

**Sermon Title: The Love of God for the Most Vulnerable Children Among Us  
- Love the Orphans  
Date: November 17, 2019**

**Psalm 68:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Father of the fatherless and protector of widows  
is God in his holy habitation.

<sup>6</sup> God settles the solitary in a home;  
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,  
but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

**Introduction**

Today we are concluding the 2-part sermon series on the love of God for the most vulnerable children in our land. Last week we saw the horrific violence inflicted on the unborn babies in Singapore and around the world. Let's continue to pray for God to use us as His mouthpiece, as his warriors to defend the unborn because God loves them.

Today we will see how God loves the orphans and His call for us to love the little ones that He loves. The Love Singapore churches believe loving the orphans is part of the solution to loving the unborn. When the pregnant mother is simply unable or unwilling to take care of her baby, adoption or fostering provides a way out.

Follow me as I answer these 3 Essential Questions:

1. Who are the orphans?
2. How does God love the orphans?
3. How can we love the orphans?

**1. Who are the orphans?**

In Psalm 68:5, God reveals Himself as the "Father of the fatherless ...".

Do we know who are the fatherless? If we are to love them as God loves them, we must be able to find them.

First, let me clarify that in my sermon, I will refer to the fatherless and the orphans interchangeably.

The traditional definition of "orphan" is a child who has lost both parents.

In the ancient world, a child is considered an orphan when one of both parents are dead. Here in Singapore ... an orphan is a child who has lost both parents or a child who is in the foster care system.

In a nutshell ...

An orphan is a child who has lost his or her family.

One or both parents may still be alive, but they are unable or unwilling to care for the child.

How does that happen?

Some of the orphans are voluntary because their parents think it is better to put them in orphanages where the physical condition is better than their own homes. Or the parents are simply unable to parent the child.

Some orphans are victims of abuse or severe neglect. Others can no longer stay at home because both parents are either too sick; in prison or pass away.

Globally there are between 140-150M of such orphans.  
In Singapore, there are about 1200 children in the foster care system.

So where can we find them?

Some are in foster families. This accounts for less than 50% of the orphans due to severe shortage of 400-500 foster parents.

The rest of the orphans are in institution homes - about 600 of them are housed in one of the 23 children homes and orphanages

## **2 How does God love the orphans?**

Psalms 68 is a Psalm of David and written as a song. The happy occasion could be when the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was brought back into Jerusalem. It had been missing for about 20 years after being taken away by the Philistines. Psalm 68 portrays the God of Israel as feared by the enemies and loved by the righteous. Yet, the King of kings and Lord of lords chooses to reveal Himself tenderly as ...

Psalms 68:5 (ESV)

*5 Father of the fatherless ...*

Though God is the highest, He cares for the lowest.

His love for the fatherless is consistently written across the pages of the Bible.

Deuteronomy 10:18

*He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, ...*

Psalms 10: 14

*“... you have been the helper of the fatherless”*

Job 29:12

*because I delivered the poor who cried for help,  
and the fatherless who had none to help him.*

Continuing into the New Testament ....

Jesus said in ...

John 14:18

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you*

James 1:27

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, ...*

We can see from the OT to NT, God really cares for the orphans.

### **God loves the orphans in 3 ways**

#### **i. He becomes their father**

Imagine if you were fatherless and someone comes along as tells you “I am your father”. How will you feel?

Well, it depends on whether your newly discovered father is good or bad.

In an old Star Wars movie, Darth Vader, the leader of the dark side, told Luke Skywalker “I am your father”. Luke was totally shocked and disgusted.

But if Luke discovered that his father is the leader of the light, the one he is fighting for against the dark side. I believe he would be elated.

God says to the fatherless, I am your father. Your good good father. I am always on your side. That is wonderful news.

While their earthly fathers have left them for one reason or another, God the Father will never leave them.

God also speaks to those of us who has broken relationships with our own fathers. Our earthly father has not been involved in your lives. You may feel like you are fatherless as life goes on without him.

God speaks to those of us who has lost our loving earthly fathers. We miss him. My father went home to the Lord 3 years ago. Oh how I miss him.

We are fatherless but God assures we have not lost Him as our Father. He is always with us and He will never leave us.

#### **ii. He protects the mother and child**

In verse 5 there are 2 words that describes the role of God in how he relates to the orphans and the widows.

Psalm 68:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> *Father of the fatherless and protector of widows ...*

He cares not just for the orphan children but also their mothers.

Sometimes after something really bad happens to a person, new laws are passed to prevent it from happening again. You know you are important when laws are introduced on your behalf.

This is what God did. He laid down specific laws for the protection of the orphans and the widows. By this we can see His love for the weakest members of the society.

Exodus 22:22

*You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child*

God also instituted the “gleaning” law in the OT for the landowners to leave some of their crops behind so the poor are able to harvest some food for themselves. It’s not a charity handout. It’s gives them dignity to work for their provisions.

In 1 King 17, God commanded prophet Elijah to visit a widow in the midst of a severe famine. She only had enough flour and oil left to make the last meal for her and her son. She thought after that they were going to die. But God the father of the fatherless and the protector of the widow gave them unlimited supply of food. When her son died of illness, God answered Elijah’s prayer and brought the boy back to life. God revealed to them He is their God - The Father of the fatherless and the protector of the widow.

Earthly fathers and husbands sometimes are unable to protect their families.

Some of them even rob and harm their own children and wives.

God says He is their protector. The protector keeps harm away. He is always good to His children and He will never harm them.

### **iii. He puts orphans in families**

In verse 6, God focuses on 2 groups of people ...

*Psalm 68:6*

*“God settles the solitary in a home;”  
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,*

“The solitary” are the lonely or deserted ones.

“The prisoners” can also be translated as exiles.

While these 2 groups are not referring exclusively to orphans, they are certainly included – children who are lonely, deserted by their own parents and exiled from their own homes.

God settles them in homes & He leads them to prosperity.

The word “home” is better translated as family due to our current cultural context. Because places like nursing homes or children’s homes are not the same as families.

What is the difference between institution homes and families?

There is 1 key ingredient that institution homes lack. Even if they are like 5-star hotels they still do not have what every healthy family has – Loving parents. The love of fathers and mothers. In families, there are other family members such as siblings, grandparents, uncles & aunts, cousins & family friends. Of course, some families do not have loving parents but that is not by God’s design.

When we travel, we’d pack our luggage with all the necessary items. For some of us, we can pack for 1 week of travel into a duffel bag. Some of us require 2 large suitcases!

But orphans are not able to bring all their essential items. When a child goes into the fostering system, she is not able to bring her favorite toys, favorite bedtime stories or all her favorite clothes and shoes. She simply not able to pack her entire life into a small bag.

So, God puts her in a family where everything else will be provided. He leads her from poverty to prosperity. He replaces her loneliness, sadness and turmoil with love, happiness and stability.

**A home is not just a physical structure.**

**A home is a family where children are loved by their parents.**

Will you bring orphans into your homes? Will you make them part of your families? Will you foster or adopt orphans?

Ronald and Michelle answered “yes” to these questions.

Now I’d like to invite Michelle to share her journey of how God led them to adopt Wansi.

### **Michelle's Adoption Testimony**

Hi Agapians, I am Michelle. And my hubby is Ronald. We have just finalized our adoption of our daughter, Wan Si on 8 July 19, which is on my birthday.

We have been married for 16 years and have been trying for a child for 13 years. As I now looked back, I realized that God has **been at work in preparing us for this adoption.**

My plan like average Singaporean is to be married at 27/28 years old, 2-3 years later have the 1st child and 2 years later the 2nd child. However, 3 years after our marriage, we found out that both of us have problems physically n thus difficultly to conceive. We did pray, TCM, IUI etc. but all without success.

A Sister-in-Christ told me that it is because I **don't have enough faith that is why God did not answer my prayers**. I questioned myself and struggled with this comment. **Is it true I didn't have enough faith** that's why God you don't answer me?

I wrestled with God. Shortly after, we were invited to Agape to listen to the faith series in 2009. And through Pastor Guna's message I learnt that it is not how much I pray or how hard I pray. **Faith is the assurance that God is in Control. Faith is the understanding that God is going to accomplish His purposes. Faith is trusting His Sovereign will for me.** And we stayed on in Agape.

My mother-in-law who herself was adopted, had suggested for me to adopt. But I was not ready as I had concerns:

- I was afraid that people would laugh at me for not being able to conceive.
- People would point fingers or talk about us and the adoptive child. - don't look like us,
- What if the child doesn't like us?
- What if after adopting the child, I conceive naturally and love the adopted child less
- What if the child finds out from others accidentally that she is not my birth child and is upset? What if she then decides to go back to the birth parents?
- What if he got medical issues due to his genes?
- Why go and find trouble 没事拿事做?
- Why would I be so stupid to go and raise other people's children for free?

If don't have child, I can retire early n live a carefree life

- In my cell, Ps Too and Joyce who are fostering often shared about fostered children in need of families.
- Ps Thomas and Sarah also shared about abandoned babies left in homes and due to limited manpower were left lying in their beds and this affected the growth of these children due to lack of affection.
- Our ex-cell members Jack and Jasmine also surprised us by one day telling us they have adopted a baby boy.
- Agape's messages on reaching out to the marginalized and those in need, open my eyes that there are many children out there in need of families.

I gave myself a deadline. If by the time I am 40, I have done my best to conceive by natural means or going for the IVF medical treatments and failed, I will consider adoption or live life as a couple & free do God's work

I did conceive 3x (once natural n thru IVF). However, God took them home. I was really sad, but I held on to my faith knowing that God loves me & trusting that His sovereign will is good for

me. Of course, the support of our family, my Redhill cell group n friends helped us to go through these difficult times.

So, come 40...my own bb plans failed but I still have this deep longing for a child. Thus, after discussing with Ronald, we sign up for the pre-adoption workshop by MSF (Ministry of Social and Family Development) where it provided more information on adoption in Singapore and the responsibilities of being an adoptive parent etc.

We learnt that Adoption is not about

- filling the emptiness in my heart,
- fixing my marriage / infertility
- satisfying others (in-laws)

Some questions posed during the talk helped us to evaluate if adoption is for us?

- Can we love and treat an adopted child as our own? Can the rest of my family do that?
- Can we fully accept and love the child as who he/she is?
- Can we respect and support the child's right to know his/her birth history and to search the birth family in the future?
- if we adopt an older child, he/she is likely to have suffered more trauma, neglect, or sensory dysfunction, would we be able to cope with possible challenges?

After thinking through these hard questions, we realize that **Adoption is**

- To provide a loving family for a child who doesn't have one.
- To provide the child with a stable, loving and nurturing environment.

**Adoption is about finding a family for a child. Not a child for a family. (Slide)**

So, we took one step at a time to attend the talks such as Disclosure Talk. submitting lots of information/ documents to process our Home Study Report Application and going through interviews.

The HSR was finally completed but is valid for 2 years. After waiting 1 year+, there was a 6 years old child, named Grace available for adoption. Besides us, there was another Christian couple being considered, I told Ronald that both families will be praying to God... hmm who God will listen. So we prayed that thy will be done - **In the Best Interest of the Child.** In the end, Grace was awarded to the other couple who are social workers that could handle her emotional needs better. of course, I was depressed **That was last year 5 Apr.**

**By then our HSR was left only 4 months. Imagine it takes 1.5 years to know of a potential child for adoption. It will only take a miracle for us to find a child for adoption within 4 months.**

**And guess what? To cut the story short, we were matched to Wansi on 12 Apr. (7 days after I received the bad news. Perfect 7). Not only that, another miracle happened. She was in our care last year on 18 May 2018 while waiting for the adoption papers to be submitted.**

This process of parenthood has been long & “exciting” (with twists & turns) as we see things unfold.

**Proverbs 19:21 says, "You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail."**

It is truly by His grace that He have given us this gift. So, we have named her Charis which is the grace of God and the gift of God.

This adoption has enabled Ronald & I to better understand what it means He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will in Ephesians 1:5

1. It is not by Wansi’s merit that she was chosen to be adopted. Similarly, not by our merit coz we are sinners & yet God chose us to be his adopted child
2. We had to do so much paperwork n preparations for this adoption, she need not do anything. Similarly, God have predestined us to be adopted as His child by making all the preparation to send Jesus to die on the cross to redeem us, **Galatians 4:4-5**

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”*

3. *By accepting us as her adopted parents, she inherited all our wealth = as rightful heir. Likewise, when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we are made heirs of God. **Romans 8:16** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God, and if children, then heirs**—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”*

I hope that my sharing will encourage some of you to consider adopting or fostering or being a respite parent.

- Will u open your house to bring orphans or those children in need into your home & make them a part of your families?

Every child is unique and a blessing from God, whether conceived naturally or through adoption.

All glory to God.

**- End of Michelle's Testimony -**

**3 How can we love the orphans?**



If we love God, we will love those He loves. Since He takes such a personal interest in the orphans, we must also take personal interest.

#### **4 practical ways to love the orphans**

##### **A. Everyone has a role**

Loving the orphaned children is for every Christian because the church is a family. Some of us can become fathers and mothers to the orphans and make them sons and daughters. Some of us can become uncles and aunties or big brothers and big sisters. The younger ones can become their friends and playmates. Everyone can be used by God the Father to love the fatherless.

##### **B. You don't have to be a super-Christian**

Sometimes people tell Joyce and I that fostering or adoption is for super-Christians.

They say something like ... we don't know how you do it. We don't have the time and energy. We don't have the love that you have. We're just not cut out to take care of children who don't belong to us.

Let me tell you, that is a lie. It is not true at all. My wife and I are sinners saved by grace. We are full of flaws and are not perfect parents.

We are not super-Christians, but we have a super-God.

What is required is simply putting God first and follow Him. When He is our highest priority, the fatherless will be high on our priority.

There was a boy named Joseph who failed his O levels twice and almost committed suicide.

One day he ran into former classmate who took him to church. He became a Christian shortly after that. Joseph's relationship with his family was very broken at the time. So the classmate brought him home to meet his parents, Mr and Mrs Wee.

After hearing Joseph's story, Mr Wee welcomed Joseph into their family. The Wee's lived in a 3-room flat with 3 sons. They were not rich, but their home was filled with singing, fellowship and love. After 3 years, Joseph's life was transformed by God. He is so thankful the Wee's made him part of their family.

This boy became a youth pastor. Today he is the National Director of Youth With A Mission in Singapore. His name is Joseph Chean.

Church, we don't need to be super-Christians to love the orphans because we have a super-God!

##### **C. Go find them**

Don't wait for the orphans to knock on your door. You have to go find them. Just as Jesus did not wait for us to find Him. He came down to look for us in order to bring us to His Father's home.

In the ancient Roman empire newborn babies were placed at the feet of the father. If the father picks up the baby, he or she becomes his son or daughter.

But, if the father does not pick up the baby, perhaps because of physical defects or other reasons. Then the unwanted baby was taken outside the city and left there to die or be eaten by wild animals.

The Christians went out and brought the babies back. They adopted the unwanted children into their families. Eventually, the Christians pressured the government to outlaw the inhumane practice.

Church, let's go find the orphans and bring them home as Christ did..

#### **D. Take the first step**

In order to find the orphans, we have to take steps and walk towards them.

Is there a spare bed in your home?

Is there room for a spare mattress on the floor?

Would you make room for them in your family planning?

Will you make room in your heart to love an orphan?

Let us be ready and partner the Father of the fatherless to place children into the families of Agape Baptist Church.

Take the first step today. Register your interest – to explore fostering or adoption. My wife, Joyce will be there to help you.

#### **Closing ...**

The love of God for the orphans and widows is Good News.

But verse 6 ends with bad news.

*Psalm 68:6*

*... but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.*

The rebellious are people who rebel against God. They do not follow Him. They do what is right in their own eyes.

If you are not a follower of Jesus, no matter how well your life is going, the Bible says you "dwell in a parched land". Even with all the material wealth, it is parched land, it is like a

dessert, dry, hot and desolate. Though you have access to the best the world has to offer, you are still thirsty like a wanderer in a dessert. I was like that for the first 49 years of my life.

This is not God punishing people who do not follow Him. This is God telling us that apart from Him there is no real and lasting satisfaction. And He wants you to be in His family to enjoy Him forever.

People, we were all spiritual orphans living in sun-scorched dessert before we are redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ.

From the Cross Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” because He was abandoned by His Father.

Jesus experienced the pain of being deserted by His disciples, abused by the soldiers and rejected by His Father. The perfect Son experienced the agony of being fatherless. This is the cost the Father paid to bring us home into His Holy Kingdom. No longer fatherless or orphans but sons and daughters in His family.

If our Father brought us into His family, would we not go out and bring orphans into our families?

I dream of a day when there are more Christian families waiting for children than children waiting for families.

I dream of a day when the shortage of 400-500 foster parents in Singapore are all filled by Christians.

I dream of a day when Christian families in Singapore empty out the orphanages.

You might say that is impossible. With God, all things are possible.

I tell you; the world will take notice. By our love for the orphans, they will know we are disciples of Jesus Christ. They will see the awesome love of God through our actions.

Let's Pray...