

“A Son Has Been Born”

The women of Bethlehem rejoiced in Naomi’s joy – “A son has been born to Naomi!”

Dearly beloved, the women of Bethlehem are an example for us, written into the Scriptures in order that we may learn to share their faith.

And what does faith do? Faith looks for nourishment and restoration in the birth of a son. Faith also turns and speaks faith to the neighbor – in order that the neighbor’s faith may likewise find nourishment and restoration in the birth of a son.

The women of Bethlehem have been immensely helpful to Naomi – and specifically to her faith. It’s not that Naomi had no faith prior to coming home – she had lived by faith all the days of her pilgrimage to Moab and back.

But you know from your own experiences how easily we get ourselves turned around, and muddle-headed concerning the faith. We need each other’s help. We not only need the comfort of others in our sorrows – but we also need them to help with the clarity of our thinking, and the faithfulness of our confession.

The women of Bethlehem speak Naomi’s faith for her – clarifying, correcting, and redirecting Naomi. That is what we do for one another as we join together in confessing the creeds of the Church.

Naomi had become (understandably) turned around in her thinking concerning the birth of a son. Mahlon and Chilion – her beloved boys – had died. Grief has a way of messing with your mind – and heightening your need for your fellow Christians and their faith.

While still in Moab, after her two boys had died, Naomi despaired at the thought of producing more sons to give to her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. And that was the problem – Naomi thought the birth of a son was something for her to give – rather than something to receive.

Naomi said to Orpah and Ruth: “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?” (1:11)

No, Naomi, you have no more sons in your womb – that you may give them as husbands to your daughters-in-law. But you’ve also missed the point of hoping for the birth of a son! Listen to the women of Bethlehem, Naomi! Those women know and believe that the birth of a son is NOT so that you may have something to give – but that you may have something to receive.

“The women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.’”

With thrilled voices the women of Bethlehem declare – “A son has been born to Naomi!” The true joy of that son was NOT found in what Naomi might give – but in what Naomi shall now receive.

She held in her arms, and on her lap – the child whom God had sent – especially for the purpose of providing Naomi with redemption and restoration and nourishment in the faith. She did not conceive this child – carry this child in her womb – and give birth to this child --- and yet, the child was still Naomi’s child, born for her that day in what would later be called the City of David.

This child born to Naomi was not the Promised Christ – but certainly sounds a lot like Him. The resounding parallels between this child, born in Bethlehem – and that later, greater Child born in Bethlehem – are profound!

Of Ruth’s son, the women say – “A son has been born to Naomi!” Of Mary’s Son, the angels likewise declare – “To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!” (Luke 2:11).

As with the son born to Naomi, so it is with the Son born to Mary – the joy is NOT found in what we might give – but in what we have now received. Mary’s Son is our redemption and restoration and nourishment unto life.

“A son has been born to Naomi” – but Jesus is born for us, our Redeemer and our Savior. Amen.

The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.