

## **Orphan Sunday**

It is estimated that there are 153 million orphans worldwide. This number is almost half of the population of the U.S.! Almost 5700 children become orphans every day due to war, natural disaster, poverty, disease, and medical needs. God cares about each of these vulnerable children. And since this is the heart of God, may it also be our heart. This past Sunday we observed Orphan Sunday at Faith, and we considered what it might mean for us to share God's heart in caring for and loving kids in need in our own community and beyond. Let's continue the conversation.

1. Read James 1:27. What does this passage say about concern for orphans?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read the following passages. How do they speak to the concern God has for the orphan?
  - Deut. 10:17-18
  - Deut. 14:28-29
  - Deut. 24:17-22
  - Deut. 27:19
  - Psalm 10:17-18
  - Psalm 68:5
  - Psalm 82:1-4
  - Isaiah 1:16-17

### **Read 1 John 3:16-18**

3. How does this passage address the "why" of caring for anyone including orphans?

4. What does this passage say about how we know that our hearts truly have love in them?
  
5. The passage talks about seeing someone in need. How did Sam's sermon help you "see" the need regarding orphans?

Sam said:

In 2019, as Outreach Pastor, I realized that we are in desperate need to start playing catchup to what certainly seems like the work of God creating such a passion for foster and adoptive care in our church. So, a few projects got started. We offered a few Respite nights, created the Foster Care supplies closet, blessed families with new foster placements with gift cards to Target, and tried to create opportunities for folks to learn more about the need for additional foster and adoptive families in our community. Along the way, as we listened to what these families said they needed from their church, one clear message got repeated over and over: a need for **support and community**. They asked for help. They asked for fellowship. They wondered aloud and expressed their desire to see Faith E Free rally around the foster and adoptive families in our community and provide practical, meaningful, direct aid through committed relationships. Could meals be made and delivered? Could childcare be provided? Could someone come by and mow the lawn, fix the leaky sink, or help paint the kid's new room? Could there be folks committed to praying for the foster and adoptive families in our midst? Might there be people willing to sit and listen and grieve with these parents and caretakers as they weep over the trauma of the kids in their care and the difficulty of loving little ones who have somehow already experienced so much evil?

6. As you hear about this vision for providing support and community to our families at Faith involved in fostering and adoption, do you sense God stirring anything in your heart? If so, what?

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7. Sam also talked about *Globalfingerprints* (a child sponsorship initiative of the EFCA) as a way to use our resources to meet the needs of orphans internationally. Have you ever been involved in orphan sponsorship? If so, what has that meant to you? Do you sense any nudges to be part of stepping into this kind of supporting ministry?