

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

THE TREE OF PLEASURE AND FULFILLMENT

17 DECEMBER 2007

I invite you to think about something, and it is this question: Why did God create the universe? I thought we ought to start big! However we might think that happened—through a Big Bang or through evolution, or some other way—why? That presupposes there was a reason, and that is my premise: that there was a reason.

The question also supposes that there was consciousness around the creation of a universe, the creation of a world. If there's a reason, it presupposes that there was someone who had a reason, that there was a self, a being, who had a reason to create a manifest world. So I'll put it to you this way: If you were someone who was pondering the possibility of creating a manifest world, being in some way unmanifest, living in the realms of vibration and energy, and you were thinking about the possibility of creating a manifest world with forests and seas and planets and even people, why would you have been thinking about such a thing? What reason could you possibly have?

Many of us have heard various kinds of reasons; for instance, the idea that God had something to learn—I don't buy it. And there are probably many other ideas that people have. I'll tell you the only one that makes any sense at all to me—and you can see if it makes sense to you. There's only one reason I can imagine that God would have created a manifest world, and that is for God's own pleasure and fulfillment. There was no one else around at that point to please or fulfill. There were no human beings around at that point. What reason could God possibly have, other than the pleasure and fulfillment of God's own being?

So the way that lands for me is that in some way God said to Himself or Herself, wouldn't that be wonderful? Wouldn't that be grand, to have a world that is an expression of who I am, that gives manifest form to the glory of My being? How wonderful to have a creation, how fulfilling to have a relationship between the manifest and the unmanifest, to have a universe that sings with energy, with an interchange between the invisible and the visible. So there was a universe created.

I was thinking about the places in the Bible where there was some indication of the spirit of what happened. There is the story of the seven days of Creation, and after each one of those days, what did God say? "And it was good." Isn't this wonderful, what I am creating?!

There's another place in the Bible where some indication of the pleasure and the fulfillment of creation is given expression, and it is in the 38th chapter of Job. This is part of an examination, so you'll see that the verses are styled as a questioning of Job. But in the process there's something being revealed. The Lord says:

“Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

“Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

“Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;

“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:3-7)

Shouted for joy—that is the spirit of the Creator, and the spirit of what was undertaken, and what’s being undertaken all the time. I don’t think the energy that created this earth and this universe went away at any point. It is the joy of creation that is behind it.

So thank you for considering with me the purpose and the reason for the creation. I propose to you that any other purpose is secondary to that. And what a beautiful purpose it is—nothing complicated, creation simply for the joy of it, the fulfillment of it. That’s what life itself is about.

So it’s hard to think about that spirit of joy and pleasure and fulfillment without reflecting on the great trouble that’s present in the human world, experienced by people. We might well ask, how did that happen? Human beings have all kinds of reasons for their lives and for what they do, all kinds of life purposes. Those life purposes are expected to lead to some kind of fulfillment. The word “purpose” implies the possibility of a fulfillment of that purpose. But whether it’s viewed personally—I will fulfill my own personal purpose for my own personal fulfillment and pleasure—or whether it’s viewed in terms of one’s family or one’s clan, nation, or even the whole world, there’s something about the way human beings are approaching pleasure and fulfillment that doesn’t always work out very well. In fact, it is often disastrous.

So why is that? The simple answer is that when human beings live for their own pleasure and fulfillment, and forget that they themselves and all of creation were created for the pleasure of something higher than them—when human beings forget that it was all created for the pleasure of the unmanifest—it doesn’t work very well. It seems like a good idea at first—“We’ll just work it out so that we experience fulfillment, and maybe not just for ourselves but for other people.” It seems like a good idea. But there’s something left out, for the most part, in the way human beings approach the experience of pleasure and fulfillment.

Of course, even talking about it, there are likely to be reflections of guilt and shame that come up. I’m sure that many a minister has preached from the pulpit about the evils of pleasure and self-centeredness and personal fulfillment, however that’s posed to people. So I’m not here this morning to shame anyone over their own impulse for pleasure and fulfillment. I’m here to consider reasonably how all this works.

If we’re thinking biblically, the story of how all this went down—how human beings went after their own pleasure and fulfillment and ended up in misery—is contained in the story of the Fall. It has puzzled me why, in human culture, that story is very much associated with pleasure, even though, if you look at the telling of the story, I don’t think that word is mentioned and it isn’t addressed very directly. So when Eve ate the apple—which isn’t actually mentioned by name in the Bible; it’s actually called a fruit—when Eve ate the

apple, I think the idea has been that it had something to do with pleasure, even though the tree that the apple came from is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which seems to be a fairly intellectual concept. But in people's minds, isn't it associated somehow with pleasure? And maybe the idea is around that the Fall had to do with physical sex—that the original sin was seeking pleasure through physical sex and that's what got human beings tossed out of the Garden. So how did that get mixed in, in human consciousness? Did you ever ponder that? I know I have.

There's a reason why the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as it's described in the story, is correlated with pleasure and fulfillment. Because if you think about what the knowledge of good and evil is about, it is about fulfillment. It's about how you create fulfillment and pleasure. That's what the knowledge is about. So the tree is about how fulfillment and pleasure come on earth. What was being said was, don't take it into your own hands. Let it be there—it was supposed to be there, wasn't it? If it was in the midst of the Garden, God must have put it there. But don't try to satisfy yourself without respect to the invisible. So the story is that there's nothing wrong with the tree, but don't eat of it. So what does it mean to "eat of it"? Don't try to have the fruit of fulfillment on your own terms.

Pleasure is the experience of participating in the creative process. So we see what happens when human beings try to have pleasure without regard to the larger creative process. It's self-destructive to do that. It's not that human beings shouldn't have pleasure, but they shouldn't try to have it on their own terms.

And fulfillment—that's the outworking of it all. We shouldn't get it all to work out as we think it should be, for our own fulfillment. It's not that there shouldn't be fulfillment, but human beings can take hold of the process of creation and make an atom bomb. And there's the literal atom bomb, but there are all the atom bombs that people set off in their daily lives metaphorically, because they are trying to wrench the creative process from God's hands, from the hands of the Creator, and let it be in their own hands.

So again, I'm not here to wag a finger at anybody or to lay a guilt trip on anybody about this. I'm talking about it because there's a way to do this that works. Particularly in the world the way it is, it is complex. What was God thinking when He gave human beings the capacity for pleasure and then said, "Don't use it for your own purposes—use it for Me, this invisible reality"? That's pretty hard, right? How does a person learn about that?

Some religious people have tried to learn about it by refraining from pleasure. "I just won't have any pleasure—I'll be very, very good and I won't have any pleasure." Well how's that working? We see that where people try to approach pleasure that way, human experience and human behavior become contorted. There isn't something beautiful, and certainly there's not a sense that the person is giving pleasure to God. So how does a person learn to give pleasure to God without taking it to themselves and causing their own self-indulgent destruction?

I had a conversation with a friend of mine about this recently. I was posing to him the idea that a young person growing up is going to deal with pleasure in their life perfectly the first time around is probably unlikely, particularly in the world the way it is. What do you tell that young person about pleasure? "Oh, have pleasure for God's sake." If the person doesn't know what it is to have pleasure for their own sake, how do they know how to give God pleasure? So what I ended up saying to my friend was that a young person is

pretty well destined to get it wrong the first time, at least according to some standard. Because you have to learn about what pleasure is. You have to develop the capacity to have pleasure. I suppose a little baby has a certain kind of pleasure. But we have to develop the capacity for pleasure to have that capacity to give pleasure to God. As I say, we're apt to make mistakes in the process. We pay for those mistakes as we go along—that's part of learning. But certainly we ought to learn how this works and how to let God have pleasure, and know pleasure ourselves in the process by doing so.

I would like to share with you a quote about pleasure from the film *CHARIOTS OF FIRE*. This is from a character in the movie, Eric Liddell, who was a Scottish runner in the Olympics. He says, "And I feel His pleasure when I run." He was trying to explain to his sister why he was compelled to stay and run in the Olympics when she was going off to start a mission in China. He was trying to persuade her to go off and start the mission without him, while he would catch up to her later. He had a lot of persuading to do, I think! But he was trying to explain to her and other people what it was that was so compelling to him about running, and that was his way of saying it: "I feel His pleasure when I run."

You know, you and I might have led very different lives up to this point. We might have done different things; we might have decided to live some self-indulgent life. But I suspect that for most, if not all the people who are sharing this time together this morning, or this afternoon or evening, we are aware that we've made a different choice. That choice, in some ways, may be filled with adversity or challenge. We probably haven't had all the outer things in life that we might have had if that had been our priority. We may not have thought long and hard about why we chose the life that we've chosen. But I suspect, if you're like me, it comes down to what Eric Liddell had to say: "I feel His pleasure when I run."

We can feel the pleasure of the invisible as we live life selflessly and in service. When we live life in a way that gives glory to God, glory to the invisible, when we live a life that declares the majesty of what this universe is about, what this planet is about, what it is to be a human being, we feel His pleasure. When we do something kind, when we create something beautiful, when we allow something to change in a beautiful way, we feel His pleasure and His joy, or Her joy. And God's joy is our joy.

That is the story of Jesus. He knew the Lord's pleasure, and he spoke about his joy. Why did he speak about his joy? It wasn't because of all the adversity. It was because whatever the circumstance and whatever he met, he had the great pleasure of fulfilling the invisible, of having a rich and full relationship with the invisible that gave it expression and returned back the only thing that is really asked for, which is an expression of praise and joy.

So the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in the midst of the Garden. It's present and operative through us. It might well be called the tree of pleasure and fulfillment.

We've spoken some of why God may have created the earth and the universe. How about human beings? Could it be that at least part of the reason was so that the sons and daughters of God might know pleasure and fulfillment in the flesh? It seems to have been very difficult for human beings to truly know pleasure and fulfillment. But if in fact a human being provides an opportunity for the incarnation of divine selfhood, a human being provides the opportunity for pleasure and fulfillment of divine selfhood in form.

In fact, while I believe it's often thought that God is somehow withholding pleasure and fulfillment, and that if we're really good people we will resist having pleasure and fulfillment, exactly the opposite is true. The great challenge for human beings is to endure pleasure and fulfillment—to be willing to receive pleasure and fulfillment, to know it on earth. I would like to ask, what other reason would God have for creating human beings? All the other reasons you can think of make no sense at all, to me anyway. It was for pleasure and fulfillment. In God's case, you could call it divine pleasure and fulfillment. That's why we have to know how to be channels for pleasure and fulfillment on earth. That's a tough proposition, isn't it? But it is exactly what's called for.

Human beings have been telling a fib about it the whole time, pretending that it was God that was withholding pleasure and fulfillment, when in fact it's human beings who are refusing to receive it, to act in a way that allows pleasure and fulfillment to be known in all ways—not just in heavenly ways, not just in ways that involve the invisible, but ways that involve form. Presumably, if all it took were the heavenly ways, all the invisible ways that have to do with vibration and energy, God could have done that without us. We're here to know fulfillment on earth, to let there be fulfillment in form.

So the question really is, are you willing to allow fulfillment and pleasure to be known? Which means to allow the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to operate through you without picking the fruit constantly. So the radiance is present—that's the tree of life. Ted Black last week was talking about the cup. We raise the cup to receive the fruit of the tree of life, and that energy, brought into our world, makes things move and change to bring fulfillment. We don't have to get our sticky fingers over all that. If we bring the heavenly energy through ourselves, because we've received it, things move.

In the receiving of heavenly energy, there is pleasure. There is pleasure in the receipt. Then there's the fulfillment because as we bring the energy of being into our world, things shake and move. As long as we don't have our sticky fingers on them that are not letting them shake and move, they will shake and move. Substance moves. Where there's a powerful being, a powerful human being bringing the energy of creation through themselves without trying to manipulate it but just channeling it through their capacity, that moves substance. First of all, the substance of one's own mind and heart—it moves. That means that physical substance responds and moves also.

There is a vibration in what comes through a person on that basis that moves the substance, and provides a pattern on which the substance can move. For those of us who have seen cymatics videos or pictures, we know what I'm talking about. When a vibration is brought into physical substance—sand or metal filings, for instance—the substance moves. But if a human being has got their sticky fingers all over that substance—if the person is trying to make the substance move according to his or her own ideas of how it should move—it is not moving, at least not according to the pattern of the vibration.

If the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is really working through us, we begin to see how things are moving and we begin to accommodate how they're moving and facilitate the movement. But it's not because we're imposing the pattern. The pattern is in God's hands—God's vibration. We're perceiving the pattern as it is, not trying to create it on the basis of what we think would be good and evil.

So let me be that person, and let us be that body of people who eat of the tree of life, who bring the positive

radiation of spirit into the world, and therefore let the patterns of pleasure and fulfillment of the Most High work out through us. That is a picture of, for one thing, a powerful human being. A truly powerful human being is one who doesn't have their sticky fingers over what's happening. And if you don't, your whole capacity is available to let what IS happening from the divine standpoint happen, through you and in your world. That's power! Not power to make things happen the way you think they should, but power to let what is looking to happen, happen. Letting divine will be done, and finding pleasure and fulfillment in that. There is no greater pleasure.

Do you ever find yourself hearing about a millionaire or someone who's got a brand-new car, or whatever it is that the world would give to them, some worldly trophy, and think to yourself, "Oh, I wish I had that..."? Don't think it for a minute! Because if you're really living your life on a basis that says, "I feel His pleasure when I run," you have the greatest pleasure of them all—the greatest pleasure of them all: the pleasure and fulfillment of creating His world as it should be, as it's designed to be.

So I am so happy this morning here to be able to speak of these things and share what is the passion of my life, and I believe the passion of our life—to name it for what it is as best I can.

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