

Sermon Outline

“I Will Not Leave You as Orphans,” John 14:18 & James 1:27 – Ben Wikner – November 4, 2012

1. Introduction

- A. For the past decade the first Sunday of November has been dedicated as national Orphan Sunday. We are joining with over 1,200 churches around the world in drawing attention to the plight of the orphan and God’s call to His disciples to go and care for them in their distress.
- B. As Bible-believing Christians, we believe this is something that is very near and dear to God’s heart, so we want to encourage and facilitate greater engagement in reaching out to orphans by coming to the aid of at-risk and vulnerable children.
- C. John 14:18 and James 1:27 are the only 2 places the word *orphan* is used in the New Testament. Because of its uniqueness it is appropriate to consider them carefully.
- D. Global orphan crisis: an estimated 150 million children in the world without a father or mother, without the most basic human, relational necessity – someone to love, care for and provide for them. Any way you look at it, it’s heart-breaking. Whenever any child is bereft of parents, it is heartbreaking. Multiply it by millions and it is breathtaking.

2. God is our Father

- A. God’s divine nature shows him to be a Father. His love for his disciples, for all who follow him, is as a father to his children. Only His fatherhood is perfect and complete.
- B. To say God is Father is to appreciate the priority of relationship that God has designed. Yes, God is king of kings, He is judge, He is the Creator and the Almighty. But God, in Jesus Christ, through adoption, desires to be in relationship with us as Father, above all.
 - a. *“The greatest sorrow and burden you can lay on the Father, the greatest unkindness you can do to him is to not believe that he loves you.” – John Owen*
- C. Hear the words of **1 John 3:3**, *“Behold, what manner of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God, and so we are.”* The perfect love of the Father overcomes the imperfect love of the world. In order to relate to God Father, we need to be adopted into His family.

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3. God comes to us and adopts us

- A. *The gospel is God's solution to the orphan crisis.* This statement is a double entendre (double significance). The gospel is God's solution to the practical needs of the many orphaned children in the world. But the gospel is God's solution for the crisis of the even more vital need to know God as their Father.
- B. Without the Father, we are like orphans: life is confusing and insecure; we need help, and often make bad decisions, finding it in things and people who do more harm than good; the orphan is undisciplined, easily abused, taken advantage of, neglected and without hope. That's who we are without Christ – without a relationship with God as our Father. But God comes to us!

4. God calls us to care for orphans

- A. In the light of the gospel, we see that God initiated salvation by rescuing us from our orphan state. In so doing, he committed to loving us though we were in various conditions of destitution, misery, rebellion, and filth. And He brought us into His home in this condition, and though we continue to sin and act like orphans at times, He continues to love us. He is faithful.
- B. God's call to care for orphans – in the light of the gospel – is His call to compassion and to love sinners in the midst of their misery and sin. Gospel-adoption isn't about getting a child (though that is wonderful); it is about mimicking the Father's love to one just like us – an orphan, and showing them the love of the Father. Gospel adoption is gritty, costly, and sacrificial.
- C. In adoption, we get to share the Father's heart. We adopt to glorify God by loving the fatherless and to show them the true Father. The Father who defends, protects, and comes to them and gives them life and hope in Jesus Christ.

5. Conclusion

The Beloved Ministry – sharing the Father's heart

- 1) Supporting foster care families
- 2) Adoption support (both for those who have adopted and those who would like to adopt)
- 3) International orphan care – partnering with like-minded organizations
- 4) Lots of opportunities to serve: for advocacy, counseling, financial support, events, adoption,
- 5) CLC adoption fund

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6. Fellowship Starters

1. Take time as a Care Group to read John 14:18 and James 1:27
2. Do you view God as a loving Father towards you? If not, why do you think you do not view God in this way?
3. Do you see yourself as an orphan without hope apart from being adopted by God? Do you think God adopted you because you were “adoptable”? Why or why not?
4. In what way do you think God is calling you to help care for and show the love of the Father to orphans?
5. How can you show the love of the Father to orphans and those around you who are spiritual orphans?