

## Devotion: May 26, 2020

*"For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain"---- Philippians: 1:21).*

*We can be truly ourselves and free if God lives in us. This is what it means to be God's creature - not to be a self-made, self-standing individual over against God, but to exist from God and through God. We are creatures precisely in that we live in God and God lives in us. We are sinful creatures when we fail to recognize this and live as if we were self-made, self-standing individuals. Being a new creature, redeemed from sin, is in this regard similar to being a creature as God originally created us to be. It's to live in Christ and to have Christ live in us. United with Christ, we live in God, and God lives in us.*  
--Miroslav Volf

Do you think much about what makes your life worth living? Hopefully, not many of you. Some of us are just not used to such philosophical questions. We are happy to just take life as it comes.

Others are so busy with family, work and other activities that those things supply more meaning than they know what to do with! In fact, the question of the meaning of life seldom comes up.

But there are also some people for whom the matter of what makes life worth living is a reoccurring nightmare . And it's not a question you can SIRI, or Google, like we do with all the other questions we have. These people agree with Mark Twain when he said, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born, and the day you find out why." And some people, unfortunately, search their lives in vain to find their why.

Dr. Alice Flaherty, a leading neurologist at Massachusetts General Hospital, has suggested that "the ability to suppress thinking about questions like the meaning of life could -- arguably -- be part of the definition of mental health." In other words, to dwell so long on one matter in life makes it impossible for you to have any normal enjoyment of life, and, that is, perhaps a state of mental illness.

Paul's life after meeting Christ got a lot harder (if you have any doubt about that, see 2 Corinthians 11:24-33), but the meaning he found in serving Christ enabled him to face those troubles.

And we need to hear that, too. When we are in dark alleys or lonely valleys where we cannot see the meaning of our life, when the darkness around us is so thick that we cannot perceive a reason to keep struggling, we need to grab onto this: God has a meaning for our lives. We need to trust that. Whether we can see the way ahead or not, it is there. We just need to do our best.

And remember what Jesus said about the anxieties of life: "*But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things [what you need for life] will be given to you as well*" (Matthew 6:33).

We need to seek our place in God's kingdom. We need to go on loving God, following Jesus and loving our neighbor, and, in so doing, we will be living a meaningful life even though we may not be feeling it.

Some people we will find joy in living and, sometimes, others will not, but there is meaning in every life, and it lies in God, our Creator, and in his Son, Jesus.

We can hold onto that even when we are in deep emotional pain. Every life -- *every* life -- has meaning, and it lies with God. We should trust God, and go on living each precious moment we are given.

*Lord, you give what we need as we need it. Your grace is not something we can make happen, and like the manna in the dessert, it's available on time, for us, every single day.*

*Sometimes we forget to give grace to ourselves. We struggle to receive the grace you give us. You give us time and space to feel the hard things and rest when needed. Help us to recognize when we need to receive your grace.*

*In all the challenges we face, your grace never departs. May we know this more fully. Amen*