

1. I shared with someone this week that I was going to be preaching from a story that is quite bizarre. The story is found in 1 Kings chapter three. Turn there is you would.
2. The person said, I have read and known that story for years and after all this time it is just strange.
3. I would tend to agree. However, I believe there is something very valuable we can learn from how these two mothers and Solomon handled this very troubling situation.
4. And I believe that all of us, whether a mother or not can learn from this true story because there are principles that when applied to our everyday lives can lead to healing.

TEXT: **1 Kings 3:16-28** Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. **17** One of them said, "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me. **18** The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. **19** "During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. **20** So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. **21** The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne." **22** The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours." But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine." And so they argued before the king. **23** The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'" **24** Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword for the king. **25** He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." **26** The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!" **27** Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother." **28** When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

TITLE: **Beauty from Ashes**

INTRO:

1. The first 15 verses of this chapter recount a dream that Solomon had and give us insight into the promise of Wisdom from God.
2. He wakes up from his dream; we don't know how much time elapses, but I would imagine fairly quickly, Solomon gets his first big wisdom test.
3. Two prostitutes come to Solomon with a dispute.

4. I think it would be fair to say that the profession of these two women would cause most of us to assume that the truth might be hard to come by. These two women are probably not honorable ladies living honorable lives, they are living lives in which they give away that which is very sacred to them for money.
5. It's possible they feel cheap and used. And on top of that both of them have become pregnant, and in reality, they have been with so many men it is doubtful they know who the father is.
6. Those circumstances and life choices have a way of messing with your integrity and your sense of right and wrong.
7. So here is what the dispute is about. Both of these ladies live in the same house. It could have been a brothel where several prostitutes stayed.
8. The first woman begins to speak. She had a baby boy. Then three days later the second woman had a baby boy.
9. During the night, with no witnesses present, the newest mother rolls over on her child during the night killing him.
10. Because she is desperate for a child, she gets up; takes her dead child and puts him near the mother whose child was born three days before; takes the live child and places it near her, and then the next morning claims that the live child is hers and the dead child belongs to the other woman.
11. How many understand this was before paternity tests and DNA testing. It was the word of one prostitute verses the word of another.
12. And right there in front of the king, these two ladies get into an argument. They are both raising their voices and claiming to be telling the truth and Solomon is sitting there thinking what did I do to deserve this.
13. And as he sits there; realizing that this argument and the lack of evidence are leading them nowhere, the Lord reveals to him the solution to get to the bottom of the identity of the real mother.
14. Solomon calls for a servant to bring him a sword. When the sword arrives Solomon declares, this is my judgment. **Cut the child in two and give each mother a half of the child.**
15. Upon hearing that news the true mother of the living child is moved with compassion and cries out, no. Don't do it. Let her have him. I would rather him be alive with her than to be dead.
16. But the other mother protests; no way. Cut the baby in two so neither of us can have him.

17. And at that moment the true mother is revealed. The one who had compassion for the living child was given the baby back and the dispute was over.
18. And word spread everywhere, wow. God truly has given Solomon more wisdom than anyone else. Solomon literally became famous over that one decision.
19. Now I want to tell you what this message is not about. This is not a comparison between what a good mother and a bad mother are like.
20. I believe that many of you listening had a mother who loved you and did her very best for you, but chances are someone listening did not have a loving mother who always did what is best for you.
21. Over the years I have begun to hear more and more around Mother's Day a particular phrase.
22. "Mother's Day is hard for me." What's interesting is I have heard that phrase from people from several walks of life.
23. Ladies who would like to be a mother but are not. People who are mothers. Men, in reference to their experience with their own mother. Teenagers, and on and on the list goes.
24. Whatever category you fit in I would like to point out that what kind of mother you had, or what kind of parents you had or what kind of home environment you grew up in does not have to define who you are and who you can become.
25. Sure, the difficulty of those circumstances can be a hurdle that you have to jump over, but **your future is not tied to your past, your future is determined by the choices you make** and the wisdom you rely on here and now.
26. Kenny Rogers recorded a song in 1978 called "The Gambler."
27. Now the song is not a Godly song. I only remember hearing it played in my youth. The message of the song is about smoking and drinking and gambling which are all things that I stay as far away from as possible.
28. But in the midst of all the stuff that isn't healthy for you, there is just a tiny nugget of truth. The fifth verse says Now Every gambler knows that the secret to survivin' Is knowin' what to throw away and knowing what to keep.
29. And then the chorus says, you gotta know when to hold'em. Know when to fold'em. Know when to walk away. Know when to run.
30. I believe one of the great tragedies of life is that we tend to pursue things that really aren't of the greatest value, while at the same time being indifferent toward those things that are really valuable.

31. An example of that would be **Mark 8:36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?**
32. The Jeff Cox translation of that verse is, what good is it to pursue wealth which doesn't last for eternity but neglect or be indifferent toward the condition of your soul which will carry over to eternity?
33. Knowing what to pursue and what not to pursue is a huge part of the success or failure of our life and fortunately we have the bible; the word of God that gives us exact and precise direction when it comes to our life pursuits.
34. And whether today is painful because of your relationship, or lack of relationship with your own mother. Or if today is painful because it reminds you of some failure on your part.
35. Or if today is painful because it reminds you of all the other injustices you have suffered, what we learn from this story is that the Lord always has a way of helping us navigate and even heal from the difficulties we face.
36. And in order to bring healing to every heart that needs it today I am going to ask you to focus your attention on two areas.
37. The first goal is to...

Identify the truth.

1. The truth about what? The truth about your circumstances and the truth of who God is in the middle of those circumstances.
2. If you've been hurt by someone in your life. Mother, father, sibling, neighbor, brother or sister in Christ, the truth is what you have been through, and probably what they did to you was not pretty.
3. In fact, it was pretty terrible. **1 Kings 3:22-23** The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours." But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine." And so they argued before the king. **23** The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"
4. When I wrote in my notes what I am about to say next I thought to myself well duh. That's pretty obvious. But I've found sometimes in my own life that what should be obvious isn't so obvious.
5. What was the first thing the king noticed? He listened to both sides of the story and he very quickly concluded, something is wrong here. Something or someone isn't right.
6. At that point he didn't know which, but Solomon knew that one of these mothers was acting in a pretty deceitful way.

7. And when Solomon gave the command to cut the baby in half (which he was never going to do) one of these mother's turned hateful and evil.
8. But this evil didn't reveal itself all at once. It was gradual.
9. She did not intend to roll over on her child. It was completely an accident.
10. But it wasn't an accident that she tried to deceive the other mother or that she lied to the king.
11. And it wasn't an accident that she was so heinous that she was willing to let an innocent baby die. Over the period of a few hours her true personality came spilling out.
12. In our lives sometimes the hurtful intentions of another person aren't so obvious, and they aren't obvious as quickly.
13. Often times in relationships there is this progression of behavior that happens over a period of years. And because it happened gradually, we might have worked really hard at justifying what we were seeing and experiencing as normal behavior.
14. One of the most freeing things is when I have spent time listening to someone's abuse or pain or mistreatment and I say to them, that is awful. That is terrible. I am so sorry you have had to endure that.
15. It's as if my acknowledgement of their pain is a key to freedom. Really? Do you think it was that awful? Yes. Yes, I do.
16. It is ok to admit. What they did to me is awful, terrible, and extremely painful.
17. I love them and I care for them, but their behavior is unacceptable. I didn't say it is easy to come to that realization, but it certainly is more than ok for you to identify the source of your pain, especially when the source of that pain is the actions of another.
18. But. Everybody say but. But, it is not ok to get stuck there. If all you ever do is acknowledge that they hurt you, you will more than likely remain in your hurt.
19. But we don't want to remain in the hurt. We want to experience healing.
20. And one of the first steps to healing is to recognize that your savior is still good, even though the other person is not.
21. 1 Kings 3:24-26 Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword for the king. 25 He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." 26 The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby!"

22. When I read that, one of my first thoughts is what kind of pain it must have caused the mother of the living child to agree to let the other mother have him.
23. That was her child. She knew it was her child. She knew that giving that child to this evil person was the only way to save the child's life, but she was willing to endure that pain in order for that baby to live.
24. I am convinced this mother's sacrifice for her child is a living example of the sacrifice and the suffering of Jesus Christ for our sins so that we might have life.
25. In the midst of the outright evil, here is this mother displaying one of the most selfless acts of love you will ever witness.
26. And in the middle of all the evil, and heartache, and difficulty and struggling you have been made to endure, there is the love of God the father, willing to give his one and only son, and the love of the son, Jesus, who willfully sacrificed his life in place of yours.
27. I believe when we truly accept the abundance of love and care and keeping the Lord has for us, it puts those trials and hardships into perspective. And what is that perspective?
28. Romans 8:31-32 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?
29. There is no evil in all the world that can cancel out the depth of God's love for you.
30. Yes. Identify and recognize the hurt, but also identify and recognize the great, loving, heavenly father who is always for you.
31. When you do the door begins to open for healing in your life.
32. The second step to healing is to...

Save someone – yourself.

1. By saying save yourself I am not trying to indicate that you are in the place of God and that you can save yourself without him
2. What I mean is don't engage in behavior that will keep you trapped to the pain. Do that which will free you from the pain.
3. The mother of the dead child was just not a nice woman. She was downright evil. To be willing to allow the living child to be killed just to spite the other mother is despicable.
4. And who is responsible for her wicked behavior?
5. Was the baby who died responsible for her behavior?

6. Was the living baby responsible for her behavior?
7. She was responsible for her behavior. And yet often times when people, parents, loved ones, people we care about treat us in harmful and hurtful ways that don't seem to make any sense, we tend to blame ourselves for their behavior.
8. There must be something wrong with me. That is the reason they acted so terribly. Why might we jump to that conclusion?
9. Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, "It has come at last—salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth—the one who accuses them before our God day and night.
10. One of the ongoing activities of our enemy, Satan, is that he is before the throne of God day and night attempting to convince God that we his children are worthless.
11. He accuses us of every wrong, every sin, every failure.
12. But I've got news for you. God isn't the only one he talks to, day and night. He talks to us. And he accuses us. And he constantly plays all of our sins and failures through our minds like a continual video clip.
13. He wants us to believe that the salvation of our soul through the blood of Jesus Christ is a sham. A fake. If something is going wrong in my life it must be because I'm a terrible person and God doesn't love me.
14. He constantly reminds us of our own sins and faults.
15. But what he doesn't tell you is that when you accepted Jesus as savior you accepted His salvation from your sins.
16. He throws your sins as far as the east is from the west, into the sea of forgetfulness.
17. Don't take the bait. Sure, we are accountable for our own sins. But we are not accountable for the sins of others. Their sins are not our responsibility. Especially when the sin they have committed is against us.
18. You are not to blame for their bad behavior. Their evil, terrible, despicable behavior is not proof that something is wrong with you, it is proof that something is wrong with them.
19. So, we are not responsible for their behavior.
20. But we are responsible for our reaction.
21. One of the great tricks of the enemy is to get us to get caught up in the blame game.
22. My problems are their fault. If they had treated me better. If they hadn't been so mean, or cruel to me then I wouldn't be this way.

23. But it's just not true. Just like you are not capable of making them act in some evil way, they are not capable of making you stay in a place of continual woundedness. Never healed. Never whole.
24. Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
25. Jesus tells us that each of us must bring our own weary and burdened soul to him.
26. I can't take your broken heart to Jesus for healing, and you can't take my wounded spirit to Jesus for healing.
27. I can pray for you, but only you can run to Jesus and blurt out God, they broke my heart. Yes, they did it, but my heart is the one that is aching.
28. I am the one who is suffering. I'm the one who needs your healing touch.
29. As long as we blame them for our misery, we stay bound in misery.
30. But when we take our misery to Jesus and lay it on him and confess, God, I can't carry this anymore. It's too heavy. Then the Lord can give us freedom.

Conclusion:

1. That's what I want us to do today. I want us to run to Jesus for the healing and wholeness he can provide for us.
2. Recognize that the person who hurt you did you wrong.
3. But also recognize that what Jesus has done for you is more powerful than any wrong. Because if God is for you, who can be against you?
4. Don't take responsibility for their behavior.
5. But do take responsibility for your pain and bring it to Jesus.
6. I felt today that we should pray for everyone here who has a broken heart.
7. I'm not going to elaborate on that further. If whatever pain you are dealing with fits into the category of a broken heart, then this time of prayer is for you.
8. I'm going to ask everyone who wants prayer to come forward.
9. Once they are up front, I want to ask some people to come in behind them and pray for healing.
10. Lord God I declare, if you are for me then who can be against me. I believe you love me and died for me so I can have life.
11. Lord God, I can't help what they did, but I can bring my broken heart to you and ask you to mend it and make it whole again.