

Orphan Sunday 2019

Psalm 68.4-6

When you see something amazing, you praise it

- The Voice / AGT
- So with God's power: it's amazing and praiseworthy (v.1-4)
 - Succeeding verses add to our amazement

God uses His power for GOOD

God uses His power for the DEFENSELESS

- Those who have no socioeconomic resources to change their situation
 - He is the father of the fatherless
 - He is the defender of the widow
 - He is the locator of the lonely
- Why is this praiseworthy?
 - When the mighty use their power for the more vulnerable, it's good.
 - Obama picture
 - When the Almighty uses His power for the most vulnerable, it's Amazing.
 - It's the LORD who rides because it's the LORD who reigns

He *allies* Himself with them

- Jesus with the drunkards, revilers, gluttons
- Consistently finding Him identifying Himself with those whom society has rejected
- He is the One who uses His power for the most vulnerable – widow's son, Mary from cross, etc

He *advocates* for them

- The voice of the Law – Exodus 22.22-24
- The voice of the Prophets – Isaiah 1.17
- The voice of the Wisdom literature – Prov 31.8-9
- The voice of the NT – God revealed as Father, James 1.27
- The voice of the Spirit in believers
 - Polycarp to Philipians - "The presbyters, for their part, must be compassionate, merciful to all, turning back those who have gone astray, visiting all the sick, not neglecting a widow, orphan, or poor person, but always aiming at what is honorable in the sight of God and of people"
 - When we first meet the mention of the adoption and bringing up of foundlings, this work appears not as a novelty, but as one long practiced. It is true that the heathen also used to take care of exposed children, but for the purposes of bringing them up as gladiators or prostitutes, or to use them in their own service.... Christians brought up the children whom

they took charge of for the Lord, and for a respectable and industrious life (G. Uhlhorn, Christian Charity in the Ancient Church, p. 186).

He *acts* in support of them

- He takes the lonely and places them in homes – firm, stable, safe place, a place where they can grow and have a voice
- This is a double-blessing – for the kids and for the families
- Certainly praiseworthy that He would design it this way

So to be a biblical Christian and a biblical church, **we** must ally with them, advocate for them, act in support of them

- Ally – let your heart turn and let go of your ease
 - Do you see them?
- Advocate – let your presence be felt
 - CASA, Foster steps
- Act – let your life touch theirs
 - Foster care and adoption
 - When you adopt, you change the world – by changing your family tree and theirs physically and spiritually
 - Sept 2019 – 2000 kids in Harris / Galv, 200 need placements

1. How many families can you name who are involved in foster care or adoption? How close were you to their stories / journeys?
2. Read Psalm 127. How does it speak about children? If you had to identify your parents' outlook, where were they in line with Psalm 127 and where were they out of line? How does that shape the way you see your kids or grandkids (or how you want to see your children)?
3. Name two ways that children model for us life in the Kingdom of God. How would you rate yourself against those two ways? What needs to change in light of that?
4. As a church, we've obviously been impacted deeply by the ministry of orphan care. How have you personally seen it? What role have you played in it? How can you play a role?
5. What's the hardest thing you're facing in parenting right now (if you are parents)? What's the hardest thing your Heavenly Father is facing with you right now? How does the latter shape the former?
6. Read the following passages: Ephesians 1.3-6, Romans 8.14-17, Galatians 4.4-7. How do these passages correlate? How do they emphasize the Gospel (and adoption as a picture of the Gospel)?