

A Church Committed to Orphans—James 1:19-27

- Intro
- **Microscope: Understanding James 1:19-27**
 - The journey of a believer—Repent from Sin, Receive the Word, Do the Word
 - Repent from Sin (v.21)—put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness
 - Receive the Word (v.21)—receive with meekness the implanted word.
 - Receive—the word is a gift! Receive it! Don't earn it...receive it!
 - Romans 8:14-17—we don't come into salvation as employees, EARNING our status, but as SONS, receiving our status as adopted sons!
 - Reminder—there are NO NATURAL BORN CHILDREN OF GOD...only by adoption!!
 - I get this question all the time—"I can tell you adopted...which are your adopted children and which ones are 'yours'/the regular ones?" My response, "all the ones I feed and provide for!" Would never say of someone, "he has 2 sons that were born in the middle of the night and a daughter who was born in the daytime." CRAZY! Doesn't matter HOW you came into the family...once you are in, you are in!!
 - In Bible, adopted is not an adjective but a PAST TENSE VERB—tells you HOW you came into the family of God; once you get there, you are SONS and HEIRS and FELLOW HEIRS WITH CHRIST so that all that belongs to Jesus is co-signed to US—Psalm 2—the ends of the cosmos belong to him!!
 - Meekness—the gospel word HUMBLER us. Simply put, our pride is ANTI-GOSPEL. The only way to RECEIVE the gospel word in a SAVING way is to receive it HUMBLY!
 - A contrast to the heart attitude in v.19-20—hasty and angry vs. patient and humble
 - The implanted Word—the secret to the Word is that, via repentance and humility, it works its way all the way into the core of us! It affects every aspect of life—"let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."
 - Ultimately, the gospel word that SAVES us also SHAPES us!
 - Do the Word (v.22-25)—But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving himself.
 - Richard Foster—Spiritual Maturity is not about what you know but about how you live in light of what you know.
 - "deceiving yourselves"—the idea here is that we can be blinded to the true reality of our spiritual state, thinking we are right with God when, indeed, we are not!
 - James—you can't divide the Word into parts; if you want it's SAVING power you must SUBMIT to it as a guide for life! If we don't do the Word, we haven't truly RECEIVED it.
 - The true test of a believer
 - A controlled tongue (26)
 - Matthew 12:34—out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks
 - How we talk, how we pray, how we sing...all our words reveal our hearts! What comes out of your mouth—praise, encouragement, grumbling, complaining, gossip, prayer, singing, malice, scolding, slander. Your mouth is a good indicator of your soul!
 - A clean life (19, 27b)
 - "unstained"—we've been kept IN the world but set apart FROM the world as we live lives marked by holiness, righteousness, love, grace, service, purity, humility, etc.
 - Notice—James UNITES holiness and hospitality! Historically, conservatives have valued HOLINESS/PURITY and liberals have valued HOSPITALITY/THE POOR.
 - A gospel people pursue both! It is unacceptable to reject EITHER the poor or the holiness of God. We must have both! This will make us look WEIRD...a bit homeless in this current culture and political landscape!
 - A compassionate ministry (27a)
 - "before God"—all our ministry and lives are BEFORE GOD. That is WHY we must pursue and value BOTH hospitality toward the orphan, widow, sojourner (POOR) AND the holiness of God. Our father is father to the fatherless, husband to the widow and puts the solitary in a home! We must reflect him!

- How we live, how we engage and orient ourselves to our neighbors and the world is radically redefined by the gospel
- **Wide-Angle Lens: Expanding on James 1:27—Why Orphan Care?**
 - **God cares for all people made in His image**
 - Genesis 1:26-28—Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
 - **God has special concern for orphans, widows and strangers**
 - Ex. 22:21-22—you shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child.
 - Deut 10:18—he executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing
 - Psalm 10:17-18—O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed.
 - **God commands his people to reflect his care for orphans, widows and strangers**
 - **VISIT the orphan and widow:**
 - Gen. 21:1—The LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did to Sarah as he had promised.
 - Gen. 50:24—And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”
 - Ruth 1:6—Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.
 - Luke 1:68—blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his ppl
 - Acts 15:14—Simeon has related how God visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.
 - **God chose to save us while we were orphans, widows and strangers**
 - Ephesians 1:5—in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons, through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will
 - **God Almighty, in eternity, made an adoption plan!**
 - **Adoption may be hard, it may be long, it may take insane resources but it’s worth it**
 - Ephesians 2:19—you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God
 - Romans 8:15—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!
- **Snapshot: Applying James 1:27 to Our Lives**
 - **Orphan Care is a task the ENTIRE church must do this!**
 - **Not one single expression**—some have enough love, energy and resources to add some beds and babies into your home; others have enough resources and bandwidth to welcome a baby into your home through foster care for a week, month, or year. **Others aren’t able or called to foster/adopt and, if that is you, PLEASE DO NOT DO IT! Foster care and adoption will not FIX anything!**
 - **Care for an expectant mom! Welcome a birth family into your home for dinner. I can help an adoption family financially! Provide respite care for a child whose parents are unable to care for them! We can all minister to widows/orphans in short-term ways locally and globally!**

- RISK is a primary obstacles of orphan care!! What if they are sick, what if they are addicted to drugs, what if their biological parents have baggage, how can I vet these children/agencies to avoid risk!?
 - There is always risk and brokenness. If you don't want risk, you shouldn't foster, adopt, have children, get married, join a church—there is risk everywhere! BUT, in the gospel all that we need is already SECURED in Christ and the gospel FREES us from FEAR of risk.
 - We will bear with kids with fetal alcohol syndrome, the baby with HIV that others are scared of, the young man born addicted to cocaine b/c our lives are NOT OUR OWN, we have been received and now we live to receive others!
- Close
 - We are not here b/c of our DNA. We are not here because we have a great resume. We are not here because we've done anything. We are here not of ACCIDENT but of INTENTIONAL adoption! If Jesus did not want us, he would never have come for us as he did! With all our background, baggage, wounds and trauma, we are here and Jesus knew all about that when he adopted us.