

# Special Issue

Vol.No.56 No.08

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

AUGUST 20, 2018



## “Hephzibah – My delight is in her”

I visited a family which had recently welcomed a newborn baby. From the time I entered the room to the time I left, the whole focus of our conversation was the baby. The baby was sleeping, but at the slightest movement, instantly everyone ran towards him. A little later, when he started crying, one of his grandmothers took him in her hands and the other grandmother hovered around, ensuring everything was fine. The mother described how the doctors helped the baby promptly and efficiently when there was some medical problem. On the whole, the entire room was excited about him and grateful and happy about him. He was the centre of attraction for everyone. The baby could neither walk nor talk or play; yet he was the delight of the family. He was the reason for the joy and happiness of the family.

The voice from God the Father was very clear to Jesus just after his baptism in the river Jordan. “*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*”. It was not after Jesus finished his task on earth, not after miracles or great teachings. Even before any action, any accomplishment, any sacrifice or even any sign of obedience, the Father was *well pleased* with his Son. This is an indication of God’s unconditional love. The Lord God demonstrated this unconditional love towards the people of Israel by saying that God’s delight is in Israel (Isaiah 62:4). Jesus referred to his disciples as “*his friends*” (John 15:14). The Apostle Paul addressed the people at Philippi as his “*joy and crown*” (Philippians 4:1).

Some of us think that God will love us if we complete all that He has asked us to do. We think that we will be God’s children if we obey God. But the scriptural evidence is that we are already identified as God’s children. Out of this identity, we do good works and we obey. We don’t become children by obedience, rather, we are children and therefore we obey. We don’t work for our identity; we work out of our identity that we are God’s children. This releases us from the tension and anxiety to perform in our life. We begin to live once we are clear about our identity.

We are God’s delight. Our *beings*, not our *doings*. It is good news to hear that God is well pleased with us – God’s children. This fact resonates with two messages. First, there is a strong reason for me to rejoice that I am a beloved child of God. The second one is about the other. The one in my home, the one at my work place, the one in the society is also a beloved child of God. I watch my behaviour with him/her because he/she is also God’s beloved.

### Let us think together:

1. How would I behave if I am aware that I am a beloved child of God?
2. How would I relate with my neighbours if I knew that they are also beloved of God?

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