

## I. Introduction

- A. We've all done it (at least I have)
  - 1. Checking out, on your couch, chips all over your shirt, binge watching TV and the "feed the children" ad comes on.
    - a) You want to fast forward it b/c It makes you feel guilty
  - 2. I don't want to confront reality when I am trying to escape reality
- B. We all know that we are supposed to care, but for a lot of us (maybe you too) you wrestle with two questions: How? Why?
  - 1. The how is difficult...we can hurt more than we help sometimes...but that shouldn't paralyze us into inaction.
  - 2. The why seems no brainer, but I bet few would really be able to explain
    - a) Because we should?
- C. I am a firm believer that motivation by guilty manipulation won't last
  - 1. So I could show you pictures, make you feel bad, but that often isn't able to actually spur on life change → just temporary guilt-driven action
- D. Today I want to show you the biblical reason, at least one of them, for why we are called to care for orphans.

## II. Background

- A. Created in God's image // Fall // Revelation // Abraham // Slavery to PL
- B. He covenanted, or contracted, them to himself as their king (standard ANE)
- C. Israel would be unique, though, because their king would reign from heaven
  - 1. Strategic location, strategic job → represent their King to the world
- D. Contractually, kings were supposed to care for the helpless...
- E. Hammurabi Law Code: *"...to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak ... to further the welfare of the people ... I brought health to the land; I made the populace to rest in security; I permitted no one to molest them ... I restrained them that the strong might not oppress the weak, and that they should give justice to the orphan and the widow.... "*
- F. A good king would do these things...but what if your king lived in heaven?
- G. Difference = Government's job vs. people's responsibility
- H. God has always helped the helpless.** (Beginning → Cross → End)
- I. Israel was meant to reflect the One True God w/ their faith and lives

## III. Read *Isaiah 1:1-9*

- A. Isaiah writes on the precipice of Israel being scattered as judgment
- B. The main accusation against them → **Misrepresenting God**
- C. God blessed Israel so that the world would be blessed (Abrahamic Covenant)
- D. He used his blessings, favor, kindness, patience as an opportunity to sin
  - 1. They were called to know God and reveal God, but instead God says a donkey has more sense than they do.
- E. What could cause this? How could people be so thick, so dense, so dimwitted?
  - 1. Surely we know because we do the same thing...
    - a) Salvation is a gift, we try and be perfected by works

- b) Receive God's forgiveness, we willingly withhold it from others
- c) Experience unmerited favor, we deny love
- d) Experience grace, we use it for an occasion of the flesh
- e) Recipients of love as helpless ppl, but don't love the helpless

F. What could cause this? What was wrong with them? What is wrong with us?

IV. *Read Isaiah 1:10-15*

- A. The cause = a sin-sick nature coupled with empty religion
- B. Evil isn't a thing - it is a corruption of a thing, like rust is a reduction of iron
- C. **Sin will infect and destroy everything, even pious things.**
- D. A sin-infected heart will take good religious concepts and turn them into...
- E. Sacrifices were part of their religious structure intended to foster true piety, to move them to love God & others, but it didn't happen
- F. As people we tend to live on the surface and never get to the heart →
- G. For the Jews:
  - 1. God says he isn't impressed w/ their big, fat, bloody sacrifices // they were designed to remind the nation of their sin, not to impress God
  - 2. God says he is sick of them trying to look pious when they are hypocrites // they show up at the festivals looking holy and they raise their hands to pray but are COVERED IN THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS (that is flipping intense)
  - 3. *"God rejects his people's worship, however lavish, because they use it as a pious evasion of the self-denying demands of helping the weak."*
- H. For us, we can relate. We also experience empty religion...
  - 1. God isn't impressed w/ our dress, buildings...he wants our hearts
  - 2. He isn't impressed w/ our attendance or our good deeds...he wants our hearts
  - 3. He isn't impressed w/ how many candles you light, rosaries you say, prayers you repeat or any other ritual b/c he wants your heart
- I. Religion isn't bad (Jesus was religious), but separated from a heart surrendered to Christ it is offensive to God
- J. Isaiah's argument = **You don't love like God loves because you don't truly know the love of God.**
- K. Love your neighbor, whom you see, as evidence that you love God, whom you do not see

V. *Read Isaiah 1:16-17*

- A. So what's the solution? Repentance which leads to action
- B. Maybe you thought I would stand here and make you feel bad about orphans (and I might), but the solution isn't to make you feel bad about kids in Africa
  - 1. The problem is our hearts.
- C. "Go from being cleansed to putting away evil and doing what is right!"
- D. Often we think that we get cleansed by doing what is right.
  - 1. Only Jesus can cleanse away your sin and make you pleasing to God
    - a) "Without faith it is impossible to please God"

- 2. Real surrender → Real action
- E. We were all born orphans, but Jesus cares for the orphan...
- F. What does it say about our understanding of Christ if we don't do the same?
  - 1. Do we know him? Do we truly grasp the depth of our own depravity before we were rescued? Do we know how hopeless we truly were?
    - a) If we did, we would be broken for the overlooked & forgotten
  - 2. Do we understand what it means to be adopted into the family of the King of kings, the Prince of peace, the God of gods?
    - a) If we did, we would desperately want to show that love
  - 3. Do we understand that we who were far away pagan idol worshippers have been brought near through Jesus' death and resurrection?
    - a) If we did we would be excited about embracing, for the sake of the glory of God, those who are different from us
  - 4. We would embrace missions, embrace diversity, run to parts of town that make us uncomfortable.
  - 5. No sacrifice would be too great. No discomfort too much.
- G. We love because we are loved by a loving God.**
  - 1. We care b/c we are cared for. We are kind b/c we have received kindness. We sacrifice b/c our salvation cost Jesus everything.
- H. It is our mission to represent him to a lost and dying world.**
- I. The Gospel is the reason for Orphan Care**
  - 1. We were spiritual orphans, we reach out to spiritual orphans and physical orphans, representing our Lord and Savior.
- VI. What does this mean for us? Tangibly what can we do? How do we live and reflect the goodness of a God who gave his all for us? What does it look to live a worshipful life?
  - A. The statistics are staggering:
    - 1. 153 million children worldwide
    - 2. HIV/AIDS has orphaned 17.9 million children
    - 3. Over 1 billion children suffer from at least one form of severe deprivation of basic needs such as water, food, and sanitation.
      - a) Something like 90% of whom live in the 10/40 window (explain)
    - 4. 22 million children are refugees or internally displaced...now even more
    - 5. Over 1 billion children live in countries affected by armed conflict
    - 6. What do we do about it? It would be far easier to ignore and escape
  - B. Corporately
    - 1. We are not where we want to be. We know this.
    - 2. Before we started revolve, we talked a great deal about the overlooked and forgotten people in this world
      - a) As we grew, other things demanded figuring out
    - 3. We want to be a church for all people, esp. the overlooked & forgotten b/c we want them to know that God hasn't forgotten them
      - a) We want to church plant in hard areas, support Gospel-Centered aid work

4. Locally, we want to help the poor in healthy ways & equip you to help
5. We want to increase the amount of money that we give with each passing year.
6. We do not want to misrepresent God nor his Gospel. We are called to be ambassadors of Christ - representing his kingdom here on earth.

C. Personally

1. This happens corporately when individuals take responsibility personally
2. Corporately, it is our job to encourage you, equip YOU & empower YOU
3. The question isn't if you should care for orphans, it's commanded. The question is how is God calling you specifically.
4. Today we are launching multiple ways for you to tangibly live this out so that you are without an excuse, but please realize it doesn't stop here.
5. Tangible manifestations of living God's call to care for the orphan:
  - a) International Adoption Coaching
  - b) Foster Coaching & Information
  - c) Hope Pregnancy Center
  - d) Child Sponsorship, \$38/month, all from Indonesia
  - e) Prayer

D. These are just ideas, but you need to walk w/ your head up, aware of what God places before you. Ready to help, serve, represent God all the time.

E. You are called to represent God to a lost and dying world

F. You are called to represent the love of the Gospel to overlooked, forgotten ppl

G. You are called to love the fatherless, the orphan because you have been spiritually adopted by God

1. Brought into his family, given sonship, made an heir

H. That is how you have been loved. **How will you love in response?**