**DOES LIFE HAVE A PURPOSE?**

Introduction:

How do you think most people would answer that question?

I. We are people who are wired for purpose.

A. When you are trying to pick out a movie to watch, you may watch the trailer to answer the question, “What is the movie about?”

1. If you watched the trailer and you couldn’t understand what the movie is about, are you still going to watch it?

2. Probably not. But why don’t you want to watch a movie that you don’t know what it is about? You want to watch a compelling narrative.

B. Seinfeld episode

1. George and Jerry decide to pitch an idea about a new TV sitcom that they say is “a show about nothing.”

2. How do you think the TV executives felt about that?

3. They didn’t buy it. They said nobody would watch it. We are designed for meaning.

C. Meet me downtown.

1. How about if I said to you that I wanted you to meet me tomorrow at 11am downtown TC on the corner of Front and Cass.

2. What question immediately comes to mind?

3. Why do you want to meet? What is the purpose for our meeting? If there is purpose to be found in this world, what does Christian faith say it is?

D. I want to suggest to you that the reason we feel the way we do in each situation is because we are wired for purpose.

1. All of us want to feel like we are making a difference.

2. All of us want to determine if it is worth investing our time into something because of our understanding of its purpose.

II. How do we go about finding purpose?

A. How do you define purpose? It depends.

B. It depends on what sort of universe we think we occupy.

C. Some say that we live in an accidental universe. Others say we live in an intentional universe.

D. The accidental universe

1. This universe is meaningless.

2. There is no purpose. There is no story.

3. It is a cosmos being driven by random processes with no intention behind it; no direction to it.

4. In this universe, you are a speck on an insignificant planet in an insignificant galaxy, and you go totally unnoticed.

5. And what you do in your life will make no difference and will ultimately be forgotten.

6. Our species and planet are merely a result of accidents. This describes the evolutionary process.

7. In this universe, there is no god.

E. The intentional universe

1. In this universe, we are still a speck on a planet in a galaxy, but in this universe, there is purpose, there is intention, there is meaning.

2. In this universe, there is a Creator who created everything for a reason.

3. As a result, our lives on this planet are always being observed, and nothing ever goes unnoticed.

4. Everything in this universe is headed to a glorious end.

5. There is a direction and a story to this cosmos.

F. So if you were going to watch a movie about one of these two universes, which would you rather watch? Probably the one with a story.

G. The interesting thing is that often most of us act like we live in an accidental universe. “Christian Atheist”

1. The reason I say that is because the dominant narrative of our culture tells us that the way you derive purpose is through the choices of the individual.

2. You need to look inside yourself to try to derive meaning and purpose for you.

3. Our culture says, “You be you,” which is ridiculous especially if you are a selfish bully.

4. The idea is that purpose comes from you individually constructing purpose for yourself – whatever you want is fine.

H. This kind of construction of meaning and purpose only makes sense if we live in an accidental universe – if we live in a universe with no God and Creator.

I. If there is no meaning in the universe, then the only option we have is to look inside ourselves to construct meaning and purpose.

J. Unfortunately, even in Christian circles, we act this way. We say that if God wants to come alongside of me and help me to accomplish my goals & dreams, then that is great, but ultimately, it is my call.

K. Our world makes us the center of the universe. Everything is about me and what I want, and others are here to serve me. No one has the right to tell me what I should or should not do.

L. A secular worldview says:

1. The self is the authority.

2. The way to make choices is determined by my feelings. You’ve got to look within.

3. There is no such thing as ultimate right and wrong.

3. The goal of life is for me to be happy.

M. But the Bible says we live in an intentional universe created by God with a story, a narrative. Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning, God created…”

N. That changes everything. That means that we don’t look within to try to determine meaning & purpose on our own. It means that we look to God to understand the purpose for which He created. It means we look to God to understand the grand narrative of the universe to understand where we fit into God’s story. It means that this life isn’t all about us but about God.

O. CS Lewis “If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy

(in this case the desire to make a difference; to have a purpose), the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.”

P. The question could be asked, “Which universe do you act like you occupy?”

1. Is life all about you and what you want?

2. Or is life all about God and finding out what He wants?

3. Do you live as if you can do whatever you want, and you try to construct your own purpose & meaning? Or do you live as if God is in charge of the universe?

III. If this universe does have purpose and intention, then what is it?

A. The Christian worldview says:

1. That God is the authority.

2. The way to make choices is determined by what God says in His Word.

3. The goal of life is for me to glorify God.

B. The narrative of God’s story is:

1. Creation of the world by God.

2. Fall of man.

3. Redemption of man through Christ.

4. The consummation of all things to God.

Read Genesis 1:26-28.

C. So why did God create man?

1. In many ancient religious narratives, the gods needed help, and so they created man to grow food for them or build things for them.

2. Mankind were just slaves for the gods, and they were expendable.

3. Reasons God didn’t create man:

a. It wasn’t so we could grow food for God. (Ps 50:12)

b. It wasn’t because He needed man to build a dwelling for God. His dwelling is the universe. (Isa 66:1-2)

c. God didn’t create us because He needed us to be His slaves.

d. God is the all-powerful God of the universe in need of nothing. (Isa 40:28) If God needed our help, He wouldn’t be a God worthy of our worship.

4. According to Genesis 1, God created us to represent Him. “Made in the image of God.”

a. All humans were made in the image of God.

b. That is why all of life is valued and matters.

c. That is why we have fought against slavery, racism, injustice, poverty.

5. We were created to have dominion over the earth.

a. Not to take advantage of the earth and pilfer its resources.

b. We are to grow, build, invent, paint, work, etc. as a way to represent God.

c. We do these things for the flourishing of others.

d. We do these things to reflect God and bring Him glory.

6. It is like the picture of a mirror. We don’t glory in the mirror. The job of a mirror is just to reflect the image in front of it. And so our purpose is to reflect the image of God in all we do, not so we are seen but so God is seen.

7. We are all called to represent God no matter where we go, no matter what our occupation. We are all called to reflect the character of God to all people that we interact with.

8. This is not just for people in full-time ministry but for every Christian.

9. What might it look like for you to reflect God at school, at church, at home?

Conclusion:

So what is the purpose of your life?

As Christians made in the image of God, we were called to use our gifts, talents, abilities, tongues, bodies, time, creativity, work to reflect God to a world that so desperately needs to see God and come to know God.

The reality is that we are broken mirrors at best, and yet God has created us, redeemed us and is growing us to reflect Him to the world.

Is that how you are living your life or are you trying to create meaning and purpose apart from Christ? If you are you are living like this is an accidental world and trying to create meaning and purpose on your own you will end up feeling empty.

Small group questions

-How have you gone about to determine your purpose?

-Are you living like this is an accidental universe making all of life about you with your greatest goal your happiness?

-Or are you living like this is an intentional universe created by God making all of life about Him?

-If you are living to glorify God, how are you reflecting God in your everyday life?

What does it mean to glorify God with your life? 1 Cor. 10:31

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