
TWO PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION

James 1:22-27

My wife and I have recently gotten involved in 4KIDS, and we became licensed foster parents about a month ago. Many of you know we've had two children come through just for a day each. Then this last Saturday, not yesterday, but a week ago yesterday, we got a little baby who is still with us. It is wonderful, terrifying, glorious, everything -- every emotion that you can imagine. I don't know the best way for us as a church to push people toward getting involved in other ways than what we are doing. We can lay guilt on. We can try to do X, Y, Z. I don't think everybody necessarily has to become a foster parent, but the issue is real. The issue is something that is before us that we cannot just ignore. There are so many children in dire need of help. Today we are going to get a bigger picture of what God has to say about it so that we can prayerfully and mindfully engage with this problem, because there is a definite solution. That's what's so encouraging, and yet daunting at the same time. But we can really make an impact in the world through this.

We are going to be in James, Chapter One, verses 22 through 27. We have looked at this passage several times, probably every time we talk about the foster need or orphan needs. In November it's Orphan Awareness month. Generally, this is the passage that comes out. What I thought might be helpful today is to look at two men. We are going to look at the text. We are going to study the scripture, but I want to frame it around two men -- two men who have two very different perspectives, born in the same part of the world, migrated to another part of the world at the same time, and yet had completely different impacts on the world around them. I will tell you who they are as we go. But let's read this passage, then we will pray. James 1:22-27:

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.

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.

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Let's pray. Help us, God. Help us to see your word as a life-giving, life-changing, Spirit-filled word/book for us. We need you, God. Help these words to come alive in us. God, we are in need of awakening at times. So I pray we would be awoken this morning, that you would awaken us, you would help us to see your word in a new way, to live out your word in whatever ways that we can. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

"Two Perspectives on Religion." I want to ask a question. I am going to say a quote and I want you to tell me who said it, okay? "Religion is the opium of the masses." Karl Marx. Very good. I heard some other names thrown out, but Karl Marx is the right one. Actually, the quote isn't quite that. He said it in a broader context. This is kind of the fuller statement. It's short. It says, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

Karl Marx was born in the early 1800's. He was born in Germany. He, as you may know, was a philosopher. He was an economist. He was a revolutionary. He didn't invent communism, but definitely was an early proponent of it. It could be said that he was founder, really, of socialism. He believed that the working class would one day overthrow the social elite in society. He actually came from a long line of rabbis, funny enough. This is interesting: His father actually agreed to be baptized as a Protestant so that he wouldn't lose his job. He was a well-respected lawyer in their city in Germany. He agreed to become a Christian, a baptized Protestant, so that he could keep his job in the city.

As an adult, Karl Marx moved around Europe. At one point he lived in Paris, then was kicked out of Paris. His writings started to get promoted, then the government would shut it down. Often he was removed from where he was living. He eventually settled in Brussels for a few years. That's really where he started to promote his writings and his ideologies. It's during this time that he wrote his most popular work, which was The Communist Manifesto. It predicted the collapse of industrial capitalism, which would then be replaced by communism.

Shortly after the publication of that work, revolutions began to break out all throughout Europe. Eventually, he migrated with his family to England, where he would spend the rest of his life. Interestingly, he lived in England for over 30 years yet never learned to speak English really well. Marx was a staunch atheist and a staunch humanist. We know that Marxist thinking was a major

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player in the formation of communist and socialist regimes that have participated in some of the world's greatest revolutions, and even atrocities, not least of which are the events of World War II. Marx, along with other atheists and humanists, saw religion as an obstacle to humanity reaching its full potential. Religion was the enemy. In the same work that I quoted where he said, "Religion is the opium of the masses" (of the people), this is something else he wrote. "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions." I know that maybe the English in this, the language is not easily understood as we kind of gloss over it. But what is he saying? He is saying the thought that religion is just a tool to subjugate people. It's a tool to oppress people, to guilt the masses into doing something contrary to their nature. So he called for the abolition of religion. If you abolish religion, what you are doing is telling people to give up on illusions. Religion is an illusion. God is an illusion. There is no God. Man is all there is. So to put faith in something that doesn't exist is to believe in an illusion. He says you want to tell people to give up religion because it's a call for them to give up their illusions about their condition.

What is their condition? He goes on to say this after. He says, "The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest essence for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence." What is he saying? He is saying that we have to understand that man is God, and that it is our imperative, it is our duty to overthrow everything that teaches that man is anything less than that. We must overthrow the idea that man is less than the standard of God.

Maybe you feel this way today. Maybe you are here and you agree. You agree that religion is an enemy of humanity, that it is just an enslaving proposition that leads men to think less of themselves, and be confined to something less than what they can actually achieve on their own. Even Christians, right? We tend to be watchful of this word "religion." We do. Often it has negative connotations. If you tell someone that they are so religious -- "Oh, you are so religious" -- it's usually not meant as a compliment.

Religion for many of us can conjure up feelings or images that just drive us away. It drives people away. It can bring up images of a dead, cold, impersonal, duty, structure that we want nothing to do with. I get it. As Christians, we have made it a point to separate our faith from those kinds of

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images and say, "Well, Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship. It's a faith. It's more than religion." And it is. We do this because it's a response to bad things that have been done in the name of religion, and a response to the religious mindset that says this. This is the part of religion we rebel against -- that I need to do this in order to earn favor with God. I need to do certain things in order to find God. I have to find him, so I find myself in a religious atmosphere so that I can get to God. I need to be good. I need to do good. I need to go here. I need to not go there. And if I do those things, then God will like me, love me, let me in.

That idea is a problem, right? If you read the bible, and you read the New Testament, you know that Jesus spoke strongly against that. We call it a religious spirit. He spoke to all the religious leaders of his day and came hard against that kind of mindset, because the truth of the gospel says that I cannot do enough to earn God's favor. I can't do enough to earn God's love. We use this word because it's been given to us. We say it's "grace." Grace is the most fantastic word that we find in the New Testament, because grace tells us that our sin is so great that we need someone to save us. We don't deserve it. For someone to show love on such an unlovable person is gracious.

It's not what we can do to get to God. It's what God has done to get to us. It's all about what he did. So when we talk about religion we have to come back a little bit. If we tend to rebel against this word, we also have to realize that it's in the bible. We read it this morning from the passage we are in. When properly understood and applied, religion is a good thing. Here in our passage we see James talking about religion. He is not only talking about it, he is applauding it, what he calls "true religion." What do we mean by this word "religion"? What did he mean by the word "religion"? That word "religion" means an expression of devotion. See, that's different. When taken in the right context, we start talking about our expression of devotion to God. It is bigger. It is far from the cold, dead, duty-oriented religion that we tend to rebel against, and that someone like Karl Marx can come and say, "Aw, religion is pointless; it's an illusion."

So, we can see that there is "bad religion" and there is "good" and "true religion." Before I talk about the second man, I want to highlight "true religion" from our passage. What is true religion? How do I know if I have it? How can I spot it? How can I live it? From this passage I want to pull out three things that we see from James, from God's word, about true religion. In order to live a truly religious life we need the right foundation, we need the right motivation, and we need the right destination. Let me explain.

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I. The right foundation.

We can see this in verses 22-24. We need the right foundation for anything in life. Everything needs a proper foundation. Do you want to build a house? You need a foundation. Do you want to raise kids? You want to build in foundations at the beginning. You want there to be a solid place for anything to stand so that it can grow, get bigger, get stronger, and handle more when it comes our way. So we need the right foundation. We need the right source for how we live our lives.

What does James tell us here? He says, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." Two things jump out right away. We have to hear God's word. We have to do God's word. But at the center of it is God's word. Something foundational is there. It is God's word. What's the word? What's God's word? Is it the word he spoke to Moses in the Ten Commandments? Is it just the words that Jesus spoke? When we talk about God's word, we are talking about the entire bible. We are talking about all 66 books, from Genesis through Revelation, that we have been given.

If you have been here any length of time, you know that we strongly hold to the authority of the scriptures. If we preach, we preach from the scriptures. If we give advice, we give advice from the scriptures because this is the foundation. This is where life is found. And if we go to other sources, they might be okay, but they will not sustain like this will.

James is clear and he just says, "Listen, you need to hear the word and you need to do the word." First, we need to hear it. We could substitute "read." But that's not enough. We have to put into practice God's word. It is the foundation for how we live our life. Life is not just about hearing a bunch of stuff. We would like it to be that way sometimes. We love it when we can just hear things and understand them and be like, "Yeah, I get it. That's really great, as long as I don't have to do anything about it." Maybe we hear this need for children in our area and we feel it. We are like, "Yes, I hear you. I see it. I can read the stats. I can hear you talk about the need." And yet we find resistance when we start thinking about how we can do something.

Hearing isn't enough. In order to get licensed for our foster parent license, we needed to take a CPR class. I told you about a different story from our CPR class, how a woman in there wanted to know if we had to figure out if people had a "Do Not Resuscitate" order, and how we were supposed to navigate those waters. The instructor was like, "Just save the person -- deal with those things later," which I felt was an "of course" moment.

Most of the class was just us sitting there listening. We are listening, we are hearing, "Do this, do this." Why don't people normally save people? Why don't people help? We started hearing,

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hearing, hearing, and it was great. But it means nothing. The certificate that I got says that you are able to save someone's life, understanding that when we have the right foundation of God's word we see who God is, who we are, how we can be saved. These are the big questions of every religion to ever come across this earth. Who is God? Who am I? How can I be saved? We see it in here clearly. We don't need any other book. We don't need anybody else telling us what to do. It's here. So when we have that, when we see it and hear it, we now can live it, and not out of guilt and condemnation, but out of like, "Man, wow, I get to do this. I get to live this out in some very, very unique ways."

God wants us to have a fuller life by doing his word, not just by hearing it. You will live a more enriched life if you do God's word rather than just hear it. James gives us this great illustration. He uses a mirror. We all know full well about it. We have mirrors for days in our society, not just like our normal mirror. You don't even need a mirror anymore, because you can just take a picture of yourself at any given moment and look at yourself and see how things are. Actually, our mirrors now can last longer because we can take them with us, and they can be posted for the world to see in a matter of seconds. Imagine a world without phones and the kind of technology we have. He uses this image of a mirror. He says, "someone who hears, but doesn't do is like someone who looks in a mirror, takes inventory, figures out what's going on, then 'okay, I'm good,' walks away and then just forgets about everything that just happened in front of the mirror."

What's the point of the illustration? Mirrors are great! They help us a lot. Some of us probably should use them less. Some of us maybe need to use them more. But they are only as good as we make them. What if you look in a mirror and you see some major flaw going on? That big piece of food stuck in your tooth from last night's dinner – you see it and you say, "Oh man, I've got to handle that." If you walk away and forget everything that just happened, and you walk around with a blacked out tooth that everybody gets to see, what good was the mirror?

James is pointing out there's this temporary nature to our lives. We see, we hear, we agree, then we walk away and we forget because life just goes on and we are full of other things to do. How much more for us today? We are busy. We are so busy. We are everywhere, all at the same time. If we are not physically there, we are mentally there. We can't have conversations without our heads somewhere else. We are trying to live in both worlds and agreeing with the person in front of you while texting somebody else and having conversations with people all over the world while you are in a moment with someone else. Look, we are all guilty of it, maybe not all of us. I am. Many of you are.

The foundation for living a godly life, for living a true religious life is one that is rooted and grounded in the word of God. Before doing anything we have to hear it. We have to read it. We

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have to understand it. You don't just go and do. I don't want to go start performing CPR on somebody before I know what I am doing, because I will probably hurt them. So I need to hear it. I need to understand first. That's why hearing is important. That's why we do this, so we can hear.

But then, after hearing, we do. We see in the scriptures that God loves us more than we could ever have imagined, and we are more sinful than we ever could have imagined. Our hope is built on a love that God has beyond what we can understand. And he sends his son to die on the cross so that our sins can be forgiven. When we read that, and we see it, then we start seeing, "Okay, this is who you are in Christ. Now this is how you need to go live." We are like, "Oh, okay, I know and I understand the foundation of my life so now I can go live it properly. Because if I try to do it in another way, it's going to be just a work that might cause some good, but it will not be the fullest picture of what that work can look like."

Once we hear and see what God says, everything changes. We are changed, and it pushes us into a life of living for him, a life of serving him and a life of serving others. It's doing his word. When we have the right foundation, a religion can be pushed in the right direction. It is beginning to be true. The right motivation is second.

II. The right motivation.

We have the right foundation: God's word. The right motivation. In verse 25 he says, "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." This overlaps a little bit, but we need the right motivation. The reason religion can be so troubling to so many people is because so many people are doing stuff in the name of religion for all the wrong reasons. They are doing terrible things in the name of God, or a god. Or they are doing good things, but hoping these good things just earn themselves a favorable position with God. But that's not true religion. That's not the gospel. The gospel is different. It is more. We just talked about it. In verse 25 he talks about the law of God, and what does he call it? "The law of liberty." Now, that's pretty amazing. There are very few places in our conversation ever where we would put law and liberty in the same sentence and equate them in the same context.

Law, for most of us, is like drudgery. It's obeying rules. It's confinement. It's "you are constraining me, you are restricting me. I don't want to be restricted. Let me loose. Let me go." We see the law as that. But what does liberty mean? It means freedom. God's law – when we say that we are talking about God's word -- God's word brings freedom. This is the complete opposite of what Karl

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Marx thought. He talked about religion as a prison, as a confinement of the brain, as a mind-killer. He said we need to throw it off. Anything that tells you that you are less than god-like needs to be gone. And yet we see that true religion is not a place of bondage, but a place of freedom, of liberty.

When we are saved we are set free. That's now our motivation. I am not confined to doing stuff for other people because of the guilt prison we put ourselves in. We don't want to raise our kids that way. We don't want to manage our homes that way. We don't want to run our businesses that way, where we are just constantly going through the hamster wheel of, "I gotta do this. I gotta do this. If I don't do this, people aren't going to like me. People aren't going to think I'm qualified. People aren't going to think that I am able to do what I am doing. They are going to see what kind of a fraud I am, or they are going to feel differently about me. They are going to see me in a different light. I will not look as cool. I will not look as beautiful. I will not look as put-together as I want to look." That's prison. And that is not the gospel.

We have been set free. True religion, understanding what God has done, is freedom -- freedom from doing so that we will be noticed, either by God or by other people, freedom from trying so hard to be approved, freedom from striving to be qualified. When God has saved you, he has made you new. He has qualified you. He says, "I approve." He says, "It doesn't matter how much money you have. It doesn't matter how pretty you are, how thin, how much food you have in the pantry, how much is in your retirement account, how big your business is, how big your church is, how many friends you have." He says, "All that should matter is that you are mine and I am yours and I have loved you and saved you."

All those things that we strive for in this world come from a foundational trust in Christ. We are told that when we have this right motivation we will be blessed in all our doing. That's what the end of that verse says. It says, "You will be blessed." Look, we want to be blessed. Just say it a different way. However we like to phrase it, we want to be blessed. We want our life to be blessed. That's the American dream, right? To have a lot, do a lot. We would consider those things blessings. But when we start opening up, understanding who God is, we start seeing blessing as something very different. We can have a fuller joy in this life from understanding Christ, understanding who he is, and what he has done for us. We will say, "No matter what, even if I am

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behind bars, I am blessed because the savior has saved me.” He says you will be blessed in all your doing. So what does that doing look like? This is our final point.

III. It’s the right destination.

We need the right foundation, the right motivation, the right destination. What I mean by destination is this: We need the right target. But target didn’t rhyme with foundation and motivation, so I put destination in so that it can rhyme, because it’s really important to rhyme when you’re preaching. It’s in the bible somewhere. The right destination, verses 26 and 27. This is where we get to what true religion looks like. The truly religious does three things. The truly religious bridles his tongue, visits widows and orphans in their need, and keeps himself unstained from the world.

I am only going to talk in depth about the second one, because I think that’s where we are met today. I’m not going to say too much about the first one: bridle your tongue. Look, this is a no-brainer. Just stop talking so much. It’s really easy. For some of us it’s really easy. James goes on to talk about it later in Chapter Three, and even earlier in Chapter One he says, “Be quick to hear, slow to speak,” then later in Chapter Three he talks about taming the tongue. This is important to James, and I think it’s something we need to understand. This is a big deal. You want to live a religious life? You want to live a devoted life to Christ? Listen more, talk less. Boom. Write it down. Put it everywhere. Write it on your mirror, in your car. You guys are like, “Adam, listen to your own advice. Stop. We’re done.” I’m going to keep talking though. God gave us two ears, one mouth. Listen twice as hard as you talk. Talk less. Bridle the tongue.

The second piece of evidence that a religion is true (and this is where we are going to finish up) - he says that pure and undefiled religion is “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction,” to love and show mercy to the most oppressed and helpless in society. The widow and the orphan were two images used throughout scripture to signify the neediest in all of the land. Because of the communal culture, when you lost a father, when you lost a husband, when you were alone, when you were abandoned by your parents, or they were killed, it was a borderline death sentence.

That image of widow and orphan is a picture for us of people we need to care for, because they didn’t just exist then -- they exist now. Even in our culture, being a widow and an orphan isn’t maybe as severe as it was back then, but it is still a severe life circumstance. Though there are more opportunities for those in that condition in our society, so many still need help. This is a great

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destination for doing God's word. You want to do God's word? You want to be truly religious? Visit the widow and the orphan. To visit isn't just waving, saying hi, or going and showing up to see someone. That word means to meet them with helpful intent, to go with helpful intent. It's not just being there, it is being there with a purpose. When we visit anyone in need, we should go always thinking, "How can I be a help to this person?" Sometimes it's just being there, and your presence is helpful. Other times it requires some action.

Here we are. How can we visit the orphan in 21st century North Lauderdale? Here we have 4KIDS, a place to live this out, to do God's word. All the churches in South Florida, here in Broward County, are uniting to come up with a goal for each church to get foster families engaged in this mission. Riverside's goal is five families this year to become foster parents. Some might say, "Aw, that's too small." Some might say, "I don't know how you guys are going to do that." We are just believing that this is what God has put on our hearts to do, and we want to support the vision of 4KIDS. We want to support God's mission for us and say, "Okay, we are going to work hard to get five families licensed in the foster care system." After church, Tom will be out there. Go see him. He will tell you more about what's involved in that process. Maybe it's not to be a foster parent, but like he said, there are so many ways that we can help. This is true religion. We are caring for those who cannot care for themselves.

Our baby right now, Ariana, is 10 days old -- born straight to the NICU for many reasons. She was taken from her parents, 10 days later placed in our home. We don't know how long we will have her. It could be a few weeks. It could be a few years. We don't know what we are doing. I mean, we have our own biological children. We have three, so we know some of what we are doing, but there are so many new things. It's scary. You say, "Well, how did you know you were called to do that?" I read James. I don't say that to be smug or condescending. I say that because I don't know how you know to do anything that's in God's word. You see it. It comes in and you just say, "Alright, we are going to give it a shot." So, I'm going to give you three things, some thoughts about how to do this.

1. The first one is this: Look and lay down your life.

Look and lay down your life. Look for opportunities to serve.

_____. I am ready to die for the sake of others, lay my

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life down and give it away. I'm just going to say that this is what God tells us to do. Look, see where needs are, and just lay your life down and trust God for it.

2. The second thing is: Forget excuses and find time.

I know you are busy. Everybody is busy. There will always be a reason to not. There is not clear indication in scripture of our idea of "I'm going to wait and be released. I'm going to wait for God's release." I know we use that often. I know there is a value to that. I just want to say that we will always find reasons to not. Start looking for reasons to do what God has for you. And give your life away generously.

3. Trust God and turn to him.

Look and lay down your life. Forget excuses and find time. Trust God and turn to him. None of us can do this on our own. We need God. We need to look to him for wisdom, direction, and strength. There is more need than you can do on your own, but don't let that stop you. We trust in God.

Right now we are just trusting every day for what God will have for us. There are so many factors in this new adventure. Well, what's going to happen to my three biological children? Are they going to get the care that they need? We are still homeschooling. We are doing all these other things. My life, my job. Am I going to have enough money to support this addition? How do we work this out? One day after the next we go, "I don't know. I'm just trusting God." Man, he tells Abraham to go to a far country and leave it all and Abraham goes. Jesus walks around and says, "Yeah, foxes have holes, I've got nowhere to lay my head. Do you want to come?" People are like, "Sure!" We just go when God calls. When your foundation is there, the motivation is there, the right destination -- when all those things are where they should be, God will move mountains. We live by faith. We don't live by sight.

This is what George Mueller said: "When sight ceases, it is the time for faith to work. The greater the difficulties, the easier it is for faith. As long as human possibilities for success remain, faith does not accomplish things as easily as when all natural prospects fail." He is the second man I want to talk about. I am going to quickly tell you a little bit about him.

Same thing: born in Germany, same time frame. As a child, he was a notorious liar and a thief. His father was a tax collector and George Mueller used to steal from his dad's collections. His dad

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didn't want him to go into the family business. His dad wanted him to become a minister because it would afford him a good life. It had nothing to do with faith. It had nothing to do with being a Christian. He knew ministers lived comfortably.

His child was so full of immorality that at 14 when his mother died, he was barely impacted by it, and went on doing the things that he thought were best for him. He was known for staying at hotels with women for a week at a time, then when it came time to pay the bill he would sneak out and go to another hotel, and he wouldn't pay. Eventually this caught up with him and he got thrown in jail at the age of 16 for 24 days until all the debts were paid. But none of it changed his behavior.

He went to the university at the age of 20 to study theology. Nothing had changed in his life and this had actually bothered him. He was like, "Man, no one is going to choose me to be their pastor." He said, "Unless I've reformed, no parish would choose me as their pastor. Secondly, without a considerable knowledge of theology I would never earn a good living." It was just all about religion as a tool.

But then things changed. He got a bigger picture of what the religious life was. During that same year a friend invited him to a prayer meeting, and that prayer meeting changed his life. He said, "I had never seen that kind of Christianity before -- men praying on their knees, people loving on him, true heartfelt prayers being lifted to God." He traces his conversion to that night. Immediately a desire was birthed to be a missionary. His dad told him, I have wasted my money sending you to college. You are going to go be a missionary? You're not going to earn any money doing that. I have wasted my money sending you to university."

So again, he was in Germany. Amazingly, he got sick right at the time he was supposed to go into the German military. Everyone was supposed to go in, and he got sick right at the time he was supposed to report. During that sickness he moved to England, and everything changed. He got married. He started pastoring a local church, but felt like things needed to change. Back in those days, churches would rent pews and that's how the pastor would earn his salary. He came into church and said, "This isn't right." He stopped the practice of renting pews and he said, "I won't take a salary. I don't care." He said, "We are violating God's word, because the rich are going to get good seats, and the poor are going to be put in the back." He just put a box in the back of the church and told people to give as they felt led.

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This set the tone for his entire life in ministry, how he would view money, and how he would view trusting God. There is story after story of how God provided for his wife and him. When there seemed to be no hope for food or money, God provided every time. And it was his practice to never make his requests known to people, just to God.

His heart started growing for children, especially for orphans. The orphan condition in the 19th century was incredible. So many were sick with cholera. Many were begging on the streets. There were accommodations for 3600 orphans in all of England. For the entire country, there was only room for 3600 orphans in shelters. Twice that many children under the age of eight were in prison. So in 1834 Mueller started inviting children to his house for breakfast and a bible study, and this was the beginning of his orphanage. He prayed constantly for all the needs of the house – for food, for furniture, for clothing, all of it. Two years later he opened his first orphan house, bathed in prayer, prayed for everything. He had everything there. He opened the doors, but there were no orphans, and he realized, “I forgot to pray for orphans!” He said, “We have all this stuff and no one came in.” He prayed that day, and the next day 50 applications from orphans came in and he started his orphanage.

Within a year, three more orphan houses were opened. By 1870, 25 years after the first house was opened, 25 years of prayer, five orphan houses were built. They housed 1700 widows and 2500 orphans. By the end of his life, his orphan houses cared for over 10,000 orphans. He never took a salary in the 68 years of ministry. He trusted God to put it in people’s hearts to send him what was needed. He never took a loan. He never went into debt, and neither he nor the orphans were ever hungry.

His work and vision created a different revolution in Europe. We have Karl Marx, we have George Mueller -- contemporaries, born in Germany, moved to England, both with a revolutionary heart. One leads to disaster. The other leads to life for children and generations to come who would grow up. And we see as George Mueller’s vision increased, what happened to England by the end of his life was just incredible.

Be doers of the word, not hearers only. True religion – this is what pleases the Lord and this is what we need to give our lives to. Let’s pray.

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