

FATHER OF THE FATHERLESS

Exodus 22:22–24 You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to Me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

- A failure to do so would result in one's own family feeling the burden of being widows and fatherless.
- God has always cared for the vulnerable. It doesn't surprise me how the last plague to strike Egypt was the death of their firstborn, seeing as how the Pharaoh ordered the midwives to kill all the the Hebrew women's males babies by throwing them into the Nile.
- You'll remember how Moses' mother put him in a basket and sent him down the river and how God was with him. Out of all people, the Pharaoh's own daughter showed pity on Moses and took him in as her own son.

Deuteronomy 10:12-22 "Big Picture"

- It's about the heart.
- It's about having a heart like God's.
- It's about humility and sympathy. Remembering what God has done for us all.

Deuteronomy 27:17-19 " 'Cursed be anyone who moves his neighbor's landmark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' " 'Cursed be anyone who misleads a blind man on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' " 'Cursed be anyone who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' "

- Basically against idol worship, respecting parents, sexual sins and murder.
- God cares about our actions. He wants us to be a moral people. Now, there are those outside the body who care for others, but they don't do it by faith (that's another lessons). However, if anyone should have such a heart in this world, it should be God's children.
- If they didn't obey then curses would follow (including captivity). And they did.

Isaiah 1:12-17 "When you come to appear before Me, who has required of you this trampling of My courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations - I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before My eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

- Not only because they're ungrateful, but they are supposed to represent Him.
- How can God feel pleased with their worship when His children behave in such a cold way. It's contrary to His nature. It's embarrassing and empty. It's fake. It's so easy to lose sight of the big picture.

Jeremiah 5:27-28 Like a cage full of birds, their houses are full of deceit; therefore they have become great and rich; they have grown fat and sleek. They know no bounds in deeds of evil; they judge not with justice the cause of the fatherless, to make it prosper, and they do not defend the rights of the needy.

- The harsh reality is we become callous towards others when our focus is on ourselves.
- God's blessings can turn into a curse when we become entitled.
- **James 5:5** You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

Psalms 68:4-6 Sing to God, sing praises to His name; lift up a song to Him who rides through the deserts; His name is the Lord; exult before Him! Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

- I love the NASB "God makes a home for the lonely."
- Isn't that the greatest picture. When you see a child taken in to someone's home. Their loneliness disappears. They finally have, not a house, but a home. Comfort. Security. Love. Provision. Faithfulness.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 "At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

- Israel would offer a portion of their produce collected every three years.

Deuteronomy 24:17-22 "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge, but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

- Not only were they provided for by the tithing every three years, but yearly during the harvest time (**Ruth**).
- What's the point? Don't be stingy. Do you see how it pulls from the mercy and grace of God?
- Do we have faith that God will provide? This challenges someone's belief in God's love.
- Many times we cannot take someone in ourselves for several reasons, but that doesn't excuse of from helping children in need.

Job 31:16-23 If I have withheld anything that the poor desired, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless has not eaten of it (for from my youth the fatherless grew up with me as with a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow), if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or the needy without covering, if his body has not blessed me, and if he was not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, if I have raised my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder, and let my arm be broken from its socket. For I was in terror of calamity from God, and I could not have faced His majesty.

- This is why Job was considered blameless and upright.
- In fact, in Job 22:5-11, Eliphaz accuses Job of sin including doing harm to the fatherless (though it wasn't true).

James 1:26-27 If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. 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.

- John 14:8 is the only other time it's used in the N.T.
- This is what God expects.
- We have those here who are looking to adopt. We want to encourage them in this road ahead. Can I challenge us a little on this as individuals: open up your hearts to this. Open wide your arms - ready to help. Open up your homes when needed. And, to be blunt, open up your wallet.
- I've thought about this - what am I willing to do? If we are not able/ready to take on full responsibility, should we not be ready and willing to help as much as possible? Listen, Jordan and I have discussed adoption and it's not on the table. So, I'll pick on myself for a bit. But what am I willing to do? It's very hard to imagine a family who is ready and willing to take on that responsibility, but cannot because of financial burdens. I'm not saying that we can all come up with tens of thousands of dollars, but then again, how far am I willing to go?

Final thoughts:

- Helps us appreciate our own families. Our number one goal is to share the good news to our own.
- Pray for these children. I don't know what all this means and what that looks like. So many children are neglected, beaten and left to their own. I'm sure there's been much abuse during the virus. Ultimately, the Lord will make things right, but let's be praying for these precious little souls.
- Realize that you're not alone. God can make a home for the lonely.