



Sermon Series Notes

"God's Heart for Orphans, etc." (James 1:27)

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Intro: We will be back in Mark's gospel next weekend, but this weekend we focus on a subject that is near and dear to the heart of God.

Isa.58:6-9; The Christian life is more than attending church & practicing religious traditions.

Acts 10:38 (Peter at the home of Cornelius)...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good...

Christianity is not as much a list of "don't do's" as it is a list of "do's." it is the doing of our Christian faith that confirms it's genuineness.

See James 2:14-18.

I am trying to do good personally, as the Lord gives me ability and financial resources to do so. And I am trying to do good pastorally, by leading this local church into doing as much good as possible with the abilities and resources we have. And there is one particular ministry the Lord has raised up that is doing a world of good in the name of Christ, and I don't know of another ministry that clearly reflects the heart of our heavenly Father any more than this ministry. It is called A Door of Hope, and it specifically ministers to orphans right here in our backyard, the Tampa Bay area. The vision for this ministry began with one of our pastors, Tom Teel. In a few minutes I want you to hear from Tom, but before he comes, I have a few things the Lord has laid on my heart.

See Isa.1:11-17; The old life of sin must be replaced with a new life of doing good. And here, some specific good deeds are mentioned (v.17).

Deut.10: 18 He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

Psalm 10:14...you are the helper of the fatherless...

Hosea 14:3...in you the fatherless find compassion."

See Luke 7:11-15

In Acts 6, the early church had a problem with the Grecian widows being overlooked in the daily distribution of food, and the apostles made sure that this problem was solved, because they knew God's heart toward orphans and widows.

I Timothy 5:3-4 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first to put their religion into practice by caring for their own families and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

My mother caring for my grandmother, Ward and Ann Ellis, Dave San Souci, etc.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

This is one time when examining carefully the Greek word in a text can be very helpful. The word translated "to look after" in James 1:17 is "episkeptomai, ep-ee-skep'-tom-ahee."

Meaning = to inspect; to go to see, visit; to select; relieve

- To Inspect = To look closely at or into; Nehemiah 2:13, 15
- To Visit; We sometimes send teams specifically to do orphanage ministry. We also do this through our mentoring ministry (expound?)
- Give to help them
 - Deut.14:28-29 At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites...and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.
 - Deut.16:10-14 (Give shout out to all the adopted children, mentored children, we are so happy God has made you a part of our family here at CCSP!
 - Deut.24:19-21 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.
 - Deut.26:12-13 When you have finished setting aside a tenth of all your produce in the third year, the year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then say to the Lord your God: "I have removed from my house the sacred portion and have given it to the Levite, the alien, the fatherless.
 - God established this law so that any widow, orphan, or stranger ***within the vicinity of God's people*** would be provided for. Every person in God's family was to do this, it was not optional.
 - I John 3:16-18 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and

sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

- Select = Become a foster parent, or adopt a child
 - Psalm 68:5-6 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families...
 - God is in the adoption business
 - Romans 9:4...theirs is the adoption as sons...
 - Ephesians 1:4-5 for he chose us in him before the creation of the world...In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.
 - God intended to adopt us before the dawn of human history, before God spoke His all-powerful, life-giving words, "Let there be!" John Piper said "[adoption is greater than the universe.](#)"
 - Theologian J.I. Packer wrote, "adoption is the highest blessing of the Gospel, higher even than the gift of justification (Rom.3:24; 5:19; I Cor.6:11; Titus 3:7) because of the richer relationship with God that it involves. Justification is a *forensic* idea, conceived in terms of *law*, and viewing God as *judge*. Adoption is a *family* idea, conceived in terms of *love*, and viewing God as *father*. In adoption, God takes us into His family and fellowship, and establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the father is greater." (*Knowing God*, 186-188).
 - Galatians 4:4-6 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."
 - See John 14:1-6, 15-18; Note that the word for orphans is same as in James 1:27.
 - Our adoption into God's family has an incredible future climax. See Romans 8:15-19, 22-23; Rev.21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Salvation Invitation

ADOH video; Tom Teel shares here

Three biblical reasons for being involved in ministering to orphans in some form or fashion.

- It provides evidence that our faith is genuine (James 1:17, pure religion)
- It is central to the heart of God
- God is in the adoption business

CONCLUSION

The only recorded "Abba Father" cry in the Bible was from Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed for the removal of the cup (the cross). But he submitted to his Father's will and drank every last drop of

that cup. In doing so He has made possible an indescribably good gift to us—the gift of adoption into His family.

His sacrifice gave us the opportunity to be adopted into God’s family. As a result of His sacrifice for us, He calls us to sacrifice for others. And our ultimate goal is not a humanitarian cause but a heavenly one.

No community of people in this world should be more anxious to minister to orphans than those of us who have been adopted into God’s family.

Deut.27:19 Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow.

Consider becoming a mentor, a foster parent, or adopting. And everyone, at the very least, give monetarily. Make your gift to ADOH, or just give extra today, or from your next check, etc. Everything over what we need for budget this weekend will go to ADOH.

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