



## INTRO

I have one idea that I really want to share with you for the next two weeks. *The gospel should change more than simply what you do on Sundays.*

Rather, the Gospel, the good news about all that Jesus Christ has done, should transform every aspect of life.

But before we get into the details of what this “Gospel life” looks like, there is one major objection that I want to deal with.

## FREEDOM

As soon as we begin to talk about the Gospel **changing** us, we reel back. “I don’t like the sound of that.” or “Who are *you* to tell me how to live *my* life?”

If you ask the average American what the most important value they hold is, chances are, they will answer, “Freedom.” Simply put, we don’t like being told what to do.

- Land of the free
- Freedom isn’t free
- Give me liberty or give me death

The objection could be worded this way:

“The Bible is full of way too many rules for me to follow. I know plenty of Christians, and they lead terribly boring lives. I just don’t want to live that way, I want to do the things that I want, that I think are right. No one, no thing, has the right to tell me otherwise, to tell *me* how to live *my* life. I want to be free.”

I’m sure this line of thinking sounds very familiar to you. You may even agree with it, if not in theory, then at least in practice.

I think we have made a big mistake. I’ll give you three reasons:

1. If you are absolutely free, life becomes meaningless
2. No one can live that way
3. Only the Gospel can give us true freedom *and* a meaning to live.

# IF YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE, LIFE IS MEANINGLESS

If your life has meaning, then you must live in accordance with that meaning. At the very least, there would be some basic set of standards for you to fulfill that purpose.

Absolute freedom means no constraints, no restrictions on your life. (No standard) If the standard is simply your own heart, is there nothing beyond it?

Complete autonomy, freedom, the ability to answer to no one, only comes if there is no one to answer to. If all you are is a bunch of atoms on a bed of mud, you may be completely free, but there is no purpose to your existence.

Steven J Gould - Harvard, in an article titled, "The Meaning of Life" wrote, "We are here because one odd group of fishes had a peculiar form of anatomy that could transform into legs for terrestrial creatures. And we are here because comets struck the earth and wiped out the dinosaurs giving mammals a chance they would not otherwise have had available and therefore, thank your lucky stars in a very literal sense. Because the earth never froze entirely during an ice age, we are here. Because a small in tenuous species arising in Africa a quarter of a million years ago has managed to survive by hook, and especially by crook, we are here. We may yearn for higher answers, but none exist. This explanation, though superficially troubling, if not terrifying, is ultimately liberating..."

Troubling, Gould says, but liberating. Meaning, I can do what I want. It's good writing isn't it? He almost makes the idea sound noble. Aldous Huxley was a little more honest.

In his book, Ends and Means, he writes, "I had motive for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do, or why his friends should not seize ... power and govern in the way that they find most advantageous to themselves ... For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political."

If your ultimate desire is simply to be free, to do whatever you want, it's not hard to find reasons for it. Even if those reasons lead us, like Huxley and Gould, to the conclusion that we are nothing but a pile of atoms destined to die in the vast death of the solar system.

The problem is we know this isn't true. And because you know it, you can't live that way. No one can.

# NO ONE CAN LIVE WITHOUT MEANING

## Ecclesiastes 1

1 The words of the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem:

2 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher.

“Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say.

The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.

9 What has been will be again,  
what has been done will be done again;  
there is nothing new under the sun.

10 Is there anything of which one can say,  
“Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago;  
it was here before our time.

11 No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come  
will not be remembered by those who follow them.

1 I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good.” But  
that also proved to be meaningless. 2 “Laughter,” I said, “is madness. And what does  
pleasure accomplish?”

10 I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.  
My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.

11 Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve,  
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

17 So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of  
it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Do you know who wrote that?

King Solomon. One of the richest, and most successful men in all of history.

Solomon tried what Tolstoy described as “being intoxicated with life.” You can distract  
yourself from life’s meaninglessness with pleasure, but when you sober up, like Solomon  
you realize, pleasure isn’t enough.

G.K. Chesterton said

“Meaninglessness in life does not come from being weary of pain, meaninglessness comes  
from being weary of pleasure.”

When you try and live as if there is no meaning, your fruitless search for ultimate  
satisfaction betrays what you really know to be true. You **know** life has to have meaning.

Don’t you see? We’re living on premises that lead to conclusions which we know are  
false!

Put another way,

One of the problems with this view, is that no one honestly lives this way.

Do you realize that if there is no meaning, there is no morality?

*“is rape always wrong? Is torturing children always wrong?”*

If there is no purpose, no meaning in life; you can't say that it's wrong. You might not like it, but nothing is wrong.

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But you know it's wrong!

If you start with a premise that I'm free, and there's no such thing as God and meaning, and it leads you to the conclusion that there is no such thing as evil, but you know there is, it leads to the conclusion that there is no such thing as love, just chemical reactions in your brain, but you know there is, you have to conclude that human beings are just piles of matter, but you know that we are something more!

If you start with a premise that leads to conclusions that you know are false, why not conclude that the premise was wrong?

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It's time to reconsider the premise.

## **ONLY THE GOSPEL GIVES US TRUE FREEDOM AND MEANING TO LIVE**

Maybe freedom doesn't mean the absence of all constraints, but the presence of the right ones. Look at a fish for example, his purpose is water. If a fish leaves the water in the name of freedom, he'll die.

## **LOGOS**

This isn't a new philosophy. The Greeks were debating this issue for centuries. They called it, the Logos. A philosophically packed word. “The meaning for existence, purpose, the reason for life.”

For example, If you try and make nachos with an espresso machine, the nachos really aren't going to be great. Why? Because you've misunderstood it's logos.

**In order to realize something's fullest potential, you've got to know it's logos.**

Imagine you're a kite.

So the question we must ask is, what is our logos?

The Author of the Gospel of John gives us the answer.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the [logos] and the [logos] was with God, and the [logos] was God.” v. 14 And the [logos became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.”

You see in the Gospel, the meaning of life isn't a truth, or philosophy- its a **person**.

That person came into our world- and what did he do?

He gave up his absolute freedom, submitted himself, denied himself pleasures and comfort- for what? For “the joy set before him.” For us.

Freedom we said earlier, is submission to the right set of constraints, submission to the meaning for which we were created.

Paul said the best in **1 Corinthians 5:14**

“**14** For Christ’s love constrains us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.**15** And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

The love of Jesus Christ is the meaning for which you were created. Do you know him? Do you know that kind of love? I