

9.22.2024 Trinity 17 (Ephesians 4:1-5)

William Paley was born in Peterborough, England in July, 1743. He was an Anglican Priest, a popular preacher, and certainly one of the most important 18th century defenders of the Christian faith. Paley wrote several very influential books on philosophy and Christianity, and in his work titled: *Natural Theology*, he argued that the unity and complexity we find in nature demands an intelligent Creator. The Watchmaker analogy is the name given to Paley's famous argument for the existence of God. He presents it by asking his reader to imagine themselves walking in the deserted wilderness, and stumbling not on a rock, but on something as carefully constructed and finely tuned as a watch. Paley writes:

“...when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive... that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose, e.g. that they are so formed and adjusted as to produce motion, and that motion so regulated as to point out the hour of the day; (we know) that if the different parts had been differently shaped from what they are, or placed after any other manner or in any other order than that in which they are placed, either no motion at all would have been carried on in the machine, or none which would have answered the use that is now served by it... The inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker - that there must have existed, at some time and at some place or other, (a designer) an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer, (a Watchmaker) who comprehended its construction and designed its use.”

A carefully constructed, finely tuned watch demands a watchmaker, and when you take the Watchmaker analogy, and apply it not to mechanical, but to living creatures, it becomes an even more persuasive and comforting analogy. Paley uses his argument in this way by pointing out the fact that living organisms are far more complex than watches, to a degree, he wrote, “which exceeds all computation.” He then argued that an intelligent Designer is the only way to account for the unity, complexity, and adaption in the design of plants and animals, and Paley went on to say that if God has taken such care in designing even the smallest and seemingly insignificant organisms, how much more must He care for you and I? Listen to his conclusion, he wrote, “In every portion of nature... we find attention

bestowed upon even the minutest parts. The hinges in the wings of an earwig, and the joints of its antennae, are as highly wrought, as if the Creator had nothing else to finish.” Consider the care with which God created the earwig, and you will find that “we have no reason to fear... our being forgotten, or overlooked, or neglected.”

We have not been forgotten, or overlooked, or neglected. God sent His Son, Jesus, to bleed and die on the Cross at Calvary to assure us of that eternal truth. We have not been forgotten, or overlooked, or neglected. In fact, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, St. Paul tells us that we have been called. In our Epistle today, Paul stated, “*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*” (Ephesians 4:1-3).

St. Paul exhorted Christians to “*walk worthy*” of our calling, and as we consider these words we should be careful to recognize the truth that just as a watch demands a watchmaker, or creation demands a Creator, a call demands a Caller, and the One who has called you and I to the Christian life, to walk this path that leads to His kingdom, is Almighty God. This call, which by the grace of God we strive to answer with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, was placed on our lives by the Triune God of heaven and earth - Father, Son, and Spirit.

Consider this call from God the Father, the One who designed and formed our various parts, who knit us together in our mother’s womb for a purpose (Psalm 139:13), and that purpose was not so trivial as to point out the hour of the day, but instead, to point the world to Him. The Father created us, set us in motion, and through His Son calls us to be “*the light of the world. A city on a hill*” that cannot be hidden (Matthew 5:14). The Church, and the people of God, are called to be a beacon of hope for the hopeless, a city of refuge for the weary, sin-sick soul.

Consider this call from God the Son. It is our Savior Christ, the Divine Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who took on human flesh, lived the life we couldn’t live, died the death we deserve, rose to new life, and ascended to

the Father's right hand. In so doing, the Son has reached up to the Father and out to fallen humanity to obtain this Divine call for us. It is only through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, it is only through the merits and meditation of the Son that we receive the Father's call. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (John 14:6). The only way to hear the Father's intimate call is through His Divine Son.

Consider this call from God the Holy Spirit. The One of whom Jesus spoke on the day He ascended to heaven and said to His Apostles, "*Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high*" (Luke 24:49). On the day of Pentecost, this promise Jesus spoke of, the promise of the Father, was sent by the Son when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church. Now, the Spirit of God lives in every member of Christ's Body, every member of His Church, to the end that we may be endued with Divine power to fulfill this call, to walk as Christ walked, "*with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*"

My friends, we have not been forgotten, or overlooked, or neglected. We have been called by the Triune God of heaven and earth. Designed, formed, and called by God the Father. Ransomed, redeemed, and called by God the Son. Endued with the power, indwelt by the Divine Person, called by God the Holy Spirit, and again this is a call to walk as our Savior walked. We are called to humility and holiness, unity and love, and just like a watch that keeps perfect time demands, and points to, an intelligent watch maker, a people who love as God loves, who give as God gives, and who forgive as they have been forgiven point the world directly to Him.

William Paley's watchmaker analogy encourages every thinking person consider the question of how to explain that which we observe and experience in this world apart from God. Does something ever come from nothing? Does order ever come from disorder? Does life ever come from non-life? These questions about life, order, and design point to a Designer. Likewise, the call placed on the life of every Christian points to a Divine Caller, and when Christians "*walk worthy*" of His call we point the world to

God, and to the truth of the Gospel.

It is vital that you and I “*walk worthy*” of our call, that we walk as Christ walked, because just like none of us would place our faith in a watchmaker who couldn’t be trusted to produce a watch that pointed out the correct time, those outside the Church are not going to place their faith in Christ if Christians fail to “*walk worthy*” of His call - if we fail to live out the truth that we proclaim, and therefore we pray that God would continually provide us with the grace we so desperately need to love as He loves, to give as He gives, to forgive as we have been forgiven, that through the Spirit of God, the world would be drawn to the Son of God, and God our Father would be glorified.