



Mom's Connect –A Season for Everything

April 1st, 2020

Ecclesiastes 3:7

Naomi and Ruth

Introduction/Overview

Today is our 7th Mom's Connect and we have the privilege of studying two more mothers in Scripture – Naomi and Ruth. In addition to looking at Naomi and Ruth this morning, we'll start our time with studying our next verse in Ecclesiastes 3 which is verse 7.

*For everything there is a season...
A time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak
Ecclesiastes 3:1a, 7*

A time to tear, and a time to sew

Tear: to separate parts of or pull apart by force

Rend: to remove from place by violence; to tear (the hair or clothing) as a sign of anger, grief, or despair

Synonyms: gash, incision, laceration, rent, rip, slash, slit

Sew: to unite or fasten by stitches; to close or enclose by sewing

Synonyms: mend, patch, repair

Biblical Commentaries

Tear, rend

- Literally – tearing garments, in sign of mourning or anger Joel 2:13, 2 Samuel 1:3, 2 Samuel 1:11

- Figuratively - nations, as Israel from Judah, already foretold in Solomon's time 1 Kings 11:30-31

Sew

- To be "sewed" together hereafter Ezekiel 37:22. Sewing the nations back together.

A time to keep silent, and a time to speak

Silence: forbearance from speech or noise; often used interjectionally, the absence of sound or noise

Synonyms: dumbness, muteness, speechlessness, stillness

Speak: to express (a thought or emotion) in words; to utter words or articulate sounds with the ordinary voice; to express thoughts, opinions, or feelings orally

Synonyms: articulate, bring out, enunciate, pass, say, state, talk, tell, utter, verbalize, vocalize

Biblical Commentaries

Silence

There is a proverb which says, speech is silver, silence is golden. Like all proverbs, this needs qualification. There is a silence that means cowardice, sulkiness, and stupidity; and there is a speech that is more precious than any gold, triumphant over error and wrong, quickening and beneficent as the sunbeam.

People may be silent through:

1. Grief – Job 2:12,13
2. Sickness or weakness
3. God-caused silence: denying a man ability to utter his mind. See Exodus 4:11, Luke 1:18-23 – Zechariah doubted the angel and he became mute after learning his wife would bear a son.

Silence can happen because of emotional fullness

1. Painful emotions - Matthew 22:1. Will not all the wicked who stand at the bar of their Maker at the last day be struck with this silence? Emotions of surprise, remorse, despair, awe...
2. Joyous emotions – Perhaps when the father embraced his prodigal son - Luke 15:11-32, his heart was so full of joyous feelings that he could not speak. It has been said that superficial emotions chatter, deep emotions are mute: there are joys that are unutterable.

Scripture examples of silence – Aaron, the Psalmist, Christ

- Aaron held his peace – Leviticus 10:3
- The psalmist said, “I am mute; I do not open my mouth, for it is you who have done it.” Psalm 39:9 This indeed is a golden silence: it implies absolute confidence in the character of our heavenly Father.
- Christ displayed silence before His judges. The man who can stand and listen to the language of ignorance, bigotry, and personal insult addressed to him in an offensive spirit, and he offered no reply. This exerts a far greater power upon the minds of his accusers than he could by words.

To Speak or Not to Speak?

Times not to speak

1. When it is an evil time or a time of calamity in a nation, it is not a time to be talkative, especially in a vain and outrageous way
2. When a friend is in distress, as in the case of Job and his friends - Job 2:13
3. When in the presence of wicked men, who make a jest of everything serious and religious, Psalm 39:1 says: “I will guard my ways, that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth with a muzzle, so long as the wicked are in my presence.” Better to be still and mute, rather than open your mouth in a murmuring and complaining way.

Time to speak

There is a time to speak out:

1. Publicly, the truths of the Gospel – now more than ever!
2. Privately of Christian experience - open profession should be made of Christ, his word and ordinances
3. Speak to God in prayer and praise
4. Speak the Truth in love -Proverbs 15:23; 25:11; 27:5; Galatians 2:11-14; Ephesians 5:11

Silence is Golden

There are times and situations in which silence is the best policy. Here are some guidelines:

- When you have nothing of value to say. Proverbs 17:28 says “Even a fool keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips he is deemed intelligent.”
- When you haven’t even heard the question yet. “If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.” Proverbs 18:13
- There is a time for thoughtful reflection. “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer...” Proverbs 15:28.
- James 3

Summary

One commentator wrote: “To rend... to sew... keep silence... speak — The rending of garments and sitting down in silence is token of great sorrow; the repairing of them and the recommencing of conversation is evidence of the relief of sorrow. These are thus properly grouped in one verse.”

Mothers in Scripture – Featuring Naomi and Ruth

Background

Set in the period of the judges, the book of Ruth records how a famine in Judah forces Naomi and her husband Elimelech to leave Israel and move to Moab (considered an enemy of Israel) where they stayed for 10 years. Their two sons marry Moabite women. For 18 years Moab oppressed Israel during the time of the judges. The story of Ruth occurred in the latter part of time of the judges “where they ruled Israel” from 1370 to 1041 BC. The book of Ruth covers a span of about 11-12 years.

While in Moab, Elimelech dies, leaving Naomi alone with her two sons. She allows them to marry Moabite women despite the pagan culture they came from. Not long after, both sons die, possibly because of disease from the famine. This left Naomi widowed, with her two daughters in law, not knowing what to do.

After hearing that the famine had passed in Israel, Naomi sets out with Orpah and Ruth to go back to Judah. As they start out, Naomi stops and encourages them both to return to their homeland to their families so they can have some chance of starting over as she knows she has nothing to give them. Both sisters cry. Orpah decides to go back to her family but Ruth clings to Naomi and insists on going back with Naomi.

Ruth 1:16-18; But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

This is just chapter one! The rest of the book is an incredible story of devotion, love, redemption and God’s sovereignty.

Naomi and Ruth were well received once back in Bethlehem, but they were poor and had nothing. Due to Naomi’s age, Ruth was the one who would support them both as she was strong and hard-working and would look for opportunity to glean in nearby fields.

Leviticus 23:22 says: "And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God."

Ruth would be the one gleaning in the field working from morning until dusk. This was their new life, one of survival but God always provides.

God beautifully orchestrates Ruth to glean in a field owned by Boaz, who happens to be a distant relative of Elimelech. She finds favor with him and he graciously watches over her, protects her and provides for her. Because of his family connection, he can restore Elimelech's land and marries Ruth, taking care of Naomi as well. This is a beautiful love story of redemption. I am leaving SO much out and encourage you to dive in deeper to this beautiful story.

Naomi - "My Joy" or "Pleasant"

Description: Suffering a threefold tragedy, Naomi refused to hide her sorrow or bitterness. Believing in God's sovereignty, she attributed her suffering to his will. But her fixation on circumstances, both past and present, led to hopelessness. A kind and loving mother-in-law, she inspired unusual love and loyalty in her daughters-in-law. She was able to impart much wisdom into Ruth as mothers do.

Ruth - "Friendship"

Description: Generous, loyal and loving, she is strong and serene, able to take unusual risks, dealing actively with the consequences. She was known by everyone for being virtuous.

Despite Ruth not being Jewish (she was from the pagan land of Moab), she left her homeland, her family and her religion to follow Naomi back to Bethlehem. Everyone could tell that by Ruth's hard work, she had care and concern for her mother in law. The word virtuous describes both Ruth and the Proverbs 31 woman. They share 8 traits. Just like the Proverbs 31 woman, Ruth was:

1. Devoted to her family – Ruth 1:15-18, Proverbs 31:10-12, 23
2. Delighting in her work – Ruth 2:2, Proverbs 31:13
3. Diligent in her labor – Ruth 2:7, 17, 23, Proverbs 31:14-18, 19-21, 27
4. Dedicated to godly speech – Ruth 2:10, 13 Proverbs 31:26
5. Dependent on God – Ruth 2:12, Proverbs 31:25b, 30
6. Dressed with care – Ruth 3:3, Proverbs 31:22, 25a
7. Discreet with men – Ruth 3:6-13, Proverbs 31:11-12, 23
8. Delivering blessings – Ruth 4:14-15, Proverbs 31:28, 29, 31

Ruth is in the genealogy of Jesus as she was the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David... Matthew 1:5. She was King David's Great-grandmother 😊.

Discussion

1. The sound of silence – has there ever been a situation where you chose to be silent? What was the result?
2. Times to speak and not speak – has the opposite happened where you spoke, maybe too soon, but it would've been wiser to remain silent? What happened?
3. When is it hardest to hold your tongue?
4. Reflect upon the story of Ruth and Naomi – what actions in each of these women displayed the following:
 - a. When to speak and when to keep silent?
 - b. A time to “tear” and “sew” or repair?
5. What qualities do you see in Ruth that you would like to incorporate into your life?
Qualities of Naomi?
6. What is one thing you will implement this week?

Further Study – on your own

- Read the book of Ruth – it's only 4 chapters 😊
- Look for instances where Ruth demonstrated faithfulness and God demonstrated His.
- What kind of character did Boaz have? Give examples.
- What encourages you most after reading this book?
- Do you see any parallelism with our redemption story?

Resources

ESV John MacArthur Study Bible

Twelve Extraordinary Women – John MacArthur

Women of the Bible – Jean E. Syswerda

The Remarkable Women of the Bible – Elizabeth George

Blueletterbible.org

Miscellaneous Biblical Commentaries - biblestudytools.com, studylight.org