

THE TOPIC : IN CELEBRATION OF BEING ALIVE

THE AUTHOR : DR. CHRISTIAAN BARNARD

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Performed the world's first human-to-human heart transplant in 1967.

Earned a Doctorate in Medicine and received 11 honorary doctorates and 36 international awards.

Wrote 14 books and over 235 scientific articles.

Founded the Christiaan Barnard Foundation for underprivileged children.

THEME : **Finding joy and strength in life despite suffering**

PARAGRAPH

Dr. Christiaan Barnard, the world's first heart transplant surgeon, tells a touching story in *"In Celebration of Being Alive"* about how he learned to value life in a new way. One day, after enjoying dinner with his wife, both of them were hit by cars while crossing the street. Dr. Barnard suffered *"eleven broken ribs and a perforated lung"* and his wife's shoulder was badly fractured. While lying in the hospital, he felt pain, anger, and sadness, asking himself, *"Why should this happen to us?"* He had many patients waiting for his surgery, and his wife had a young baby to take care of. As a doctor, he had seen many people suffer, especially children. He said, *"I see nothing noble in a patient's thrashing around in a sweat-soaked bed."* But one morning, he saw something that changed his thinking. At Cape Town's Red Cross Children's Hospital, a nurse left a breakfast trolley unattended. Two young patients turned it into a racing car. The "mechanic" was a seven-year-old boy who was blind and badly disfigured by burns. The "driver" was a boy who had lost an arm because of cancer. They raced the trolley joyfully, while other children laughed and cheered. After the race, the blind boy happily told Dr. Barnard, *"You know, we won."* In that moment, Dr. Barnard understood something very important: *"It's not what you've lost that's important. What is important is what you have left."* The boys, despite their pain and disabilities, chose to be happy and enjoy the moment. Dr. Barnard realized that the real *"business of living"* is not just pleasure or fun, but the *"celebration of being alive."* Suffering itself does not make people better, but living through suffering and still finding joy can make us stronger. Just as we appreciate light only after knowing darkness, and warmth after feeling cold, we value life more after facing hardships. His story teaches us that life is not always fair, and painful things can happen to anyone. If we focus on what we still have, and find reasons to smile and laugh even in hard times, we truly celebrate life.