



# THE ORPHAN

a short story

Faith Christine Honorof

## What was God saying about orphans?

In the middle of a discussion to His disciples, about His leaving the earth, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, Yeshua said something unusual. He said: "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:18) I wonder what His disciples first thought when He said that? They had probably never thought of themselves as orphans, but Jesus did. He knew man's orphaned behavior in the world in which they lived. And that without His Presence living in our hearts, we too would live and behave like orphans---a bunch of rowdy, unloved children, pushing and shoving just to get ahead and to survive.

Yeshua knew that even in His believing Body on this earth there would be many 'little ones' (that's us) who would have a hard time coming to believe that we have a Father in Heaven who truly loves and adores us, and will joyfully provide for all that we need for a sanctified life and for His Kingdom purposes. What an amazing breakthrough. We no longer need to behave as if we are orphans; striving, demanding, and pushing our way through this life.

An important part of the reason that Yeshua came to this earth as the only begotten Son, was, in fact, to show and teach His lost sons and daughters the lessons of Sonship---a life long process! A secure son knows that all is well, and that he has a Father who will always be there for him, and will never fail him.

Have you ever watched a small child holding on to his father's hand as they walk in the midst of a busy world? Usually there is a look on the little one of perfect peace and well being. He's with his daddy, and everything is okay!

Thank you Yeshua---for showing us the way back into the Arms of our Loving Father, that we can be a 'little one,' who will help teach a lost and broken world that we are no longer orphans.

I hope you enjoy my little story.

# The Orphan

a short story by Faith Christine Honorof

Jeremy pulled the blanket up over his head. He did not want the other boys in ward six to hear the muffled cries that would occasionally escape from his mouth. Although he knew that many of the other boys---especially the younger ones---often cried themselves to sleep, he did not want to risk being called a “sissy.”

It was two days before Christmas, and they had come back from their once-in-a-while trip into the town of Bradford, which was about one mile from the orphanage. It was an event that Jeremy and all the boys on his ward looked forward to every year. But many of the boys would often come back from their exciting outing with tears in their eyes and in their hearts.



The orphanage had been the only home Jeremy had ever known—at least since he was two years old. His parents had been killed in a car accident, and since he had no living relatives the orphanage had become his home.

Christmas, for the most part, was no different than any other day for Jeremy or any of the other boys in the bleak gray boarded house. It was just another day of sticky porridge, school, study, and chores.

Often times, for the smallest offense, there would be a whipping in the woodshed before bed. But they were reminded every day, by Mr. Toad, how fortunate they were to have a bed to sleep on and food to eat.



Jeremy's family consisted of a motley group of young boys, roughly around the age of ten. There was Billy and Freddie who were his age, and then Jack and Luther who were almost twelve. Twelve was the oldest you could be and still live in ward six. Mr. Toad, the principal of the orphanage, was very strict on where the boys were to be placed. Friendships mattered little to him.

For Jeremy, the boys at the orphanage were his only family--- at least what he believed a family might be. Freddie was really his best friend, but Freddie was always talking, even though he stuttered. He couldn't seem to slow down, and so sometimes Jeremy had to take a break from his good friend, but only for awhile.



A family without a father and mother was really not a true family---Jeremy knew this. The boys pushed and shoved for the smallest bit of attention, always trying to out do each other; to be king of the mountain. And then there were the nights, like tonight, when it was the hardest time to be an orphan. There were no loving mother's hands, or a father's reassuring smile before they went to bed. For many tonight it was the woodshed that awaited some of the naughtier boys before they crawled into bed and then the sounds of little boys crying could be heard late into the night throughout ward six.

There was little variance to their common day to day life, except when Mr. Williams, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, would take the boys for a hike around the brown, dusty hills that surrounded the large old house. Sometimes they would climb to the very top of one of the hills, and if it was late in the afternoon they would watch with excitement as the twinkling lights in the town would begin to come on---creating an almost fairy tale scene. Jeremy liked to try and imagine how the different families, who lived in the brown gray stucco houses, with their pretty little yards, lived.

And then, on rare occasions, usually on a holiday, when they actually went into the town, Jeremy could see close up what the people were like. He wondered if they ever thought about the boys at the orphanage. And Robert...did he remember the boys who had been his friends?

The boys had been antsy about going into town---jousting each other for the best place to sit. This brief interlude in their daily drudgery always brought them excitement and hope, a special kind of hope. Mr. Williams would sit the boys in the back of the wagon, tell them to "behave or else..." and then they would begin the one mile trek into town.

Once they had parked the wagon near the side entrance to the General store and Co op, the boys would jump off the wagon and like a group of little ducklings they would follow Mr. Williams into the store.

Christmas was always an exciting time to go into Mr. Chuckles General store. The smell of fresh baked cinnamon cookies would cause them to lick their lips and their eyes would grow big, in hopes that they would be offered a free cookie and even, sometimes, one of the red and white striped candies that Mr. Chuckles had put out in abundance, in small containers, for the Christmas season. Mr. Williams bought the supplies that were needed and sometimes the boys could wait outside on the sidewalk, and watch the people walk by.

The men would usually be dressed in their winter coats, and some would have large, warm hats pulled down over their ears. Jeremy especially enjoyed watching the mothers with their lovely dark velvet skirts and soft muffins, with fur trim. Sometimes they would have packages filled with all sorts of exciting things, and Jeremy would try to look inside them as the shoppers rushed by. The other children who sometimes followed their parents were, of course, not allowed to talk to the boys from the orphanage.



The boys longed to be part of a family.

But it was one of the rare times for them to be seen and viewed. The boys always made sure their hair was slicked in place and their britches were pulled up. And when any adults walked up the sidewalk to the store the boys would trip over themselves to try and open the door for them. If it had happened to Robert, they thought, maybe it could also happen to one of them too?

After two years of age it was very unusual for a boy to be adopted from the orphanage---and for sure an impossibility if, like Jeremy, you had a disadvantage. But they had been given a small reason for hope.



Last year, just before Christmas, the day after they had been standing on the sidewalk in front of the General Store, looking their very best, a nice looking man and woman came to the orphanage. They stood outside the door to the classroom as Mr. Toad, breathlessly, went into the room and spoke to Mr. Williams. “Robert,” he said, “would you please come with us.”

Mr. Williams then hurriedly directed Robert to come out into the hallway and meet his new, prospective parents. The story was later circulated that when this husband and wife saw Robert on the sidewalk they were utterly amazed at how much he looked like their son, who had died two years before.

Jeremy never saw Robert after his adoption---well, except for once when he thought he saw him at the parade with his parents. He looked very happy. Jeremy was glad for Robert, and believed that God probably loved him more than the others. Of course he didn't really know God, except for what he had been taught at Sunday School. Sunday was just another day when Mr. Williams used the Bible to instruct the boys in a healthy fear of God, and that they would be judged by God appropriately.

Jeremy knew that what happened to Robert would probably never happen again---it was, as Mr. Williams had said, a "chance happening." And sometimes he was embarrassed by how the boys behaved when they were in town---so eager to be noticed. He could see that the town-people were not interested in any of the ragged, orphan boys.

After Mr. Williams came out of the store the boys scrambled into the back of the wagon, and they went back to the orphanage. Jeremy noticed, when they got back to the large, rambling house, that the boys were unusually rowdy. Their most exciting day of the year was over and they had nothing to look forward to, not even Christmas---and their undisciplined behavior usually meant a line up at the woodshed.

Jeremy pulled the blanket off of his head and listened to the breathing of the boys around him. He could hear a soft whimper, here and there, but for the most part all had gone to sleep. He too closed his eyes, and for a brief moment he tried once again to remember the face of his mother and father, but he could not. He brought the edge of the blanket close to his face, said a short prayer and went to sleep.



“I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.”

John 14:18

Jeremy had tried to talk his friend, Billy, into not leaving with the farmer. It was not unusual for the farmers who lived near by to come to the orphanage and see if they could ‘hire for labor’ some of the stronger looking boys. Mr. Toad had a long report of abused boys who had not been adopted, but were hired out. But Mr. Toad, nonetheless, considered each family a new prospect for any of the orphans. The young teenage boys were given the opportunity to say “no,” but the fact that they were usually promised a fair wage was more than most of the orphaned boys could resist.

Somehow, Jeremy knew in his gut that this job would be a big mistake for Billy. He had even run after Billy, as he left the room. But Jeremy’s bad leg, that gave him a slight limp, kept him from keeping up with his friend. Besides, Billy had already made up his mind. Jeremy watched from his bedroom window as Billy climbed into the truck next to the very pleased looking farmer, and off they went.



Jeremy wondered if perhaps he should pray a short prayer for Billy, who had been one of his good friends. He wasn’t sure how much God really heard him, but he felt it was worth a try. “Dear God,” he started out, “I want to ask you a big favor for my friend, Billy. He has been my friend now since I was about four years old.

He isn't mean like some of the other boys, but he's not too bright, and I think he has made a big mistake. Would you please do what you can and kinda watch out for Billy? I would very much appreciate it, if you would. Thank you." He ended his prayer, "Jeremy Zethan."



It was about one month later when Freddie came running up the steps. He was out of breath and speaking fast, and stuttering so that Jeremy could hardly understand him. "Freddie, slow down. What is it that you are telling me? Speak a little bit slower, please."

Freddie slowed down. "I heard Mr. Williams talking to Mr. Toad. Billy is in the hospital."

"What?" Jeremy responded.

"That old mean farmer that took him away beat him up real bad for not doing his chores on time. If it hadn't been for the farmer's wife finding him in the barn and taking him in the wagon to the hospital, things might have been much worse. I heard Mr. Toad tell Mr. Williams to keep it under his hat. Now, that's kind of a silly thing to say, don't you think Jeremy? How could he keep it under his hat? I guess he's going to live, but I don't know what's going to happen to Billy. I sure hope he doesn't have to go back to that mean ole farmer?"

Jeremy was glad when the lights went out. He didn't want to talk to anyone. Of course the whole ward knew about Billy, and they were all talking about him. Jeremy pulled the blanket up over his head, and pretended he was asleep. He was angry at God for not taking care of Billy.

Mr. Williams was always saying that God was good---no matter how bad the world was. But how could a good God let bad things happen to a little boy? He turned over---trying not to hear what the other boys were saying. He then closed his eyes without saying his prayers. Jeremy had decided he wasn't going to say his prayers anymore.

Two weeks later Billy came back to the orphanage. He didn't look very good, and he wouldn't talk to anyone. Jeremy felt really bad for him. A couple of times Billy looked at Jeremy, but then quickly turned his head away from him. Jeremy didn't know what to do, and he really didn't know what to say to Billy, anyway.

After lunch Jeremy went for a walk outside. It was Saturday afternoon and there were no classes. He had decided to go down by the creek---even though he knew he'd probably get a pretty good whipping for it. He liked it down by the creek. He liked watching the dragonflies dance on the water, and the little fish that would jump into the air. He sat down on a log that partially extended into the creek. He picked up a stick and swished it around in the water. "I am sorry, God," he said, "that I haven't been saying my prayers. I guess You know that I was mad because You wouldn't help my friend, Billy. But now I really need You to help him, because I don't know what to do about Billy. He's really angry and hurt."

"But maybe God did help him, Jeremy?"

Jeremy turned around quickly. A man was sitting there on the ground, right in back of him. He had on a pair of blue jeans and a green plaid shirt. He looked like a normal man---except Jeremy noticed his eyes were very unusual; kind of like deep pools that someone could dive into and never come back up. He found it hard not to look at him. Jeremy knew right away that he was a nice man. He could tell.

“So, why do you think that God didn’t help your friend Billy?”

“Well,” Jeremy did not feel uncomfortable talking to this man, “because he got hurt really bad---that’s way.”

“But God sent someone to find him and take him to the hospital, didn’t He?”

“Well, I guess,” Jeremy answered reservedly. “But He didn’t stop him from getting beat up---don’t you think He could have?”

“He could have, Jeremy, but God does not always do things just the way we want. And yes, sometimes people do get hurt and even die. But instead of looking at what God did not do, maybe it would help to look at what He did do? You see, Billy made a big mistake by going with that farmer. But every person, Jeremy, is given free will to choose good or evil. Billy was motivated by the idea that he would be given money. As soon as he got to the farm then he realized that he had made a big mistake, but there was little he could do. Do you remember, Jeremy, when you first prayed for Billy, and asked me to watch out for him?”

“Yes,” Jeremy answered.

“Because of your prayer of faith, Jeremy, I had My angels always watching out for Billy. There were several times when Billy was spared from some things that could have been very bad.



I also made sure that the farmer’s wife was not afraid to rescue Billy, and take him to the town hospital.”

“How do you know so much about Billy, anyway?” Jeremy was beginning to wonder who this nice man was. He sure seemed to know a lot.

“My name, Jeremy, is Yeshua. It is a Jewish name, like yours. But many people in the world call me Jesus. I don’t mind.”

“Wow!” Jeremy had no doubt that what this man was telling him was the truth---he just knew. You mean like Jesus in the Bible? Are you like him?”

“Well, no, Jeremy. I am not like Him, I am Him.”

“Jeremy’s eyes got very big. “But Jesus lives in heaven. So how can you be here?”

“That’s true, Jeremy. I am in heaven---seated at the right Hand of My Father. But My Love is so great that it cannot be bound by anything, not even time. And so by My Spirit I can be in many places at once. I think it’s a big thing to try and understand. I am here because I love you, Jeremy, and I love all the boys at the orphanage very much, and I want to share some things with you that I think, as My son, you need to know.”

Jeremy could hardly believe what he was hearing. “You just called me Your son? Why?”

“I speak only what My Father speaks, Jeremy. I am His Son, but you are also His son. You are not an orphan, Jeremy. You are Mine and My Father’s most beloved son. You have believed a lie for a long time, and so have the other boys. Your Father in heaven loves you more than you can imagine. We have a wonderful home for you, and We want you to come and live with Us. We also have a wonderful plan for your life, Jeremy.”

Jeremy stood up and moved over to where Jesus was sitting. He sat down next to him and leaned his head on His shoulder. Yeshua put His arms around His son, and for the first time in his life Jeremy knew he was deeply loved, and somehow he knew that he would never feel unloved again.



By the time Jeremy got back to the orphanage it was already dark. He knew that he would get a good whipping for being out so late. But it didn't matter to him---not at all. He had spent the whole afternoon talking to Jesus. And for the first time in his life he was beginning to understand what it really meant to be a son.

In the days that followed Jeremy spent many afternoons and even whole days with Jesus, and just like the first time, nobody at the orphanage seemed to miss his being gone. Jesus had worked a miracle for him. But God was also showing him how important it was to be obedient---even to the teachers and principal at the orphanage. Jesus did not just tell him things but he actually showed him how things are done in the Spirit. In a few days time it seemed as if Jeremy had learned a life time of knowledge and understanding. Before Jesus left He gave Jeremy a brand new Bible. It had his own name written on it.

“I will never leave you as an orphan, Jeremy,” Jesus had said to him. “And one day you will actually see the home We have made for you in heaven. We have given you Our name, and you will always be Our son.” Jeremy missed seeing Jesus, but as he read the Bible he felt the love of his heavenly Father come into his heart, and once in a while he was even able to see into the heavenly realms and glimpse some beautiful and glorious things.

Jeremy was anxious to share with his friends, especially Billy, everything that had happened to him. At first Billy was a little hesitant to believe all that Jeremy was telling him. But every day when Jeremy began to read from the Bible, especially the parts that talked about how we must forgive the people who have hurt us, something began to happen in Billy. Slowly, at first, but then more as time went on, Billy began to change, and even began to believe that it was the truth when Jesus would tell him that he was a good son, and that His Father in heaven was very proud of him.

The Lord also showed Jeremy how important it was to pray for the other boys, and that by his prayers positive changes would happen. He even showed him how to pray for Mr. Toad and Mr. Williams. Jeremy was now becoming a leader at the orphanage, as changes for good were happening all the time. The Holy Spirit would quickly remind Jeremy if he started to slip back into his old orphan ways of doing things. He was truly beginning to see that a son is a leader---an orphan is one that follows. Instead of being impatient and nasty with the other boys, Jeremy was learning that as a true son of heaven he needed to be patient, loving, and kind. It was no longer important for him to compete with the other boys, and he did not always have to try to be the best at something. Now he only needed and wanted God's attention. He had God's love working on the inside, which was changing everything. And everyone around him sensed that he had changed and that he was different, in a good kind of way. He would frequently read the Bible, and he would also read aloud to the other boys, who now wanted to be around him more and more.

The change in Jeremy was noticed by all the other orphan boys and by Mr. Toad and the other teachers too. The Lord had showed him Mr. Toad's very sad up-bringing, and that he had never known the kind of love that Jeremy now knew. So Jeremy spent a lot of time just praying for Mr. Toad, and being more respectful and loving to him.

After awhile Mr. Toad began to look like a new man, and began to take more of an interest in the boys, treating them nicer.

Over the years that he spent at the orphanage Jeremy never grew tired of watching how God's love would always change things.

Fifteen years later....

Jeremy looked around the very expensive office. Wow, he thought, this is really nice. He looked out the spacious window that overlooked a prosperous Washington city. He had come a long ways.

When Jeremy turned eighteen he was able to leave the orphanage and start a new life. He wanted to become a doctor, and he had planned on working his way through medical school, even though he knew that it would be a real struggle to have to work and also keep up his grades.

A few months after starting school the head administrator had called him into his office to tell him that his tuition had been paid in full. It seems that his old friend, Billy, when he had left the orphanage as a changed man, had started building homes for poor people who had little money. In his generosity for others the Lord had greatly prospered him, and he became a wealthy man. He then made sure his good friend Jeremy was taken care of.

"Well, young man," Doctor Millton walked briskly into the office, "have you made up your mind? Your qualifications for this job are exceptional and there is something special about you. All I can say is well...you are the one I want to take over my job when I resign next month. You fit the bill." He laughed unabashedly.

Jeremy looked away from the well respected doctor. He glanced again out the window. He hoped his fiancée, Jeannie, was praying for him. It had been a hard decision, but he had talked with his friend Jesus, and now he knew what he was going to do.



Although he knew that he could have this job if he wanted it, he also knew that it was not in the heart of God for him to accept. He turned around to talk to the retiring doctor.

“I am very much honored that you would consider me for such a prestigious position. I have given this much thought and prayer. But I am afraid, Dr. Milton, I must say ‘no.’

“What?” the doctor responded. “Have you been offered a better job?”

“Well, not a better job, pay wise,” Jeremy laughed softly.

“About a two hour drive from this city, doctor, there is a pretty run down orphanage, that needs a lot of work, and some boys that are a real handful, and need a lot of love, and someone to tell them what they don’t know.”

“And what’s that?” the doctor asked.

12/11/12

Jeremy looked away from the window and smiled broadly.

**“Because of Jesus, they do not have to be orphans anymore!”**



