

What's the Burden of God's Heart Right Now?

A few years back, I was preparing to share a message about the orphaned and fatherless with a missions organization. I was wrestling with the idea of giving this talk—not because I didn't have things I wanted to say, but because I wanted it to be much more than me talking about “a moving issue.”

Truth is, when we hear about justice issues, emotions get stirred. And rightly so. We *should* stir over babies' heartbeats being stopped in their mother's wombs; over women and children trafficked into rings where bodies are cyclically raped and ravaged; over children removed from their families, by law, because they were starved, abused, and neglected.

In fact, God's own emotions are stirred. He's not stoic when He looks down at the little girl being trafficked as a slave or when the life He's fashioning in the womb has a scheduled injection to end its life. The Father feels. And His emotions are perfect, holy and untainted.

But our emotions, unlike His, can sometimes go awry, becoming soiled with our own human ambition and pride. And here, hidden behind our well-intended zeal, lies our potential pitfall.

We want to fight. We want to change things. We want to make a difference.

And, because it is the tendency of all men to move in their own strength, we often do. And thus, we neglect to ask God to move in His.

The Lord is looking for far more than a justice movement fueled by man's anger and fervor against the wrong.

Many across the earth are championing groups who are lifting

up their voices and shaking their fists at the injustices that have come against our children. Believers and unbelievers alike are speaking out against human trafficking, are building homes and schools for the poor, are adopting the orphaned.

But if Jesus is not at the core of our move, is it truly justice?

What really makes Christians who care for the afflicted and the orphaned different from those outside the church who do the same?

With these thoughts pressing on my heart, I prepared to share with this group of young twenty-somethings. I knew I could show pictures of cute kids and tell sad stories. But that wasn't enough. God wanted something deeper. Something that went beyond stirring up mere sentiment.

After talking with my husband, we decided to shorten my talk with this group and instead devote a portion of the time to prayer. And to my surprise, the leadership of the ministry, not knowing of my intended plans, asked me to do just that: They asked me to lead a prayer meeting.

So I stood up before this little gathering, and I told them of 400,000 children in our nation who did not have homes or families. I told them of more than 100,000 orphaned who were waiting for adoption. I told them of the common story of severe abuse and neglect, of deep wounds of fatherlessness, that all of these children share. I told them of 20,000 teenagers who age out of the foster system every year, unadopted.

And then, together, we lifted up the orphan before the throne of heaven, asking Him to break our hearts for them. We asked God to turn hearts of fathers back to their children. We asked for the arising of godly, anointed families. We asked for the healing and salvation of young, broken hearts.

We entered into the place of prayer as one body, and the Father of the fatherless drew us into His heart and gave us a taste of what He feels.

And some began to weep, not because I prodded their emotions, but because we went to the place of prayer and met God's heart.

Yes, weep over the fatherless.

But Why?

Why do even the unbelieving who do not know God and do not love His Son weep over orphans, trafficked victims and starving children?

Why do people, inside and outside of the church, bring orphans into their homes?

The reason we weep, the reason we put our hands to the crises around us, is more important than can rightly be expressed in writing. God is looking for much more than our tears and our efforts to do something "good" in our fallen world.

He wants to bring us into the very burden of His heart.

We need His vision, and if we are not praying, we do not have it. No one can tell it to you or describe it to you. It is deeper than words, and attempting to put it into words only seems to lessen its weightiness. We have to go get it ourselves, and we can only find it in prayer—when our hearts touch the heart of God, the heart of the Great Intercessor, the heart of the Father.

Our vision will remain too small and our ability to bring true justice hindered unless our effort to minister to the fatherless is born out of an intimate prayer partnership with Jesus.

God wants to do something that is beyond our own ability,

something fueled not by our human zeal and sentiment but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Giving food to the poor, building homes for the needy and even bringing orphans into our homes are good and necessary things—but alone, they will not necessarily give these destitute ones true and full justice.

We don't just want to give orphaned children a different living situation. Along with seeing them in homes or having their bellies filled, we want to contend for the salvation and restoration of their souls. And apart from the power of God, we cannot see their full restoration—body, soul and spirit.

We want to see the afflicted ones step into the destiny God desires for them—and if this isn't the ambition and vision, if the aim is only to feed, clothe and house them, we are not delivering full justice. We're simply making them a little more comfortable on earth while hell is still before them if they aren't led to Jesus.

We have to point them to their Healer, their Savior, their God.

God wants to save and restore a fatherless generation of children.

Prayer—intimate connection with the heart of God—must be primary in our movements against injustice. This is what makes Christian orphan care different from what the world is doing for orphans.

The core must truly be Jesus.

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