

Orphan Sunday 2020
James 1.27

Jesus fulfills the Law *for us and in us*

- This is what God said would happen
 - Jeremiah 31.33-34, Ezekiel 36.26-27
- My life reflects the truth, goodness, and wisdom of the Law
 - My transformed life looks like compliance to the commands of God – *course, not source*
 - True in James – heart issue working itself out in our very real lives
 - Words – out of heart mouth speaks (Matt 12.34)
 - Purity of life IN the world and care for widows / orphans
- Jesus gathers communities of disciples – those beyond fans and fascination (though hopefully present in the community of disciples) – who express the truth, goodness, and wisdom of the Law together

What would this look like?

Destroyer of the gods – Larry Hurtado

Early church was...

1. Concerned about racial tensions
2. Concerned about economic inequities
3. Concerned about sexual ethics
4. Concerned about babies, orphans, end of life questions
5. Concerned about priority of relationships (forgiveness, reconciliation vs. retaliation)

Aside: church transcended issues because they didn't see them as issues but *opportunities* for obedience and ministry

Today is an opportunity to let our hearts engage in this opportunity for obedience and ministry – to let Jesus fulfill the Law in you

- It's too easy to be politically prolife – Jesus never called us to make that shallow an investment (into politics that change and then change again)

Watching over orphans (*episkopos*)

True religion is this – not the normal religious trappings commonly associated

- God allies with orphans (Ps 68.5)
- God advocates for them (Ps 82.3)
- God acts on their behalf (Ps 10.17-18)

Our opportunity for obedience and ministry:

- Prayer and care
- Babysitting
- Respite care
- Foster care
- Adoption

Am I in this alone? **No** – it's in our DNA as a church and in our families (VIDEO)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Reread James 1.26-27. How does James define and describe religion? How is that different than how religion is described and defined normally (or in your experience)?
2. Read Matthew 15.1-20. What was the issue at hand? How did Jesus wrestle with it? What was His target? What do you take away from it?
3. In the sermon, we talked about how a group of gathered disciples (called the church) expresses God's will and obedience to it together. Using the information from Larry Hurtado's *Destroyer of the gods* (mentioned above), where do you think the American church is on these 5 issues? What about our church family?
4. Thinking about the opportunities for obedience and ministry mentioned above, what is one way you can pray and care for those families who are in the orphan care process? Is there a next step that you and your family need to take?
5. COVID Check-in: how are you? Your family? Your neighbor? Your One?