

## Christmas Meditation 2024

Have you ever sat down and really asked yourself, *What's the meaning of life?* It's a big question, but one thing I've learned is that meaning depends on where you are in life. Everyone's story is different, and instead of searching for some universal answer, maybe we should be asking, *What's the meaning of my life, right here and right now?*

The truth is what feels meaningful can change over time. As we grow, so does our understanding of what matters. Maybe that's why we shouldn't write it in stone or tattoo it on our body. Erik Erikson showed that there's a gradual evolution of meanings throughout an individual's life. Meaning varies depending on which phase of life you find yourself in.

In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl offers a powerful perspective: what if we're not the ones asking the question about life's meaning? What if it's life asking us? That flips everything on its head. It's no longer about endlessly searching or feeling stuck. Instead, it's about taking responsibility for creating meaning in the way we live. The question becomes: *What's the meaning of my life?* And only we can answer it.

If I'm being honest, I tend to ask this question most when I'm feeling disconnected or down. It's like when life feels a little empty, that's when I start spiraling. I hear other people's struggles—a friend who passed away, someone battling cancer—and I start worrying. Why do I have these headaches? Am I okay? I'm not getting any younger. And suddenly, I'm in a dark place.

But maybe there's a different way to look at life. What if the real question isn't about the meaning of life, but about finding those moments when we actually *feel* alive?

We can't go back and change the past, but we can change how we look at it. The meaning we give to our experiences shapes how we live today and how we move forward. And maybe the biggest truth about life is this: it's not about discovering something that's already out there. It's about creating something new.

Tonight, I want to suggest that the Light has come—a light that can give real meaning to our lives and help us bring meaning to the lives of others. It's a light that can change the way we see things and open the door to new opportunities for connection and purpose.

Robert Fulghum, a minister and author, tells a story about attending a seminar in Greece with Dr. Papadopoulos, a professor of Ancient Greek Philosophy. At the end of the class, Fulghum asked, "What's the meaning of life?" The class laughed, but the professor saw he was serious.

The professor took out a small piece of glass from his wallet and said:

"When I was a child during the war, I found a broken mirror from a wrecked German motorcycle. I tried to piece it back together but couldn't, so I kept the largest piece. I smoothed the edges and carried it with me, fascinated by how I could reflect light into dark places where the sun couldn't reach.

As I got older, I realized it wasn't just a game. It was a metaphor for life. I'm not the source of light, but I can reflect it into the dark places: into people's hearts and the shadows of the world. With my small piece, I can make a difference. And maybe, if others see it, they'll do the same.

This is what life is about."

The Light has come to us tonight in Jesus Christ. We're invited to take that Light, reflect it, and share it with others. Our world needs more love, compassion, kindness, fairness, and light.

This is what tonight's service is about. This is what our lives can be about.

So as we reflect the Light of Christ into the dark places around us, let's stop asking, *What's the meaning of life?* and instead ask, *What will the meaning of my life be, now that I carry the Light of Christ with me?*

Amen.