorrow, if you'll listen in, at this time on this program.