

## The Orphanage

Isaiah 43:5-7

### Introduction

1. The saddest thing on earth is when children lose their parents. Whether the home has been destroyed by the untimely death of a parent, or whether it has been broken by the failure of a marriage, it is the children who suffer the most.
2. Perhaps this tragedy has never touched your life. But if we think for a moment, actually we've all been touched by the tragedy of the fall of man, the failure of our first parents, Adam and Eve. HISTORY'S FIRST BROKEN HOME WAS IN EDEN.
3. What person on the face of this earth has not been influenced by the painful disease of sin? Even we who sit in celebration of God's love still, if we admit it, have to struggle with the fallen nature that attached itself to that first father and mother in the Garden through their relation with Lucifer.
4. Adam and Eve failed to set a true, loving tradition for their descendants to follow. Look at the tragedy of their two boys, Cain and Abel. Eden was, indeed, turned into a sadly broken home.
5. With the loss of the original and sinless relationship with our Heavenly Father, and with the loss of our first parents, HUMAN HISTORY HAS, IN A VERY REAL SENSE, BECOME THE HISTORY OF ORPHANS, AND OUR WORLD AN ORPHANAGE.

Today I'd like to reflect on this "orphanage", and on Christ as a parent returned.

### Life in the Orphanage

I had a good friend in college who had been raised in an orphanage. One day sitting at lunch he shared with me about life in that institution.

- The rule of the orphanage was every man for himself. It was foolish, he said, to trust any relationship because everyone was out to get what little they could, whether cigarettes, drugs, a pair of socks, or loving

- Groups would form around the strongest individuals. The place was full of rival gangs, tougher than the streets outside, often divided by race. And as long as there was selfish ambition in the name of an individual or a gang, peace was unheard of. People survived more by toughness than by brotherly love.
- But he did say that love was important there, in fact desperately sought! He told me that those young people, deprived of the love of parents, spent days and nights trying to get love from one another. It wasn't the love of brother and brother or brother and sister in the sense we seek here in the church. It was an almost violent sexual society that existed in that institution, with perversions of every kind. (Ironically and sadly, my friend told me, even the staff members had their lovers among the children.)
- Finally, my friend mentioned loneliness, cold loneliness deep in the heart, loneliness that he was afraid to admit, loneliness for something the orphanage could never provide: true parental love.

### Where are our Parents?

Saint Paul says, in Romans 8:10-23:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

Paul speaks for all of mankind and history as he shares his hope for adoption as a son of God.

- Someone may say, why do you speak of this world as an orphanage? God is with us, and Jesus already came two thousand years ago. That's true, but there is one factor that cannot be overlooked: the presence in this world of one that Jesus called the “prince” of this world, someone that I might call, in this sermon today, the “chief of staff” in the orphanage, Satan.

- Along with our elder brother Paul, we await for adoption as sons (and daughters), the redemption of our bodies. We wait for the coming of Christ and the kingdom, and we wait for the end of a satanic world born of Eden so long ago.
- As we reflect back on the story I told earlier of the orphanage, what more fitting image is there as we look at the world around us today?
  - Without God, it is every man for himself. As we walk our city streets it is so hard to trust. And not just on the individual level: great nations live in constant fear and insecurity for the lack of trust. (Evangelist: there may be more that you want to say here.)
  - The orphanage of my friend was full of rival gangs or groups. There is much beauty in the many cultures, races, and nations of our earth. But there is no beauty in racism or culturism. Nationalism is no longer acceptable in a world which is shrinking, a world that demands global minds and hearts. As long as there is selfish ambition, whether in the name of one person, a group, or an ideology, there can never be true peace. (Here is an important question: What is the difference between the heart of Christ and religionism? Religious people too are divided into so many opposing groups. Is that what Jesus intended?)

The point is not which person or gang will rule in the orphanage, but who can come to take us out of the orphanage. Where are our parents?

- Love was at a premium in my friend's orphanage. Need I say more about our world today? There wasn't one perversion in that orphanage that couldn't be found in our city streets today. Times Square in New York City (Evangelist: you may want to use a local example) at this moment is full of pimps, hookers, dope sellers, and upstanding businessmen shoving quarters in machines that portray grown men sexually abusing little kids. Yes, a violent sexual society. But, in truth, aren't all those desperate lives in Times Square, or anywhere for that matter, simply searching for someone to love them, and to love? (Evangelist: this, of course, is not to justify the crimes of those in Times Square.)

- Finally, behind all the pushing and shoving for things, for power, for love, there is the quiet and seldom admitted loneliness of the heart. “Who will liberate me? Who will love?” THE IMAGE OF THE ORPHANAGE FITS OUR WORLD VERY WELL.

### Conclusion

What is our responsibility as Christians in the orphanage of the world today?

First, to challenge our own “orphanage mentality.” Our world has suffered too long from groupism. We must break our barriers down, to the world and between ourselves. Otherwise, sadly, we aren’t that different than an other group.

Second, to realize that God’s Heart aches for the liberation of every orphan in the orphanage as we face the time of Christ’s arrival. What virtue is there in simply waiting for “my own adoption” when our Heavenly Father cries for even the most hateful orphan, the one we’ve condemned.

Third, to seek out the Heart of God for His whole human family, the family that He lost in Eden.

Fourth, to give our lives for that family of God even though we ay be hated for a while by those we serve.

Last, to recognize that when Christ returns he returns as a Parent, or, as Paul said, as “the last Adam,” to bring all of God’s children out of the orphanage of history, and to end the rule of the “chief of staff,” Satan, forever. He may already be on the porch.