

February 07, 2021
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Ps 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23
Mk 1:29-39

THE MEANING OF LIFE!

Some men are sitting around discussing the meaning of life. One turns and asks the others, "**If tomorrow all your loved ones found themselves at a funeral, gathered around your casket, what would you want to hear them say?**" One starts off by saying, "**I hope they would say I was a good father and husband.**" The next one says, "**I want them to say I was not only successful, but a kind and generous man too.**" "**I want them to say,**" says the last man, "**Hey look, he is moving!**"

Kidding aside, **what is the meaning of life for you?**

Many decades ago (1979), there was a study made/done among teenagers in Sweden. The respondents were asked to respond to the statement, "**I think the following could give my life more meaning...**"

The result of the survey showed that 87% thought that life's meaning could be found in a good job; 85% thought it could be found in a marriage partner; and 84% thought it could be found in sports and recreation. Only 15% said that reading the Bible and spending time in prayer could help, and another 15% indicated that they thought alcohol could help.

What gives meaning to your life? Is it your job? Is it your educational attainment? Is it your time spent in playing sports and other recreations? Is it the material wealth you have accumulated? What about your personal relationship with Jesus? Does your relationship with him give more meaning to your life during this trying time?

As Catholic Christians, we know that the world will not give us the true beauty and meaning of life. What the world offers us are things that are fleeting/passing. Our life will only become meaningful and beautiful when it is connected all the time to the **Source and Giver of Life, Jesus Christ**. Apart from Jesus, our life will be nothing. The famous maxim says: **Without Christ, I am nothing.**

Sufferings and difficulties in life can push us to question the meaning of life. At times, it can lead us to thinking that life has no meaning at all. Job, in our 1st reading, is a good example of a person who experienced sufferings and difficulties in life and yet did not succumb/yield to meaninglessness. He lost his wealth, family, and health and yes, he questioned God. He wanted God to enlighten him why he was going through such a rough time in life. God answered him. The answers of God enlightened Job. Thus, Job repented. He realized that those who choose to give themselves to God find life has meaning.

Like Job, St. Paul chose to give his life to Jesus Christ. St. Paul found more meaning in life when he left his 'old self' and embraced his 'new life' in Jesus Christ. He discovered the beauty and meaning of life when he gave up his rights for the sake of the Kingdom. It was in giving it up that he uncovered true freedom. It became clear for St. Paul that his life's treasure is Jesus Christ. Thus, in doing ministry, he was not looking for any recompense because Jesus Christ was more than enough treasure for him.

In our gospel proclaimed the **Source and Giver of Life, Jesus Christ**, was busy doing his ministry of preaching, healing, and teaching. He was serving his people. He was guiding them to the right path. He was making them whole again. His example communicates a message that a meaningful life knows how 'to serve and not to be served.'

Our readings this weekend give us **three (3) points** to have a meaningful life.

1. Our life will have meaning when it is **connected** to the **Source and Giver of Life, Jesus Christ**. A disconnected life from Jesus Christ will easily give in to meaninglessness.

Let me give you an example of a person who disconnected himself to Christ Jesus. **Bertrand Russell** [*May 18, 1872 - Feb 02, 1970 (age 97)*], a philosopher and political activist from the United Kingdom, was born into a Christian home and taught to believe in God, but he rejected his training and became an outspoken atheist. His daughter, Katherine Tait, said of him, "**Somewhere at the bottom of his heart, in the depths of his soul, there was an empty space that once had been filled by God, and he never found anything else to put in it.**"

2. Our life will have meaning when **let go** of our 'old self' and **embrace** our 'new life' in Jesus Christ. A 'new life' in Jesus Christ will help the person see, not the mess, but the message in the midst of sufferings. And that's what happened to Job and St. Paul.
3. Our life will have meaning when we use it to **serve with humility** the kingdom of God. A life offered to serve Jesus Christ is priceless. Try it! Look at St. Francis of Assisi as an example.

Connecting to Christ. Embracing Christ. Serving Christ. These are the simple ways that will make our life meaningful and beautiful.

As we continue our celebration, let us pray for the grace to live meaningful lives by **staying connected to Christ; embracing the values of Christ; and humbly serving Christ thru his people.**

God bless us all!