

# orphan sunday

ONE DAY. ONE VOICE. ONE PURPOSE.

**Opening prayer**

**Prayer for orphans:**

**Prayer for a local church:**

This morning we pray for our brother Ricardo Mercado who started a church in El Valle De Guadalupe.

## **Closing prayer**

### **Introduction:**

Today is Orphan Sunday, and we're celebrating stories of children who were at risk, losing the protection and care of their families, but have since been taken into homes and adopted into new families. You've heard three stories that occurred in this little

local church. Orphan Sunday is an internationally recognized day, so today, all over the world local churches are proclaiming God's love for orphans. From many sources, one voice, as it's said..

Historically, Christians have always championed the cause of adoption, arguably more than any other group. But the question is why? Why do Christians adopt? Why does anyone foster or adopt for that matter? And that's what we're looking at today: **The Reason for Adoption.**

Theologically speaking — maybe you've heard it said that everything is political — maybe — but I can say with conviction that everything is theological. If there is a God from whom everyone and everything come, then everything is clearly theological. And the God who has revealed Himself to this world — **the biblical God is an adopting God and an adopted God.** Think about that for a moment.

When God took on human flesh and was born by the virgin Mary, Joseph was not His

biological father, but His adopted father. So, God Himself was adopted in the human sense. And the reason God came to earth in the first place and allowed Himself to be adopted is because He is an adopting God. The gospel is all about adoption. God is an adopting God.

The examples are too numerous. Here's just a few:

**Deuteronomy 10:18 (NIV)**

**<sup>18</sup> He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.**

## **Psalm 82:3 (NIV)**

**<sup>3</sup> Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.**

## **Psalm 68:5-6 (NIV)**

**<sup>5</sup> A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.**

**6 God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.**

Then there's the idea that God Himself is our home, our refuge; that God literally adopts us as His children; that Christians are family, brothers and sisters in Christ; that marriage itself is used to illustrate the gospel.

So, the theological reason anyone — whether you're a Christian or not — **the reason you have a heart for adoption or foster care is that**

**you were created in the image of God.** This simply means that on a human scale we have many of the same characteristics of the God who created us, family traits if you will. So, if God is concerned about the fatherless, many of us will be concerned about the fatherless as well.

It's the same thing with the issue of justice. God is a just God, therefore we have a deep concern for justice as human beings. And from both a Christian and philosophical view, these are not values, these are facts. This



means if we are created in the image of God that is true of us regardless of whether we believe it or not.

All that to say, adoption is dear to God's heart. It's so dear to His heart that James, the brother of Jesus, wrote in his little letter to the dispersed church of his time:

## **James 1:27 (NIV)**

**<sup>27</sup> Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look**

**after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**

James gives orphan care as a measure for true spirituality or true religion. Now, I understand we live in a culture where people often say, “I’m spiritual but not religious,” but let’s take a step back and think about that statement. I think what people often mean by this is that they have no interest in organized religion.

But the statement itself is confusing when you think about it, because all the word religious means is that you practice something consistently. Maybe you've heard someone say, "Oh, I golf religiously." Now, whatever your spiritual practices are, if you don't do them consistently, what good can they actually do you? So, to say, "I'm spiritual but not religious," becomes a kind of self-defeating statement, because if your spirituality is worth anything, you will practice it religiously.

All James is saying here is that this thing we call “our relationship with the Lord” or “our walk with Christ” must be practiced consistently or it’s worthless. James said as much in the verse right before this one:

## **James 1:26**

**<sup>26</sup> Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.**

**That's a pretty strong statement, but all he's saying is what Jesus Himself said — the mouth merely speaks what is in the heart.**

**This is one of the first points of the gospel, that the reason you and I need a Savior is because we have a heart problem. This is not something that only some human beings suffer from while others do not. Every human being on the face of the earth has an issue at the very core of his or her being and that is by nature you are a sinner. The word sinner simply means lawbreaker.**

- Example of God's law written upon our hearts and the codified law of God giving detail and objectivity to God's will

So, in short — we need new hearts and that's what the gospel is about. And adoption is a central reality of the gospel.

## **John 1:12-13 (NIV)**

**<sup>12</sup> Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to**

**become children of God— <sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.**

Now, what does this verse in the Gospel of John mean? First, that none of us begin as God's children. We begin as spiritual orphans, so to speak. We do not know God as our Father in any personal sense. That is the state of humanity at birth. Just as children are often orphans due to the sins of their parents, humanity became orphaned from a

relationship with God through the rebellion of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

The gist of the Adam and Eve story is that they took themselves out from under the rule and reign of God and decided they would rule and reign. That is the nature of sin, a heart that says, “I will define reality apart from God.” That is currently the nature of humanity.

That explains why there are so many false spiritualities and false concepts that humans look to in order to explain existence and find



meaning. When our first parents took themselves out from under God's rule, we were born into those circumstances. The same way they were created in God's image, we are now born in their image — the image of rebellious sinners. But we are not simply victims. We are also victimizers.

So, we begin as spiritual orphans, but God so loved the world...

**Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)**

**4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son,**

Christ came to earth at just the right time, just the right moment in history. This is how God always does things. He leaves His mark in the little details.

- Kate's story

**born of woman, born under the law,**

God the Son willingly took on human flesh, putting Himself under the penalty of the law so that He could die for our sins.

**<sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.**

The cross opens the way for regeneration. In other words, because Christ died for your sins, you can now be born again. You see forgiveness isn't our only issue.

- Bad records/bad hearts

- Rex adopted | spiritual adoption goes even deeper

**<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.**

This is the theological reason anyone adopts, because God is an adopting God.