



Aberystwyth



Purpose.

There are times when I have been walking, when I have got lost and it is difficult to get back onto the right path. That sense of panic that fills you, can be most disturbing and you get a feeling of giving up and ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?" It is the same with life, however, in life the consequences can be disastrous. If I'm lost when I'm walking, then I can just get to the nearest bus stop or train station to get home, and live to try again another day. In life it is not so easy. People's lives have been destroyed because a person simply chose the wrong path. Before I became a Christian, I was faced with a choice, and it was simply a case of life and death. A choice between carrying on living, or end it by suicide. When I think back over what I have achieved since becoming a Christian, it is hard to believe that I experienced those dark days. At seventeen I made a choice to go to church, it took a while before I plucked up the courage to go. I was lucky in a way, because my parents were Christians and they took me and my brothers to church. Well, when you're young you just do what your parents tell you, but there came a time when my parents left the decision up to us. For a while I didn't go to church, until disaster hit. My life hit rock bottom. It wasn't one thing, it was many things that seemed to bear down on me, and I couldn't make sense of it all. "What was the point of life?" It is a most profound question, seeing as we are going to die anyway, why go on living now? When you're at rock bottom this question is like a hammer blow. Many Christians can tell you a similar story. In fact, many have come to the faith because of the death of a loved one or through sickness or like me, the prospect of suicide. It is at these times that the question of existence comes to the fore. That question hit me when I was seventeen, and thank God I'm here now to tell you that I didn't choose the other way. I'm not saying that religion is a crutch to lean on because of our fear of death, as some have suggested, that's not what I'm saying at all, but that it is at the close proximity of death that the question of existence raises it's head, and we come to realize that we can not accept that there is no reason or purpose for our existence.

Many people never seem to face this question, they live their lives completely oblivious, too busy in their own little worlds to even consider what this all means. They ignore it by filling their lives with material possessions and pleasures even though these things too will not last forever. They blithely dismiss it by saying "Well, you're dead, you're dead". Maybe it's because they've never really hit the very rock bottom, I don't know, or their way of dealing with it is simply to bury their heads in the sand. They may even scoff at the suggestion by saying, "Why do we even need an explanation for our existence?" But we are humans, it's built into our very make-up. We have a hunger which needs to be satisfied. I'm not talking about physical hunger, but spiritual hunger, although the hunger pains are very similar. It is the right of every human being that we be given an answer regarding our existence. We should demand an explanation and not be too eager to accept that there is none, or accept when other people try to persuade us that there is none. This is what it means to be a human being. We were made to ask questions and find answers. Some people claim that religion is just a crutch to lean on when times are hard and to comfort us through the fear of death. The problem with this explanation is that we could say the same thing back, "maybe atheism or agnosticism is a crutch to lean on, because they can't bear the possibility that God exists and that they are going to have to account for how they have lived their lives." Why is it that they want to deny that we need an explanation for existence? Surely we have a right to ask the question of why we exist. If someone says to you "Humans don't need a purpose," then you can answer back and say "What is the purpose of you telling me that we don't need a purpose?" Many religions of the world have come about because of the human need for explanation, for spirituality. Even atheists acknowledge the need for spirituality and an explanation for our existence, that is why they are trying fervently, to find alternative explanations as to why we believe in God, and to find alternative forms of spirituality outside of religion. We humans have a need for purpose, there must be a purpose behind our existence. We humans are not just satisfied with the question of "how", but also the question of "why". That's why being told that "You're dead, you're dead", is no answer at all, it's a cop out! It didn't convince me when I was seventeen, and it doesn't convince me now. I'm alive today because I didn't accept that life has no purpose, not just my life, but the lives of every single human being. The Bible tells us that every human being is precious in God's sight. That a human being can not just be discarded like a disposable razor blade. Some living organisms live, just to die because they are food for others, but we humans are different, we were made to be different because we are called to seek out God and our own spirituality. There is also a purpose behind why certain people want to believe and want us to believe that there is no purpose. Jesus said that He is the Bread of Life and spoke about this spiritual bread as the only thing that would satisfy our spiritual need. Jesus knew that we all have a spiritual need as well as physical needs.

Prayer:- Heavenly Father, we pray for people who lack that sense of purpose, that they will find their purpose in you. We pray for people who are facing death, whether it be of a loved one, of themselves through illness or contemplating suicide, that they will see the light of Jesus and know that they are not alone and finally we pray that peoples ignorance, indifference and blindness to our real purpose in this world will dissipate and their eyes opened to your true glory. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

By Philip Catherall