

Life's Tough Questions, Part One

Why Am I Here?
Various Scriptures
May 17, 2009

Today I begin a new series called, "Life's Toughest Questions." I propose to ask – and answer – questions each of us have asked ourselves in the past, or will likely ask ourselves in the future. It is my hope these sermons will cause you to broaden your personal world view, and focus that view upon spiritual things.

The first question is the most basic question of all: "Why am I here?". Often, decisions we make are made because of that question. We are unaware of the influence of the quest to find the reason for our personal existence. "What am I good for? What purpose am I serving?" It is the basic question of why I exist.

Scripture gives two different philosophies for my reason for living:

A. ! Corinthians 10: 7 – Life is simply existence: serve self. *"And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'the people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play,'"* If this philosophy prevails, the thought is to "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you may die (Luke 12: 19)." But I remind you, Jesus said the man who said that was a fool!

B. Deuteronomy 10: 12 – Brings meaning to life: Serve God. *"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul..."* This philosophy elevates the individual life above the menial, earthbound, finite view of this world, and brings each of us to a higher vista: into a relationship with the Creator.

1. If serving God is my main reason for living, what does God require of me?

A. Good works (Ephesians 2: 10). There is a potential trap in the application of this truth in my life. If I make the mistake of believing my good works qualify me for salvation (whether it be baptism, charitable acts, or religious activities) I am missing the point of the Good News of God's grace.

B. Good works are not a means to an end (salvation) but a context to express new life in Christ. Within the context of a new life in Christ, I now understand how to love my neighbor and my enemy. I now can relate to others as a child of the Heavenly Father, not as a competitor or adversary. You see, salvation is the end of one's life – the front end! It is the beginning of a new life, a life from above.

C. What are the good works you are doing personally? If you cannot answer that question, you are not fulfilling the purpose God for which God placed you here; and I dare say you are not content with where your life has gone till now.

D. At this point you would respond two ways:

1. I don't care; or...
2. I am excited about God's purpose for me!

2. Serving God requires me to aim at something (Matthew 6: 32 – 33).

A. If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.

Jesus said the pagan are running in different directions after a multitude of desires. The only problem is when they get what they have been intrigued by, it is not as fulfilling as expected. So they move on to the next possible fad. This is like shooting with a shotgun; eventually you'll probably hit something, but in the meantime you're all over the place. Paul asks rhetorically, "If I fought the beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die (1 Corinthians 15: 32).'"

B. When a Christian aims at something, the target will be a lot smaller, but hitting it is more fulfilling. A Christian can tell if he has found the right meaning to life by how he looks at tomorrow. How do I look at the future? By trusting God: "for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future (Jeremiah 29: 11)."

C. The man who has found the meaning of life looks forward to tomorrow and the next day.

1. The one who has not found the reason for life can only seize the moment.

3. Serving God means my decisions ought to be clearly defined (James 1: 8): "*He is a double minded man, unstable in all he does.*" We have already heard God's Word say the way of the world had many roads to get to its destination; that will invariably create instability.

A. Many conflicting decisions create instability. One night one choice seems so compelling, but in the light of the next day it loses its appeal.

1. Or I may feel strongly about a choice I'm facing, only to change my mind later. Going back and forth between choices wears down our resolve and erodes our character.

B. the way of God has only one road, and that makes decision making easier: "How does this decision fit God's plan that I serve Him?"

4. Serving God makes it easier to pay attention to how I live my life (Ephesians 4: 1): "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called.*"

A. If I know my purpose – to serve God in my life – then I can pay closer attention to how I live my life. My will is held prisoner by the desire to serve my God. Every thought, every passing lustful impulse, every sudden temptation should be subjected to the same standard: "Does this advance my goal of serving God and His kingdom?"

B. Remember, we are answerable to God for the casual, unthinking decisions we make in our lives that take us away from our goal of serving God.

The highest purpose for anyone's life is to serve God; to make a mark on this world that points individuals to God's grace, mercy, and love. Each of us have been uniquely shaped, given unique gifts, and launched on life's journey to use those gifts and talents to touch others in unique ways. That's why you are here!

Let's pray!