

Orphan Care – Ps 82:3-4

Ps 82:3-4; I want to talk to you about Orphan Care this evening/morning . . .

And though this isn't the only passage on OC in the Bible, it *is* one of the strongest
And you'll find many more throughout the Bible, from examples to principles, b/c OC is
and always has been, near and dear to God's heart
Therefore, it is and always has been, an ethic and practice of God's people as well

Which is why it's one of the 10 Initiatives we've been working on since last July

And though it might be overshadowed by some of the others – it's no less important, and
affects all of us

- Which means this message is for everyone (**Intro**)

It's for the *family* who already has kids, but wonders if they should adopt more . . .

It's for the *husband* who flinches when his wife raises the issue of adoption b/c he wants
his “own kids,” and hates himself a little for thinking that way . . .

It's for the *wife* who hangs on to the adoption papers as a last resort, hoping against hope
for two lines of purple to show up on her pregnancy test . . .

It's for the *single 20-something* who assumes that they'll marry in a few years, enjoy a
honeymoon for a few more, and then get pregnant . . .

It's even for the *elderly couple* who dotes on their grandchildren, but wonders how they
can help the couple in their SG who desperately wants to start a family of their own . .

And it's for our church, and what it would mean for our witness and testimony in this
community, if we were known as the people who take in orphans, and love them as our
own
(Russell Moore – *Adopted For Life*; 19)

This message is for everyone; So I want to spend our time together informing you,
preparing you, and encouraging you to get on board; Starting with Ps 82:3-4

- Speaking to all mankind, God says in v3 – “*Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. 4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.*”

Although these verses encompass far more than just orphans, orphans are certainly
included

They're *weak* and *fatherless*; Many of them are *afflicted* – physically *and* emotionally
All are *needy*; Some are *destitute*; And a few are in the control of the *wicked*

And it's our responsibility, especially as God's people – to make sure they're treated *justly*
And that their *rights* to life, and love, and basic necessities are maintained and preserved
Even if that means rescuing them and delivering them from wicked people
Bottom line? OC is a mandate – for all of us

- Not that every single one of us needs to adopt, but we do need to *advocate*
Every single one of us needs to help, support, give, pray, and speak on behalf of the
orphan, and those who care for them
So that as a church, a family, a fellowship of believers who belong together in mutual
partnership – we might *fulfill* the mandate to care for the orphan
It takes a church; Far more than a village, it takes a church

That said, OC, at its most fundamental level, is . . .

Orphan Care is helping those whose parents can't or won't

Including those at risk of abortion – that would be a form of OC

Or helping those whose parents have died

Or those whose parents have abandoned them; Or *can't* take care of them

OC is helping those whose parents can't or won't help them

Which *could* be as simple as . . .

- **Connecting with an orphan in our community**

Maybe through a tutoring situation; Or a mentoring program; Or a sports activity

Or informally with someone in your neighborhood

Sometimes OC is connecting with a child who gets *some* help at home, some provision,
some protection, some love – but not all they need

Which is why we partner with organizations like YouthHope in Rock Island and Moline

So that you can help those whose parents can't or won't

OC could also mean . . .

- **Supporting an orphan in our world**

Like giving to an orphanage

Or supporting a *child* in an orphanage somewhere in the world

If that interests you, **Faces of the Forgotten** on the internet is a good place to start
Facesoftheforgotten.org; So that you can help those whose parents can't or won't

Third, OC could mean

- **Caring for an orphan in your home**

Like Foster Care with the state

Or becoming a Safe Family through Lydia Home, one of our local outreach partners
right here in Davenport

Or providing a break for couples in our church who are already involved – like a date
night with babysitting and a gift card

(Summary)

- **Adopting an orphan into your family**

The process for which is not nearly as scary as it is lengthy

And you can find it with a quick Google search

The hard part, is knowing who to go with – what organization

And that's one of the reasons we're starting this ministry

Not to *be* an adoption organization, but to provide you with resources and information to
point you in the right direction, and walk *with* you as you go

We want to help you *meet* the need, not just think about it

That's the second aspect of OC I want to make you aware of – the need

Orphan Care is desperately needed

- **2002 – 70 million orphans worldwide**

• **2010 – 163 million**; That's 1 in every 13 kids in this world
15 million of whom have no parent at all

• **US – 424k in Foster Care (IA – 7k; IL – 15k)**

• **Average age – 8 years**

• **Every year in US – 30,000 “Age Out”** without being adopted

The need is obvious; But not just b/c of the numbers; It's also needed b/c of their plight

Orphans are the most vulnerable demographic on the planet

They're not only the most likely to suffer fr hunger, neglect, & preventable diseases . . .

But also the most likely to be forced into slavery, prostitution, and war

- All of which seems a bit overwhelming, until you consider the fact, that out of the nearly 40 percent of American adults who have considered adopting . . .

If only 1 in 500 of them did so, every waiting child in foster care in our country would have a permanent family

And it wouldn't take much beyond that to make a serious dent worldwide

And imagine the kingdom impact if those families were part of a God-honoring church

It's not the be all end all, or the answer to *every* problem . . .

But it sure would go a long way toward impacting our culture for Christ, and meeting a desperate need all over the world (**Video – Why Love Orphans**)

OC is desperately needed – not just because of the numbers, or their plight . . .

But b/c they're kids, made in the image of God, just like you and me

Third . . .

Orphan Care is a golden opportunity

It's not just a need, but an opportunity; An opportunity first of all . . .

- **To live in obedience to God's Word**

Once again, Ps 82:3 says – *Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute.*

Those are commands that require obedience on our part

And few things offer more justice to an orphan than granting their right to basic needs

Needs that have been neglected or withheld through no fault of their own

Especially their need for love

And few things do more to rescue them in their weakness and need, or deliver them from the hand of the wicked – than providing a home and a family

Which makes OC a golden opportunity to live in obedience to God's Word

Second, it's a golden opportunity . . .

- **To make the gospel visible**

Do you realize that adoption is at the core of the gospel? The core of your salvation?

That's b/c, when Adam and Eve sinned, they turned the world into an orphanage

Think about it; Our world is void of intimacy with our *creator*, just like an orphanage is void of intimacy with their *parents*

And our world is marked by a severed relationship with our Father in heaven, just like orphans are marked by a severed relationship with *their* father on earth

When Adam and Eve sinned they turned the world into an orphanage

Until Jesus came as an orphan himself, forsaken by the Father as he died on the cross . . .

So that we could be adopted into God's family through faith and repentance . . .

And called sons and daughters of the Most High; It's almost too good to be true

And I want you to turn to Gal 4:4-5 just so you know I'm not making this up (p.974)

- Gal 4:4-5 says – *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.*

God sent Jesus to our orphanage to redeem us – to buy us back from the hand of the wicked and rescue us from the bondage sin . . .

So that he could adopt us into his family as sons and daughters

And **Eph 1:5** says that he planned it that way – *In love he predestined us* [predetermined us] *for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will*

He planned on adopting us before the foundation of the world, even though we created the orphanage ourselves, b/c he loves us *****

- And we wait for the fulfillment or the completion of our adoption, just like he promised, when he comes again to receive us unto himself . . .

And take us home to the place he's prepared, that where he is, we may be also (Jn 14:3)

Just like an earthly father does when he adopts a child, and takes them home to the place *he* has prepared, that where he is, they may be also

When you adopt a child into your family, you not only rescue the weak and needy like Ps

82 says, but you make the gospel visible – the good news that God's all about OC

It's a golden opportunity no matter how you look at it

And it's also a golden opportunity . . .

- **To show your love for the Lord**

Jesus said in **Mt 18:5**, speaking of children – *Whoever receives one such child in my name* [i.e. for my purposes, in my strength, for my glory] *receives me* [embraces me, shows their love for me]

Which means OC is a golden opportunity to show your love for the Lord, *to* the Lord

It's an act of love expressed not just to the child, but to Christ *****

Does that mean that you have to adopt in order to really show your love for Jesus? No

But it does mean that there's something special about doing so

Something near and dear to God's heart

Which at the very least, means more of you should; More of you *should* adopt

It may not be for everyone, but I'm pretty certain it's for more than are currently involved

More than just the infertile couple, or the couple whose pregnancies are high risk, or those still young in age

It's for *anyone*, who's compelled by the fact that it's a golden opportunity for *them*

So if God is pressing on your heart in that respect – ignore him no longer

Seize the opportunity, and show your love for the Lord

4th here, OC is a golden opportunity . . .

- **To fulfill the Great Commission**

OC is a golden opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission, in the spirit of the Great Commandment

Which should sound familiar if this is your church home, b/c that's the *mission* of our church; the reason we exist

To glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission, in the spirit of the Great Commandment (Mt 28:19-20; 22:37-39)
That is, to make God look good, by making disciples of all nations the Bible says – all people groups . . .
And do so out of a love for God and a love for them

It's the reason we exist as a church, and the marching orders for our lives
And OC is one of the ways to fulfill that mission; Especially adoption and foster care
In fact, in-home, 24/7 interaction, is one of the best ways to show a child the *love* of Christ, and introduce them to a *life* in Christ
It's a golden opportunity to fulfill the Great Commission

And finally, it's a process
Orphan Care is a process

It's desperately needed; It's a golden opportunity; And it's a process
A process that takes a lot of time, and a lot of effort – especially if you're getting involved in foster care or adoption

And it starts by *opening your heart to the possibilities* – aka prayer
Opening your heart to the heart of God, as to the possibility of . . .
Connecting with an orphan in our community, or supporting an orphan in our world, or caring for an orphan in your home, or adopting an orphan into your family
Whatever the case, it starts by opening your heart to the possibilities

And then *opening your eyes to the need* – the need for people like yourself, and churches like ours, to get involved

Open your heart, open your eyes, and *educate your mind*
If God's squeezing your heart on this, get up to speed by studying the Scriptures, reading a book, and getting on some websites
You can start with ours, where you'll find Scriptures, book recommendations, and other helpful links . . .
But whatever you do, educate yourself

And then *connect with others* who are doing the same – and this is one of the most important parts of the process
In fact, there's a great opportunity to do that next Sunday from 1:15-3 in the PowerHouse room . . .
Where Doug Rowland, our Pastor of Local Outreach – will introduce you to this ministry with a comprehensive overview, a video presentation . . .
And a chance to connect with others who are doing the same; It's crucial

- So whether you're barely interested and *scared* to death by all this . . .
Or, all in and *thrilled* by it . . . *****
Let me encourage you to mark your calendars and take advantage of that
B/c it's a long process that takes a lot of time, and a lot of effort
But there's a lot of blessing, if we do it together

- With that in mind, let's go to **communion**

And let me encourage you to take the time to reflect on and thank God for your *adoption*, and the sacrifice Christ made to make it possible

But if that's not true of you, if you haven't yet been adopted into God's family by faith in Jesus and repentance of your sins – let the bread and cup pass
Otherwise you'll be guilty of showing disrespect and irreverence toward God, and risk bringing judgment on yourself

But if u believe that Jesus died in your place, for your sin – and you're sorry about that . . .
You can ask God right now to forgive you, and adopt you into his family
Committing to love him, worship him, and live for him the rest of your days

You can do that
And if you do, join us – b/c you too have been adopted into God's family

As you receive the bread, go ahead and take it on your own when you're ready – as a reminder that you personally have been adopted into God's family
But hang on to the cup and we'll drink it together – as a reminder that we're in this together as a family

- Cup — 1 Cor 11:25
This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .
IOW this cup and what it contains is symbolic of the promise of salvation that Christ's blood bought/guaranteed
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me

Pray – God, thank you for rescuing us from our self-imposed orphanage, and adopting us into your family
And thank you for sending Jesus to make it possible
For forsaking him on the cross, so you could welcome us as your own
How deep your love for us; How vast beyond all measure
(No amen)

Worship – How Deep The Father's Love For Us/How Great Thou Art

Close – More information about OC in the lobby
Don't forget about WinterJam; Next is 1 Cor 8