

Reading Ephesians 2:1-10

Sermon

What On Earth Am I Here For?

What on Earth am I here for? Are we just a bunch of atoms put together by chance, or is there a reason for us to be here. Science tries to tell us that life is an accident - the Bible has it all wrong. But is there a conflict between Science and Christianity? The Bible begins

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1 NIV)

Whereas someone like Stephen Hawkins in his book *A Brief History of Time* puts forward the Big Bang as the start of the world, the universe and everything. But even he says, ‘What caused, what was there before the Big Bang? Was it God?’

So it need not be a conflict between Christianity and Science, and so this morning we are looking at three questions that spring from the main question ‘What On Earth Am I Here For?’

The first question is

Why Am I Here? – The Question of Existence. This question has been around for ages. In Jeremiah 20:14 we read

“Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed! Cursed be the man who brought my father the news, who made him very glad, saying, "A child is born to you—a son!" May that man be like the towns the LORD overthrew without pity. May he hear wailing in the morning, a battle cry at noon. For he did not kill me in the womb, with my mother as my grave, her womb enlarged for ever. Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?” (Jeremiah 20:14-18 NIV)

As you can tell Jeremiah was not very happy and if we take God out of the equation, then we don’t really have very many alternatives. We really don’t have much hope.

Mystical Approach

You can try the Mystical approach – the mystical approach says “look within and find your purpose within.” You could do this with Pyramid Therapy. This says that

Pyramid therapy utilises the energised space within a four-sided pyramid along with a specific combination of crystals and magnets to promote healing.

Or if you want to you could go down the route of the Vibrational Pyramid Therapy which apparently helps to

Balance your mind, body and spirit, stimulate chi, clear the chakras and cleanse your aura of environmental pollutants.

Apparently a chakra is thought to be

a nexus of metaphysical and/or biophysical energy residing in the human body and there are said to be seven in our bodies

If you can't afford a pyramid that you sit in, or you want to have this help whilst doing other things or when on the move, you can buy the Solar Cross Solar Meditation Head Pyramid for a mere \$270.00 or if you were feeling flush what about the Solar Crystal Ascension Head Pyramid for a snip of a price at \$403.20.

I'm sure that if these type of things work for people i.e. they do de-stress them because they are made to sit still for half an hour a day and it is this helps to de-stress them, but if they really worked, all of us would know our purpose, but we don't. The answer is not within us and it cannot be obtained through some Mystical purpose.

Survivalist Approach

For some the answer as to 'Why Am I Alive?' is the survivalist Approach. This says, "The purpose of life is just to stay alive." In other words, live as long as you can. This has led to the Science of cryogenics – the freezing of people when they are dead, as quickly as possible after death, so that when the ailment they died of can be cured, they can be revived, cured and carry on living. We are in the realm of Science Fiction, although if you have no money, no notion of where the next meal is coming from and you have not had the last meal, then the Survivalist Approach may be all you can think about.

Naturalist Approach

The Naturalist Approach says, "The purpose of life is just to perpetuate itself." In other words, you're just here for biological reasons. So the only reason we're here is to reproduce, so we might just as well 'chill out and reproduce. Keep the species alive' Doesn't that just motivate you to want to jump out of bed in the morning? It may motivate you to jump in to bed, I don't know.

The Hedonist Approach

The Hedonist writes, "The purpose of life is pleasure – have fun, party-hardy." Hedonism is big, big business, but does it really bring a purpose to life, to live from the next thrill moment to the next?

The Materialist Approach

Then we have the Materialist Approach. This is where we buy goods, we acquire stuff. But it does not matter how much stuff we acquire, we amass we are still going to die!

So 'Why AM I Alive?' What is my Existence for? God says in Proverbs 16:4

“The LORD works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster.” (Proverbs 16:4 NIV)

God has a plan for everything and therefore everyone, we are not here by chance, by accident. And what's more we are special. How do we know that? Ephesians 1:4

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—” (Ephesians 1:4-5 NIV)

God has such a purpose that he chose us, so long ago. God chose us because he loves us – that is why we are alive. We are created to be loved by God – Hallelujah.

The second question is

Does My Life Matter? - Question Of Significance.

Some say we can live life on three levels.

Survival level

The first and lowest level. The Survival level is where many people live. They're just in survival mode. They are just barely getting by. They're just existing. They're not living. They are controlled by their circumstances. They put in their time and live for the weekend. They're just in survival mode.

Success level

A step up from that, a better way to live, rather than the Survival level is the Success level. Honestly, this is where most of us are. By the world's standards, we've got it made. We've got a comfortable living, compared to the rest of the world; we're wealthy, compared to many parts of the world. We have possessions, we have freedom, we have good health and we may have prestige and we may be quite successful. But many still are not satisfied. The reason is, it takes more than success and it takes more than status to satisfy.

Significance level

You need to go to the third level of living, which is called the Significance level. Not a Survival, not a Success but step up to the level of Significance. How do you live at the Significance level? Well, you get there through three things:

- You know the meaning of life - that gives Significance.
- You know how much you matter to God - that gives you Significance.

But how much do we matter, do I matter to God

“This is what the LORD says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.” (Isaiah 44:2 NIV)

God formed you in the womb and he helps you now. That is how much you matter to God. But there is more

“...All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.” (Psalms 139:16 NIV)

Everyday of my existence has been ordained, has been recorded by God. Every breath I take God already knows about. Every sermon I write, God already knows what is in it. Because I matter to God that much. I matter to God so much that he wants me for eternity. 2 Corinthians 5:1 says

“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.”
(2 Corinthians 5:1 NIV)

So the question of existence – why am I alive? That is answered because we know that God chose us because he loves us – that is why we are alive. We are created to be loved by God. In the question of Significance – does my life matter? God says that you do matter. You matter so much to God that he intends on keeping you alive for the rest of eternity.

So then comes the third question –. And that is this –?

What Is My Purpose? - The Question Of Intention

What on earth am I here for? In Psalm 89:47 David asked the question of God, to God,

“Remember how fleeting is my life. For what futility you have created all men!”
(Psalms 89:47 NIV)

or as another translation puts it

“Remember how short my life is, how empty and futile this human existence!”

(Psalms 89:47 NLT)

“Why did you create us? For nothing? One of the greatest, atheist philosophers of the last century, Bertrand Russell is reputed to have said,

“Unless you assume the existence of God, the question of life’s meaning and purpose is irrelevant.”

You see, if there is no God, if you’re just a freak chance of nature.....then you’re life doesn’t matter. If there is a God, if God made you for a reason, then he made you for a purpose. So how do we know his purpose for us? The only way you’re going to know your purpose is first looking to Him.

So where do we begin? Proverbs 1:7

“Fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline.” (Proverbs 1:7 NLT)

We have to get to know God. How do we do that? A beginning is to believe that God created me for a purpose – his purpose. Paul in writing to the church of God at Ephesus says

“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,”
(Ephesians 1:11 NIV)

And then a little later he writes

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:8-10 NIV)

We are saved by grace because God loves us, because we matter to God, but God does not then send us out aimlessly, he sends us out to with a purpose, to do good works.

But we need to move on from believing that God created me for a purpose – his purpose to finding out what that purpose or purposes is. This is where reading the Bible, both on one’s own and with others is important. This book is where we find the answers, but at times we need help and so being with others can help us. Do come on Thursdays and learn together with others and also have fellowship together. There is still time to sign up for the meal on Thursday, but even if you cannot eat, do come at 8.00pm to study God’s word.

“...because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no-one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:1-10 NIV)

That is our watchword this week. God loves us, we matter to God and God has a purpose for us. As we progress we will find out what that is.