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God Was Well-Pleased With Him

by Zac Poonen

When Jesus was thirty, the Father spoke these words about Him publicly from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well-pleased." (Mt. 3:17). And that was at a time when Jesus had not done a single miracle or even preached a single sermon!

What then was the secret of His being approved by God? It was obviously not because of His ministry, for He had not even commenced His public ministry. It was because of the type of life that He had lived for thirty years.

We are approved by God not on the basis of the success of our ministry but rather on the basis of our faithfulness in the temptations that we face in daily life.

The only two things that we are told about the hidden thirty years of Jesus' life (apart from the incident in the temple) are - that "He was tempted in all points as we are and yet did not sin" (Heb. 4:15), and that "He never pleased Himself" (Rom. 15:3).

He had faithfully resisted temptation at every point and He had never sought His own in any matter. This was what delighted the Father.

Our external accomplishments may impress worldly people and carnal believers. But God is impressed only by our character. It is our character alone that can bring us God's approval. And so if we want to know what God's opinion of us is, we must deliberately erase from our minds what we have accomplished in our ministry, and evaluate ourselves purely by our attitude towards sin and self-centredness in our thought-life. That and that alone is the infallible gauge of our spiritual condition.

Thus, the world-travelling healer/preacher and the busy mother who is never able to leave the confines of her home, have exactly the same opportunities to acquire God's approval.

This is why we shall find at the judgment-seat of Christ that many who are first here in the Christian world will be last there and many who were considered last here on earth (because they did not have a well-recognised ministry) will be first there!