
One from the Heart

Orphans to Family

The most important role anyone will ever have in life is that of God's beloved child.

Many of us can know of God, love Him, worship Him as King, but He's actually far away and we have no, or very little relationship with Him.

It's only when you know Him as your Father, it speaks of a close relationship.

John 14:6-18 (ESV)

Jesus was emphasising the pathway for relationship with Father God was only through Him. No one can have relationship with Father God, except through Jesus!

Jesus speaks into this same concept of relationship with Father God several times through scripture. When Jesus taught us how to pray, He taught us to pray to our Father, a Father we can have relationship with, not a far off distant dad.

"Our Father" in heaven, hallowed be your name. Matthew 6:9 (ESV)

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father". John 14:9 (ESV)

Jesus came to show the way, the path back to relationship with Father God.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. John 14:10-11

Jesus wanted to make it very clear to us that He came to restore us into relationship with Father God, right now!

So, what is so important about this truth?

Relationship with God was broken and fear and shame entered the world. Intimacy with God was broken (Genesis 3).

There is no fear in love and before the fall in Genesis 3, there was no fear, no shame. Just perfect love.

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 1 John 4:18 (ESV)

When Adam and Eve chose to disobey they didn't just break a law, but relationship with Father God was now broken. Adam and Eve saw they were now naked and they became ashamed and hid from God. They then tried to cover their nakedness and shame with *Fig leaves*.

When God came walking in the garden they were hiding from their Father, someone who they were super close with.

- + Did God change? NO! God didn't change at all.
- + Did God run away from them? No!
- + Who ran away? Man did.

From that moment on, because of sin, humankind hides from God and we try to cover our shame with so many things of this world.

We become orphans. We were born into an orphan identity and an orphan has no name, home and is always searching for a family. Separated from the Father.

What are your fig leaves?

- + What are the things you use to cover up your insecurities and lack?
- + Have you ever stopped and thought about this?

God's desire is to restore relationship. His desire isn't to leave us as orphans. Remember back to our original passage in John 14?

Verse 18 reads - *I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

This is why Jesus came!

Churches are meant to attract orphans. It should be a place where spiritual orphans come to finally find their true identity, to belong, to be welcomed home and to receive healing and wholeness. But if we're not careful, we just end up being an orphanage, not a home, not a place of healing and restoration.

Father wants to give us a new identity!

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 (ESV)

How do we become a part of this family of God?

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. Romans 8:14-17 (ESV)

When we hear the gospel, confess our sins, and place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we are at that moment born into God's kingdom as His children and become heirs with Him for eternity.

You have opportunity to individually step into all that God has for you today.

God always gives us a choice to follow Him or not. He could have made us robots to just do whatever He programmed us to do. **But instead, so that we could experience true, incredible love from Father God, He had to give us choice.**

Jesus has done the work, He has dealt with the orphan-ness! He's made a way for us to be able to say "Our Father"!

If you've got Jesus, you're not an orphan. So if you're still thinking like an orphan, you need to give that to God. Love is powerful because it's a choice! Being a child of God is powerful, because it's a choice - you are believing Jesus at His word.

Today, and this week, what is it that God is highlighting that you need to give to Him.

God wants to restore family for revival.

For some, this is going to be a daily walking out of God's truth instead of lies?

Pray through this exchange with God:

- + God, show me the things that are keeping me walking and thinking as an orphan.
- + I choose to give these to you now.
- + God, what do you now have for me? Show me your truth.
- + Now wait on God and see what He gives you.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the Fig Leaves you have been using over the years to cover up for your lack of identity or shame?
2. What are the things still keeping you back from moving from orphan to Child of God?
3. What practices can you put into your daily or weekly rhythm to help you take your thoughts captive when you start to think or behave like an orphan?
4. How can the church (Children of God, not orphans) start to live out Kingdom Family in a more intentional way?