

"HAS LIFE MEANING"

INTRODUCTION

There's a haunting popular song that's been making the rounds, entitled, "Who Will Answer?" It's a sad song - a lament of despair at unanswered questions about life. The verses are a series of verbal vignettes - ranging from the death of a soldier on the battlefield - to the suicidal despair of a man standing on the ledge of a building - to the false fantasies induced by drugs - to the general apathy of the world "beneath the spreading mushroom tree". The song begs for "Some kind of clue.....for a road to lead us to the truth". And always the chorus is the same,

"If the soul is darkened by a fear it cannot name,
If the mind is baffled when the rules don't fit the game,
Who will answer.....who will answer?"

I think that most of us identify with the song in some degree, because we are looking for answers to the questions that confront us. And as numerous as the questions that we ask are the alleged answers which we are offered. Almost any day's paper carries the accounts of the trips and the troubles of those who look for answers in drug and drink. Others there are who experiment with the answers of communism or racism or hedonism or materialism. And still others - in the mood of the song - despair that there is any answer to be found.

The sermon today, and also two of the sermons planned for the coming month will attempt to deal honestly with three of the questions we face today and we shall be dealing with them from the perspective of the Christian faith. Jesus never offered anyone a neat package of all-inclusive, all purpose answers. Nor did he try to coerce anyone with his way and his wisdom. But in God's name, he quietly staked out his claim, "I am the way, the truth and the life". The world has really not followed him, but neither has the world been able to forget him - and there are many of us who almost instinctively think of him in response to the pleading question, "Who Will Answer?" "Who will answer..."

HAS LIFE MEANING

One of the basic questions facing us today has to do with the meaning of life. Has life meaning? Or is life, as Macbeth declared:

".....a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing...."

Is there a point to our individual existence - some purpose which we are capable of finding and fulfilling? There is a heavy mood of meaninglessness that has settled on our time. It is not confined to any one age or stage. Young people face it in the frustrations and futility that they often feel.....the middle-aged feel it as some of their goals prove to be beyond their grasp, and some of their realized goals prove to be tarnished and tawdry....the older people ask it as they feel out of touch and in the way, and often as they deal with the crises of suffering.

There was another time in history when some people were chanting the equivalent of "who will answer?" The members of the chorus included some people who had been ground under heel by a succession of tyrants, some others who had made pretty much of a mess of their lives by their own foolish choices, some others who had been laid low by sickness and sorrow which they had not chosen. And there appeared ONE who put hope in their hearts and meaning to their lives. He did not stay in one country or in one century, and the wonder is that you can never simply describe him in the past tense or the old world. This morning let us consider some of the clues that he continues to give to that persistent question, "Has Life Meaning?"