WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 226
A New Life Made Possible
by Ernest O'Neill

What is the meaning of life? That's the question we've been talking about for 226 broadcasts now from the beginning of the year. We've been discussing that vital question for about ten minutes every day, six days a week. And those of you who have been listening during that time know that we have concluded the same as Einstein, one of the greatest geniuses of all time, and certainly the greatest mathematician of our time. We've concluded that there has to be an intelligent mind somewhere behind the universe. We may not be as bright or as clever as Einstein but we do understand why he said what he said.

And you remember he said that, "My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe forms my idea of God." And however cynical and however sophisticated or intellectual we regard ourselves, we certainly are clever enough to see that what Einstein said is utterly reasonable.
That there must be a superior reasoning power, who has revealed himself in the incomprehensible universe of which we are able to perceive a little of the design.

Now many of us of course have got that far in our thinking and we discussed that about 200 or so broadcasts ago. And we came to the conclusion that there has to be some supreme being behind the universe. Then many of us can go into the old myths and the old vague superstitions that we were brought up with.

We can believe in this vague spirit or that spirit or the spirit at the bottom of the stream, at the end of our village street.

Or we can believe in some scientific theory of evolution which of course may well explain how the universe developed but does not explain at all nor purport to explain how it was created or how it originated. But we may lose ourselves in that kind of vague, scientific theory or we may wander in the myths that surround Zoroaster or surround the Hindu spirits or deities or the great "om" that lies behind the spirit of the universe. And we may lose ourselves in some of the superstitions that we were brought up with of old. The Buddhists' theories, where Buddha himself did not really believe in God.

But we lose ourselves in the psychological theories of deliverance from self and imagine that somehow they're connected with the Creator behind the universe. Or we may search for a scientific piece of evidence that reinforces the suspicion we have that there is a supreme being behind the universe. And many of us of course have gone to history to find that scientific evidence. And we have discovered it in some of the things that were written at the beginning of our era in the first century A.D.

This is a piece of history that you can find in a collection of books called "Ta Biblia" in Greek. And they mean "the books" and here is what this man wrote who lived in the first third of the first century A.D.; he lived about 29 A.D. really. He wrote,"For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were eye witnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory - ‘This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased' -- we heard this voice born from heaven. For we were with him on the holy mountain."

And a man called Peter actually wrote that. You find it in the second chapter of his book and the first chapter and verses 16 through 18. And there of course he said that there lived a man in the first century who was entirely different from Zoroaster, even from Confucius, even from Buddha because they were human beings like us. But this man was actually the Son of God. And he said, of course I know this because I observed his life. He lived a perfect life and he was destroyed in an ordinary crucifixion but got up from being dead and lived again. And so I have seen this man.

Many of us of course wonder, well was he the only one that saw him? No, not at all. There are hundreds of references in the writings of those days that confirm that Peter and John, Paul and Luke and the other writers who were eyewitnesses of this man's life actually lived and were well known figures at that time. In his public defense before King Agrippa, one man Paul, says: "The king knows about these things." That is, about the death of this man Jesus and His resurrection from the dead. "For this was not done in a corner." And the fact is that this man was known to be alive after He had been crucified and was observed by thousands and thousands of people.

In his letter to Corinthians, Paul writes this way, he says, Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive. And all the thousands of references to Paul in the letters of those days confirm that both the eye witnesses and the things they wrote about are true. And so here we have a body of scientific evidence that is "touch and see" evidence. That this man actually did destroy death and lived and talked in the way that we would believe the Son of the Maker of the world would live and talk.

And so what we have been doing is, studying this man's life. And studying what He described as the explanation of life and the meaning of life. And then you remember, we began to talk about the meaning of his death. And of course that's where we looked at some of the problems that we ourselves have. Because our problem, most of us, is not that we don't believe there's a God. It's not that we don't see that there has to be an intelligent being somewhere behind the universe. It's that we can't live the way we should if He exists. That's it.

We find ourselves unable to live the way we should live if He exists. For instance, if He is our loving Father, as Jesus actually said He was -- and of course you can believe that when you see all the beautiful things He has given us. Just think of the sky today and the flowers. Just think of your own breath and your heartbeat. Just think of the chart of the elements and the magnificent sight of the stars at night in the sky. Of course it's very reasonable to believe that He is our loving Father and that He loves us a great deal and has given us many beautiful things to show that love.

The fact is, that even if He is, we find we don't live as if He is. We live as if He's some terrible tyrant. Or as if He doesn't exist at all. Indeed, many of us have heard that He exists and have tried to live in the light of that. That is, we've said to ourselves, listen -- if God really does live, if He really does exist, if He really is my Father -- then what am I worrying about? Why do I get all worried when I lose my job? Or when I don't think I have enough food for the next day -- why do I get so worried? If God is the kind of loving Father that Jesus said He is, then I should relax. I should trust Him. I should be able to sleep at night with peace and rest in my heat. But I can't.

We find the same thing when we get into disagreement with other people. Or we find somebody is trying to destroy us --

financially, economically. Sometimes they're just trying to destroy us in our reputation that we have with our friends. And we know that if God is in charge of our life, then we don't need to defend it. He'll take care of us. But we don't live like that. We get worried, anxious, we get resentful. We talk about the other people that are talking us down. We try to destroy those who are trying to destroy us. We lose our temper. We fight. We get irritable.

We find it impossible to live the way we should if God is our loving Father. That's why it is obvious to all of us that we need some kind of change to take place in our life. But we can't produce that change. Jesus said, His Father knew we would find ourselves in that position and He made us all over again. That's what He said. He said, when I died, that was only the historical expression in 29 A.D., in Galilee, of a death that I died from before the foundation of the world.

When my Father put all of you into Me, destroyed you there and remade you and -- believe it or not, He remade you new, and whole and able to trust Him and able to live the way it is reasonable to live, if He exists. And He said, all you have to do to live that way is to believe that My Father has destroyed you in me and has remade you in me. And if any man is in Christ Jesus He is a new creation. Old things are passed away and the new has come. That's what this man Jesus said. And if you believe that, it's a miracle. But you are able to live, trusting God as your loving Father.