

TOGETHERFORADOPTION

What Orphans Need: Christians Who Live in the Joy of Their Father's Delight



When Christians are unsure of their Father's delight in them, real Christian joy is absent and passionate Christian living is lacking. It is almost impossible (if not entirely impossible) to mobilize Christians who are unsure of God's delight in them to care for orphans over the long haul, or at least to mobilize Christians who will serve orphans with unflappable confidence and joy.

When Jesus was about to go public with the mission of God, his Father declared over him, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). As Scripture makes clear, Jesus had been sent to fulfill the Father's mission to redeem humanity and renew creation—which includes, by the way, the removal of the word "orphan" from the human vocabulary. The Gospel writers tell us that God's Son went forward with the mission of his Father in the strength and knowledge of his Father's delight (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).

Dr. C.F.W. Walther, a pastor who lived in the 1800's, wrote: "Every Christian may apply to himself the declaration of God: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" As God's children, not only do we have the privilege of participating in His mission to redeem and renew creation, we also do so in the strength and knowledge of our Father's delight.

What orphans need are churches that are full of people who wake up each morning hearing and rehearsing these amazing words that are declared over them. "You are my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased. Yes, you were once without hope and without God in this world, but I have brought you near by the blood of Jesus. I have embraced you in the Beloved. Live in my love as you move out in mission."

If you are a Christian, God declares these amazing words over you. He doesn't speak them over you because you have earned them. You could never do enough to earn these words of love. God speaks these words over you because of who Jesus is for you.

As I've already mentioned, when God the Father spoke these words over His Son (Matthew 3:17), it was the day that Jesus launched his public messianic ministry. As our Messiah, Jesus was the faithful Son who always did the will of his Father. Never once did he disobey or disappoint Him. All of his living, from his birth in the manger to his death on the cross, was perfect in thought, word, deed, and motive. His missional life was perfectly lived, and he lived it as our Messiah. This means, among many other things, that the words that were spoken over him on that wonderful day are also spoken over us today.

Living as Christians in mission—in other words, being the church—involves learning to live each day knowing that God the Father delights in us even as He delights in Jesus. Those who learn to live in the reality of God's loving pleasure will find that circumstances no longer control them. They will find that they are able to deal with the difficulties of a missional life with confidence and humility. To be adopted by God is to enter into a family relationship where all of God's children are treated even as He treats His Beloved Son. If we are confident that we are being loved by God like this, we will not only desire to love others like we are loved, we will also be empowered and compelled to do so.

Imagine the impact that churches would have upon the global orphan crisis if they were filled with people who moved forward in mission in the strength and knowledge of their Father's delight. Just imagine.

What orphans need are communities of missional Christians (churches) who live in the joy of their Father's delight.

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