

DESIRE a book written by **John Eldridge**
The journey we must take to find the life that God offers us.

During this time after the great storm and the refreshing rains that came, the sea lion pondered all these things in his heart. Why had this apparent time of testing come on him? What was the meaning of it? Why had spring come again to his waterhole? It all seemed so strange. And then, why had he even thought of the sea again? He scratched his head with his left flipper but it did not help. So he continued his life under his tree, which now produced shade, and his waterhole which gave him some meagre enjoyment. But he felt and sensed that life was not right, and again the thought about returning to the sea came to him. That night in his dreams, a word came to him from the most high; 'homecoming'. He smiled to himself "I will be coming home".

9. The Adventure Begins.

"Enter into the joy of your master." - Jesus of Nazareth

We must explore one more aspect of our future if we are to recover our heart for the journey of our lives. For though it will be unspeakable joy to live forever in a fully restored universe, it is not enough. There is something core to our being and set within our deepest desires that remains untouched. One of the grand essentials of human happiness is having something to do. Some people love what they do. They are the fortunate souls, who have found a way to link what they are truly gifted at (and therefore what brings them joy) with a means of paying the bills. But most of the world merely toils to survive, and no one gets to use his gifts all the time. This brings us to the question, 'What will we do with ourselves forever and ever?'

We have somehow overlooked a line in the parable of the talents which speaks volumes, and says, "Because you have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things". This is their bonus "more to do". Wouldn't a vacation be a better reward? But Jesus thinks differently. He says "Come and share your master's happiness." To understand this statement we must have a closer look at "The joy of the Master."

Although God rested on the seventh day, he hasn't been lying around ever since. Jesus said, "My father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." For many the thought that God is working is a new thought. John says the only way to describe God's ongoing creativity is "extravagant"...you don't suppose he experiences his part in running the universe as drudgery, do you? We should, to begin with, think that God leads a very interesting life, and that he is full of joy. Undoubtedly he is the most joyous being in the universe. We treasure for a lifetime a well done movie sequence or a few bars of music, but God is simply one great inexhaustible and eternal experience of all that is good and true and beautiful and right. And it is this life, with all its creativity and power and unending happiness that he says he is going to share with us.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." So right here at the beginning of our existence, is the single phrase our creator used to characterise us, and we haven't the foggiest idea what it implies. So what does it mean that we are image bearers? We tend to think that if we are to reflect the image of God that we are to reflect only his Godliness! Why is it then that creativity rarely comes to mind when we think of how we reflect God? It is because more often than not we think of God in moral terms. But we are made in his total image and thus we are made like God in our creative powers because we are to be like God in ruling the earth. Human beings are never

happier than when they are expressing the gifts that are truly them. How we long for a great endeavour that draws upon our every faculty, a great life's work that we can throw ourselves into. It has been said that God created us for a place of his choosing and we will only be ourselves when we are truly there. This is what we call convergence, when you are using every aspect of your being to do the job you were created by the master to do. For example, this is precisely what happens when God shares with mankind his own artistic capacity and then sets us down in a paradise of unlimited potential. Imagine giving Mozart full use of an orchestra and a concert hall for a full autumn of composing. All you have to do is release him and remarkable things would result.

Work is not, primarily, a thing one does to live, but the thing one lives to do. If only it were so, if only we could land our dream job, where we would be paid to do what we love. No wonder when we hear the rewards in the parable with such disappointing ears - it sounds as though we will lose even those few hours of private joy we manage to squeeze in on the weekend. But what if the Master's joy was an invitation to give you the freedom (the permission) and the power (all the resources necessary) to do exactly what you were always meant to do?

Christ is not joking when he says that we shall inherit the kingdom prepared for us and shall reign with him forever. We will take the position for which we have been uniquely made and will rule as he does...meaning with creativity and power. Much of the activity of God in our lives is bringing us to the place where he can entrust us with this kind of influence. God takes our training seriously because he fully intends to promote us. God has quite a few possessions, and it is going to take a lot of looking after by men and women uniquely fitted to the task. Each person will live out the passion of their heart, set there by the creator from before the beginning of time.

The glorious freedom is coming. Life, as the popular saying goes, is not a dress rehearsal, so live life to the fullest, now. John says "What a setup for a loss of heart? But what if life IS a dress rehearsal? What if the real production is about to begin?" How many of your plans and desires take an unending future into account? Understanding this can put an entirely different view on life. The day will come when there will be a remade universe, infinitely obedient to the will of glorified men and women. When we can do all things, when we shall be those gods that we are described as being in scripture.

The Grand affair heals the curse of isolation. The Great Adventure heals the curse of futility. The glorious freedom of the children of God is the freedom of being all we were meant to be. We won't be held back by anything anymore; no, we will finally hit our stride. We all know the frustration of failure, of missing the mark. But many of us have at one time or another tasted the joy of getting it right. In the eternal kingdom, not only will we find our place, but we will be empowered to do the very things we aim to do, with and for God. We will have come home.

For Reflection

Matthew 25:31-34 'When the son of man comes....come you who are blessed by my father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'

Rev 5:23 'and they will reign forever and ever'

Q1. Do you love what you do for a living? Why...or why not? Do you feel your gifts are being fully used? Is what you are doing what you dream't about doing as a child? What were your dreams for your life's work?

Q2. Is the thought of having special work to do in the next phase of the kingdom growing on you? What do you think it may be if you are given the permission (freedom) and the power (all resources necessary) to do exactly what you were always meant to do?

Q3. What benefits are there in realising life is a dress rehearsal? How will this help you cope with life now? Are you willing to make it so?