

## Chapter 23 | Your Identity is the Most Beautiful Thing There Is

Imagine living your life with a false identity. That's what happened to Francisco Madariaga Quintela. Just over 30 years ago his mother Sylvia was kidnapped by Argentine security forces. Her husband Abel last saw his pregnant wife being pushed into a Ford Falcon by army officers dressed as civilians as she walked to catch a train on January 17, 1977.

Sylvia was placed in one of the most notorious torture centers near Buenos Aires—Campo del Mayo. Surviving prisoners later revealed that the baby was taken away after birth and Sylvia disappeared in a short time. The baby was taken by a military intelligence officer and adopted as Alejandro Ramiro Gallo. The adoptive father was eventually put in prison for murder. When he was older, Alejandro's adoptive mother told him the truth about himself.

In the meantime his real father Abel had joined a group called The Grandmothers of the Plaza del Mayo—a group formed to help return children who had disappeared during the late '70's to their parents. One day Alejandro went to the group. After DNA testing a match was found and a meeting with his father—Abel—was arranged.

Alejandro, after learning his real name was Francisco Madariaga Quintela, said, "For the first time, I know who I was. Who I am. . . . Never again will I use this name. . . . To have your identity is the most beautiful thing there is."

Maybe you need to know your identity today. A strong sense of identity can take you through the toughest tests. It did for Jesus. Just after his baptism where his lineage was stamped with these words, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased," Jesus endured tests in the wilderness. Satan attacked his identity three times with the phrase, "If you are the Son of God . . ." Jesus knew who he was and he changed the world so that you can know who you are and have your world changed by your faith in him.

During a news conference where Abel Madariaga told his story, we are told "his chest heaved" as he presented his own son to the world. Like a proud papa, God has presented his one and only Son to the world. He wants you to believe in him so that he can, with "chest heaving full of joy," present you as his child too. When Satan attacks you can stand firm. And when you need it most, you will feel his hug in a spectacular way and know that you are home.

"To have your identity is the most beautiful thing there is."