

319 ...with whom I am well pleased

Prompted by Brad Jersak's *A More Christlike God*, I determined to investigate what he calls the 'constellation of biblical metaphors' used to help us appreciate Jesus' mission. So when I woke this morning and lay there starting to plan this, the first that came to mind was adoption. Being a words-based person, I searched my *NTtext* file for 'adopt':

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.^{Rom 8:23}

Wow, what a start! We could have a series of 500-word articles on that one verse. (We must remember that 'son' had a special meaning in Paul's day – one indicating status – but I'll use 'offspring'.) So this is how God views you: '*This is my offspring, whom I love...*'

But hang on, that was addressed to Jesus. How dare I suggest that this applies to me? But are we *not* God's offspring? Did God *not* create us? Does God *not* love us unconditionally?

'...with whom I am well pleased.' Now that's where the parallel must stop, surely? It's drilled into us, every single service we attend, that we are 'not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table'.¹ You see how that came *instantly* to my Christian memory! I recited that in every single Communion service I attended when I came to faith 56 years ago. But was I ever told, '*Paul, you are my offspring, whom I love...*'? Not really.

As I explained in my very first article,^[0] coming from a dysfunctional family, it was feeling God's love (expressed through a community of Christians in Yorkshire) that drew me in – I felt adopted. Wonderful! But my life has been a series of losing and refinding that love: '68, '86, '94 (totally lost faith in 2011) and, most wonderfully, I refound God's love in 2017.

And you? Do you really believe, in your heart of hearts, that God loves you? Great!! Or has your Christian memory been so drilled – brain-washed, even – into seeing yourself as a miserable sinner that you can't hear God saying, '*...with whom I am well pleased*'?

At 400 words, this article isn't finished, but I'm stopping. Until I was willing to believe that God really *is* well pleased with me, I couldn't truly flourish – I can now!

Thank you, loving Lord!

Paul Bev. 18.3.24

¹ I do believe that we're not worthy, but I guess I never really believed about 'our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against.' Sorry, but I was indoctrinated!