

Introduction:

- A man claims to have been given free hotel and car rentals, just because he changed his last name to "Null." Raven Felix Null, 24, from the United States, says he changed his surname after becoming an adult and claims the word 'Null' is incompatible with a lot of computer programming, leading to many systems not recognizing him as a person. The programming fault means that when an employee puts the word 'null' into the surname box on an IT system, it will recognize the word as meaning 'an absence of data', and refuse to validate it. The glitch often results in an IT failure where Raven isn't billed for the item he has bought. ***But Raven is quick to point out that he didn't change his name to get free stuff. Rather, he claims he did it to reflect his estrangement from his family. He chose the word "null" because, he said "it means nothing, meaning I am not connected to my 'family' in any way anymore."
APPLICATION The story people pick up on here isn't the real story. This isn't a story about getting free stuff. It's a story about the great void in this young man's life in the absence of a loving family -- a void that is felt so deeply that he chose to change his name to Null. Sadly, there are countless others who feel the same way. But just because you grew up in a dysfunctional home, that doesn't mean your name has to be "Null." [The Daily Mail UK] The other side of this thought is connectedness.
- Video: Dove Dad commercial. "God our Father has a name which He longs to hear from our lips: "Abba!" It is the Hebrew term of endearment closest to our modern English word "Daddy!" It is itself **a conduit of connection to the very heart of God**. With the loudest of cries, or the quiet of whispers, it immediately captures His attention and ushers us into His presence. Dads, we can be a living, breathing picture to our children of what it means to have a father—a Heavenly Father—who cares, who's there, who always responds. What's in a name? If the name is Abba, the answer is everything."
- *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* (Matthew 6:26, NKJV)

I. Jesus Makes A Point

- A. Jesus knows what it is to have a good Father. *"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.""* (Matthew 3:17, NKJV) Because he knows what it is to have a good good Father, He wants to make a point. He wants everyone to have this same relationship. It is the very reason He has come. You can be connected to Father! If you can be connected to the Father then the implication is that the hearers are living in a state of disconnectedness even though they are religious.
- B. In our text: *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* (Matthew 6:26, NKJV) In our text we see the beauty of God's Love towards nature.

1. Tender care of sparrows. Father feeds them. Not one falls without Father knowing (10:29)
 2. Beautiful glory of tender lilies. Your Father clothed them in their beauty. Think of the beauty He gave you.
 3. The powerful statement is: "...*Are you not of more value than they?*" Ask yourself that question this morning. "Am I more valuable than they?"
 - a) Diapheronta - "what matters most", to be superior to. Strong importance.
 - b) This is one small verbal point powerfully communicated to Jesus hearers. You are superior to birds and flowers in the sight of God.
- C. In our text Jesus makes a point. What is that point? You have a heavenly Father and you are valuable to Him!
1. You have a heavenly Father!
 - a) He is taking their understanding of God as "Yahweh" (you are not allowed to speak that name), as one to be feared, not able to be approached, 'don't touch the mountain, hide from His presence...to being that of your Father. It is radical that Jesus presents God as a personal Father to all who believe.
 - b) He uses the word 'Father' 17 times in the sermon on the mount! (Thats more than the entire OT) Once he says "my Father" and once he says "Our Father" so 15 times he says "Your heavenly Father." Is Jesus making a point? No wonder the people were amazed! It was so refreshing to hear that God actually loves like a good good Father!
 2. You are valuable to Him! Ps 139
 - a) vs. 2 even when I am far away. David points out in the song that it is he who is far away, God is always near.
 - b) You know everything I do, you know my thoughts before I speak, (You have to be pretty close to be able to do that). In spite of that God still stays close! vss. 3 & 4.
 - c) Your hand of blessing is on my head. vs 5
 - d) Your thoughts of me are precious vss. 17-18. Ie "New born in crib"

II. Please Apply The Point

- A. Our status outside of Christ. And our status if we do not know who we are in Christ. Looks the same! This is one of the reasons the world cannot tell the difference between many who say they are Christian but do not appear to be Christian.
- B. To be outside of Christ is to be of your father the devil.
 1. Your father the devil
 - a) ""*Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:'*" (Matthew 25:41, NKJV)
 - b) "*Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"*" (John 6:70, NKJV)

- c) *"Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, ... Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (John 8:42-44, NLT)
2. The character of those who are sons of devil reflect his character. He is the most miserable, cut off, eternally damned creature that ever was. And his own bitterness drives him.
- a) John 10:10 The devil's job is to steal, kill, and destroy. He has come to mess up your life, your marriage, your children. He comes to kill you. If not all at once, then slowly, little by little. His nature is to destroy relationships, alienate people, and cause them to feel and to be fatherless in the world.
- b) Rev 12:10 He is the accuser of the brethren. Accusations separate and divide. Accuses to divide us from God and to divide us from each other. He comes to "take away" connectedness and create orphans in the spirit, not sons.
- c) The devil intentionally creates in his children a sense of abandonment, unworthiness, constant fear (expecting the worse), alienation, isolation, self hatred.
- C. Jesus came to make a point: You have a heavenly Father and you are valuable to Him.
1. Apply the Point! How? Believe.
- a) *"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God."* (John 1:12, NLT) We receive by believing in Jesus! He is the Son of God. He is my Savior. He died for me. By faith I am in Him and He in me. At that point I am made alive in Christ.
- b) *"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, **"Abba, Father."**"* (Romans 8:15, NLT)
- (1) Sonship to the Father causes us to cry "Abba Father!" Ie. Daddy's home! Dad! It is a healthy cry of endearment! It screams I am connected to you...whether you are 3 or 63! Ie. Daddy's Home!
- c) *"And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, **"Abba, Father."**"* (Galatians 4:6, NLT)
2. Apply this!
- a) If you do not know who you are when you are born again then you will always be a slave to what you have been. *"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT)

- b) If the Word says I am a son of God then I am! Does not matter how I feel! It matters what I believe. Faith trumps feeling!
- c) Romans 12, Eph 4 speak of the putting off of the old man and also of the renewing of our mind. I must now think like a son of God. IE. Luke 15: When the prodigal came home immediately the Father went to work establishing His sons identity.
 - (1) New garment.
 - (2) Family ring.
 - (3) New Shoes
 - (4) Celebration! My son is alive. My son has come home! vs 24.
- d) When a child of God does not know who they are they keep their former address/ identity which I am calling an orphan spirit: a sense of abandonment, unworthiness, constant fear (expecting the worse), alienation, isolation, self hatred which leads to self destruction and suicidal thoughts.

III. **The Point Is (If Your Apply The Point)**

- A. You are a son not an orphan.
 - 1. A son of God is not an orphan! You are a child of the King! A prince/princess!
 - 2. Please do not settle for anything else. Grow in your sonship even as the prodigal did when he returned.
 - 3. This identity in Christ has the power to totally transform who you are if you will grow in it.
 - 4. You must see God as your Father! He is more than a teacher. He is more than a caretaker. He is more than a guardian. He is Father! Your Father, my father! I have an eternal identity that is life giving.
- B. You have a good Father.
 - 1. He cares for you far more than He cares for sparrows. And He feeds them and knows all about their lives. He is far greater than the dads we saw in our opening video.
 - 2. In Him you have more glory than any flower could ever have. Ie. We photograph and paint flowers. But do you know what flowers would photograph or paint if they could? People, God's people the crown of His creation! In Him we are to live and move and have our being.
- C. You have an awesome family.
 - 1. Jesus is big brother. *"And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering."* (Romans 8:17, NLT)
 - 2. I like the Lords Prayer. *"Our Father in heaven..."*
 - a) **Our** Father - this speaks of community.
 - b) Our **Father** - this speaks of Family.
 - c) **In Heaven** - this speaks of authority.

Conclusion:

- *“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”* (Luke 12:32, NKJV)
- So why does Jesus teach so strongly, so incessantly, about *his* Father, about *our* Father?
 - First, theologically, the Father-Son metaphor, better than any other, describes the relationship of Jesus to God, and Jesus' own divine nature. The same nature we receive when born again. The same nature that Jesus enjoys with the Father.
 - But secondly, I believe that Jesus is trying to heal and bring wholeness to both men and women who have been wounded by their human fathers and by their own sinful choices. Jesus is trying to help you and me know a Father who loves us and will not do us harm, a Father who will not slap us around, but will encircle us in his arms and let us feel his love, a Father who will not let you go.
 - My friends, Jesus wants to reintroduce you to *his* Father, to *your* Father, so that you might be whole -- spiritually and emotionally. Reclaim your birthright to know and enjoy and love Abba as *your* Father.
- Invitation