

Theme: As those who have been cared for and adopted by God, believers are called to display God's love to children living on the edges of society and the brink of disaster.

I. Intro - Two Sides of Childhood

- A. My memories of childhood – happy
- B. Others memories – fear, abuse, pain, neglect
- C. Sin can often affect children the most
- D. What is God's heart/our call for children on brink?

II. Pure Religion – Caring for Those on Brink

- A. James is contrasting pure and false faith
 - 1. Verse 26 – no rein on tongue – worthless
 - 2. Verse 27 – Pure religion; orphans & widows
- B. Widows and orphans – vulnerable on the brink
 - 1. Widows and orphans (and others) – on brink
 - 2. ANE – no money; property; judged; vulnerable
 - 3. Today – statistics in notes

III. Children on the Brink (COB) in Scripture

- A. God's heart for COB - Psa 68:5; Exo 22:22-24
- B. Commands - Dt 14:28-29; 16:13-14; 24:19-21

C. Prophets rebuke – Is 1:10-17; Mal 3:5

D. Basis – redemption – Dt 24:17-22; Dt 10:19

E. Blessings for care of COB – Dt 14:28-29

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see God's heart for those on the brink?
 - 1. God is compassionate for those who suffer
 - 2. He sees their pain, suffering – reaches out to save
- B. Do we see God's call for us to help?
 - 1. Consistent call in law, prophets, Gospel, epistles
 - 2. True religion (faith) cares for those on brink
 - 3. Faith demands we engage and help
- C. How we can help children on the brink
 - 1. Give money to a group helping (World Vision, Lee Short)
 - 2. Go on a short term trip – build, play, pray, love
 - 3. Local groups – Big brothers/sisters, Boys/Girls club
 - 4. Adoption (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5)
- D. Testimony of Richard, Kelly and Anna - dedication

James 1:26-27

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Testimony by Strub's - Anna's dedication

2 Corinthians 13:14

5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. Psalm 68:5

22 Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. 23 If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. 24 My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless. Exodus 22:22-24

28 At the end of every three years, **bring all the tithes of that year's produce** and store it in your towns, 29 so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the **fatherless** and the widows who live in your towns **may come and eat and be satisfied**, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. Deut 14:28-29

13 **Celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles** for seven days after you have gathered the produce of your threshing floor and your winepress. 14 **Be joyful at your Feast--** you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, and the Levites, the aliens, **the fatherless** and the widows who live in your towns. Deuteronomy 16:13-14

19 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. 21 When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. Deuteronomy 24:19-21

10 Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! 11 "The multitude of your sacrifices-- what are they to me?" says the LORD. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. 12 When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? 13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations-- I cannot bear your evil assemblies. 14 Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong. 17 learn to do right! **Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.** Isaiah 1:10-17

5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 3:5

17 Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. **18Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.** 19 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. 21When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. **22 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.** Deuteronomy 24:17-22

19 And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. Deuteronomy 10:19

28 At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, 29 so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, **and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.** Deut 14:28-29

15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, **but you have received the Spirit of adoption** as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" Romans 8:15 ESV

5 to redeem those who were under the law, **so that we might receive adoption** as sons. Galatians 4:5 (ESV)

5 **he predestined us for adoption** as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, Ephesians 1:5 ESV

UNICEF estimates of orphans around 210 million

Others estimate around 13 million – hard to know exactly

Every 15 seconds another child becomes an AIDS orphan in Africa

In Ukraine and Russia:

10-15% of unadopted orphans commit suicide before 18

A massive number of children sold as sex slaves