WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 192
Our Maker is Able to Make You Alive Again
by Ernest O'Neill

What is the meaning of life? That's the general title under which we've begun to discuss a great many topics during this year on this broadcast at this time. And we've reached the point where we're discussing particularly the problem that many of us face in modern life, regarding the motives for which we do things and the reasons behind our actions, and behind the jobs that we do, and the vacations that we have.

We're beginning to realize that many of these activities are dictated, not by a real, free desire inside ourselves, but by necessity; by outward compulsions and constraints that force these things upon us. For instance, many of us are realizing that we don't work because we like work, or because we like the work that we do. Many of us get out to work each morning simply because we need the pay packet. And we've realized that we need the pay packet because of course we need the food to keep us alive and we need the clothing to keep us protected from the elements.

And then we've realized that many of us also work to pay the mortgage because we want a roof over our heads to keep the rain off. And so, we realize that much of our day (because it's usually about eight hours for each of us every day, and about forty hours of the week) is spent trying to meet the needs for physical security in regard to food and clothing and shelter that we have. And then we realize that many of the extras that we buy are connected up with another need that we have -- not this time for security, but for some sense of value.

We want to feel of some value to somebody. We want to feel that we matter to somebody, that somebody cares whether we exist or not. And we've found so often that the only way to get that kind of care or that kind of interest from other people is to be either useful to them in some way, or in some way outstanding, or different, or better. And so, we have realized that often we buy the nice car or the nice house not so much because we really think we should buy it, but because it'll perhaps gain us some prestige, or some value, or some sense of esteem so that we stand out a little from the crowd and at least are noticed by the rest of the people in the world.

And so, we have discovered that many of us live our lives driven by these needs that we have; these needs for security, and needs for significance or self esteem, and needs, actually, for happiness. Because often we find we're driven by a drive that makes us feel, "You should be happy. You should be happy so try to get happy circumstances in the things that happen to you to make you happy." And so we study how to have a nice vacation that supposedly makes us happy or how to get exciting weekends that will make us happy.

But all the time we're becoming driven people. And many of us have realized that we have become like little puppets or marionettes that are pulled by strings that are in the hands of other people. We realize that we do things to please our teachers, to please our professor, to please our parents, to please our boss, to please our wife, to please our children, or to please our peers. And we're always trying to please people, or we're afraid of displeasing people and we do things because of fear of our teachers, fear of our professors, fear of our parents, fear of our wives, fear of our children, or fear of our peers.

And so, we find that we are driven men and women and do not actually act freely from inside. We remember vaguely a time in

our lives when we were children when we used to be actual people; when we had an attitude or a spirit inside us that was free. We would think of ourselves as free spirits and individualists. And we had little ideas of things that we would do in life or things that we would be. And many of us remember those vaguely, those days. But it's a bit like Wordsworth said in his poem, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy. At length a man perceives it die away and fade into the light of common day."

And most of us have come to the point in later years where we doubt if there's anybody inside us at all. We have become the result of our heredity plus our environment and there doesn't seem much we can do about it. And yet, this is utterly untrue and a travesty of what was meant to be because what we have been saying is that a remarkable man came to the earth in the first century and He was different from all the other religious leaders.

He lived what He taught first of all, and then when they died like dogs and were buried like the rest of us, He died, but He came back to life again and showed He had power over life and death and proved to us by the ethical life that He lived and by His remarkable character and power over sickness and over powers of nature that He was really the son of the Maker of our universe. And He explained to us that we had got to this point where we felt we had died inside simply because we had started to live depending on the world of people and things and circumstances instead of depending in our hearts on the one who made us and put us here: His Father, the Maker of the universe.

And He said that's why you've died inside. You're actually dead inside. And that's why you have so much trouble finding yourself. Because there's nothing inside that is real anymore. It's all dead and what you are is just a bundle of reflexes and reactions to people and circumstances and things. He also said that it was possible to discover yourself all over again. And it was possible

for His Father, the Maker of the universe, to make you alive again inside -- the bit of you that had died. He called it your spirit.

The very spirit of a person is the very essence of the person, the person themselves -- before they accumulated all these accretions of peer pressures and social needs; the person themselves inside, as they were when they were first created. This man, Jesus, said you could be reborn again, could start all over again. And that His Father, the Maker of the universe, was able actually to bring that about in your own life. And He said the first thing that was needed was that you would actually believe what He was saying, and that you would examine His life and examine His death and examine His power to come back from the dead and see that He was really the son of the Maker of the universe.

And that's what He said. It's very important for you to come alive inside. It's very important that you believe that what I say is true; that it's reality. And obviously, that's the case. I mean, if this is going to become true in your life or become real in you, then there's no possibility of it unless you, yourself believe it. Obviously, if you think this is just a lot of religious stuff you'll just turn it off immediately and nothing more will happen. The first step is to believe that these things are true. So I do ask you to examine them and analyze them, and think about them.

And please don't just in a blind kind of non-intellectual, obscurantist way lay the stuff aside as stupid. Please do examine it and be intellectual about it. Don't be a miserable fundamentalist in the sense that you just believe what you believe and you won't examine anything new at all. Be real about it and examine the thing and see if it's true and then believe it and begin to listen to Him. And of course, the first thing you'll hear Him saying is that the first step towards this is to stop depending on the world and to start depending on your God.

That's the first step towards the Maker of the universe beginning to make you come alive inside, so that you can at last find out who you are and begin to live the magnificent, original, creative life that you were intended to and that you once dreamed of.