

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON SEVENTY-FOUR: RUTH 4:15

"And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him."

The women of Bethlehem gathered around Naomi and congratulated her on the birth of her grandson. They made several important points about the child. First, of all, the infant was God's provision for Naomi, a widow left childless by the death of her husband and sons in Moab. She was left without a child or grandchild to care for her in her old age. God changed all that through the application of the Levirate Law and the birth of her deceased son's heir.

Their second point was that the child would restore joy to her life and he would care for her in her old age. This was God's design for His highest creation, mankind, created in His image. One man and one woman, united, would reproduce and create the nuclear family unit. The parents would care for the children while they (the children) were young. And, then, the children would care for the parents in their (the parents) old age. It was all covered under the fifth commandment to honor your father and your mother. As a child "honoring" took the form of obedience. But, as the parent's age "honoring" morphed into providing for and caring for the needs of your father and mother.

The ladies' third part was that it was Ruth who bore the child. Ruth who loved Naomi. Ruth who proved to be more valuable than seven sons, thought to be the ultimate blessing.

When Naomi returned to Bethlehem she complained that the Lord had brought her home empty (1:21). She brought Ruth with her but apparently discounted Ruth as an asset. Now the women of the town assure her that it was through Ruth that she was blessed. Ruth had worked to provide for Naomi. She had honored her mother-in-law as if she were her own mother, obeying whatever Naomi told her to do. And she had restored the name and legacy of Naomi's husband's family. Finally, she had given Naomi a grandson to care for her in her old age and to carry on the family name.

Sometimes we don't recognize the good things we have because we are so focused on what we have lost. Naomi lost a husband and two sons but she gained a daughter-in-law. Because she focused on her loss, Naomi was bitter and believed that the Lord was against her. She did not see God had given her a blessing, a loving young woman who was dedicating her life to care for Naomi. She did not see that in Ruth God had given her the means to restore what she had lost: a family.

Are you like Naomi, focused on what you have lost? Take another look around. What have you gained? What blessing has God given you that you took for granted or ignored? If you don't see any blessing in your situation ask a friend what she sees. Sometimes it takes another set of eyes to help ours see. In Naomi's case, it took a town full of women!

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." James 1:17