

Today's Message: "God's Redemptive Plan"

The New Testament contains a clear call to caring for orphans

"Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (James 1:27, ESV)

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing." (James 1:22-23, ESV)

Do not be a **hearer** and not a **doer**!

You will be blessed in your doing.

The Old Testament contains a clear call to caring for orphans

Israel's many exiles were tied directly to their **oppression** of the poor and their **failure** to care for orphans.

See Amos 1:13, 2:6; 4:1; Proverbs 23:10-11; Isaiah 1:23, 10:1-2; Malachi 3:5

"And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart. But they refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the Lord of hosts. As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear.' said the Lord of hosts, and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate." (Zechariah 7:8-14, ESV)

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The God of deliverance also promises blessing to those who obey His call.

“For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.” (Jeremiah 7:5-7, ESV)

Obedience to a Sovereign God

“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” (Psalm 139:16, ESV)

God is a **redeemer** of brokenness.

What part of His redemptive plan does God have in mind for you?

*“Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.”
(1 Thessalonians 4:1, ESV)*

Our service to God is not a one-time thing.

Small Group or Personal Reflection Questions:

1. Pastor Randy says that we are all called to care for orphans. Do you agree with that? Why or why not?
2. What typically motivates you to obey God? Is it fear, reverence or the promise of blessing? What do you believe should motivate us?
3. In what ways have you been a part of God's plan to redeem brokenness? In the spirit of more and more, how do you feel God nudging you to replace bad habits with good, and even good with better?

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