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Women of God

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

Introduction

1. My original plan for this morning was to preach a sermon on mothers.
2. However, on Wednesday of this past week my wife shared something with me which made me stop and think.
3. It was something which Christ McCurley, who preaches at the Walnut Street congregation in Dickson, pointed out about those who might be in their worship service this morning.
4. There are a host of emotions which accompany this day, many of which are not up-lifting.
5. Here is what I mean:
 - a. Somewhere, there may be a couple sitting in a service just like ours, but instead of joy, their hearts are filled with sorrow because they recently lost a child to miscarriage.
 - b. There may be a woman among us today who has been told she is unable to have children.
 - c. There may be a son or daughter whose mother has recently died.
 - d. In some congregation, maybe here, there is a woman who wants to be married, but is not. She is questioning whether she will ever be a mother.
 - e. Somewhere, there is a son or daughter who had an abusive mother.
 - f. We must not forget the woman, who, at a very young age, gave her child up for adoption. How does this day affect her?
6. With all of this in mind, I would like to go in a little different direction.
7. I would like for us to consider some of the women we find in God's Word.
8. Some were mothers, but not all. More importantly, they were servants of

God.

9. There are traits in each of them I would like to encourage the women here today to emulate.
10. Not only will these bless your life, they will bless the lives of those around you.

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A. SARAH

1. We first encounter Sarai [Sarah] in Genesis 11:29 when she became Abram's [Abraham] wife.
2. God appears to Abram in Haran, after his father dies and says,
"Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you"
(Genesis 12:1, NASB95)
3. At the time, Abraham is seventy-five years old and Sarai is sixty-five (cf. Genesis 17:17).
4. If Sarah ever questioned Abram or complained about the move, we are not told.

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5. Fast forward 24 years
 - a. Abram is ninety-nine years old (Genesis 17:1) and Sarai is 89.
 - b. God promises to give Abraham a son through Sarah.
 - c. He fell on his face and laughed, thinking to himself, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (Genesis 17:17).
6. A little later, the Lord visits with Abraham and Sarah and repeats the promise of a son to Abraham (Genesis 18:10).

- a. This time, Sarah, who was listening to the conversation from behind their tent door, laughed (Genesis 18:12).
- b. The Lord asked why Sarah laughed and then asked, “Is anything too difficult for the Lord?” before repeating the promise.

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7. Hebrews 11:11, points to a trait of Sarah’s that every woman and man would do good to emulate.

“By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.” (Hebrews 11:11, NASB95)

8. The impossible became possible with Sarah because of her faith in the One who promised her a child.
9. Ladies, God is able to accomplish through your faith that which you might never have thought possible.
 - a. How many husbands are brought to the Lord by the faith of their wives.

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- b. How many children grow up to be faithful servants in God’s kingdom because of the faith of their mothers or grandmothers.

“For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.” (2 Timothy 1:5, NASB95)

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B. HANNAH

1. In 1 Samuel 1 , we read of a woman who desperately wanted a son.
2. Her name was Hannah, her husband was Elkanah.
3. Try as they might, they had been unable to have any children.

4. Elkanah had a second wife, Peninnah, through whom he had been able to have many sons and daughters.
5. Every year when Elkanah took his family up to Shiloh, to offer his yearly sacrifices, Peninnah would taunt Hannah to provoke her.
6. Every year, Hannah would be brought to tears, unable to eat.
7. One year, she went to the tabernacle after the meal to pray.
8. Through her bitter tears, she prayed, “O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head” (1 Samuel 1:11).
9. The priest, a man named Eli, saw her lips moving, but he heard no words — he assumed she was drunk, so he rebuked her.
10. Hannah told him that she had drunk no wine or strong drink, but that she was “troubled in spirit” and had been “pouring out [her] soul before the Lord” (1 Samuel 1:15).

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11. Realizing his mistake, Eli encouraged her; “Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him” (1 Samuel 1:17).
12. God answered Hannah’s prayer — She was finally able to conceive and in due time, she gave birth to a son.
13. She named him Samuel, a name which means “asked of God” (v. 20).
14. When he was weaned, as she promised, she brought him to the tabernacle and “dedicated him to the Lord” (v. 28).
15. For the rest of his life, he was a faithful servant of God — he would judge the nation of Israel and anoint its first two kings.
16. So many noble traits stand out in the person of Hannah — devotion, trust, patience and self-sacrifice.

17. She was a woman who found refuge in prayer.
18. Our world today is in desperate need of more Hannahs:
 - a. Women who are truly devoted to God and trust in Him with all their heart (Proverbs 3:5-6).
 - b. Women who are patient and willing to make sacrifices for the good of others.
 - c. Women who fervently pray for God to work in their own lives for His glory.
19. Ladies, is your life an example of “good works” (1 Timothy 2:10; 5:10)?
20. Can you say with the apostle Paul, “the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you?” (Philippians 4:9).

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C. ESTHER

1. Another woman I would like for you to consider this morning is the young Persian queen we know as Esther.
2. Over 2,500 years ago the Jews were almost eradicated from the Persian Empire.
4. It happened during the reign of Ahasuerus, better known to us today as Xerxes.
5. Early in his reign he deposed his queen, a woman named Vashti, because she refused to parade herself before a room full of drunken men, as Xerxes commanded.
6. Four years later, he chose Esther from a host of beautiful women selected throughout the empire to be his new queen.
7. However, neither Xerxes nor anyone else within his court knew that Esther was a Jew.
8. Mordecai, her uncle, who took her to raise after the death of her parents had warned her to keep silent about her nationality.

9. In time, Xerxes promoted a man by the name of Haman to Prime Minister over all Persia.
10. Haman had an intense hatred for the Jews and convinced Xerxes to sign a decree which would allow for their elimination within the empire.
11. Mordecai learned of the plot and encouraged Esther to go before Xerxes and intercede on behalf of the Jews.
12. Esther, however, was reluctant to approach Xerxes uninvited, because she knew that anyone who did so could lose their life.

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13. Mordecai's response to her is one which stands out in the annals of time:

“Do not imagine that you in the king's palace can escape any more than all the Jews. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13–14, NASB95)
14. Most of us know the outcome. Esther's faithful courage and trust in the Lord prompted her to act on her people's behalf thus saving them from certain destruction.
15. It is the last statement of Mordecai to Esther that I would like for you ladies to dwell upon this morning.
15. Very few of us may know the journey which your life has taken to this point in time, but God does.
16. Is it possible that God has brought you to this point in your life to accomplish something for which He has been preparing you all your life?
17. Are you willing to act on His behalf?

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1. The name of this woman is forever burned into our memories.
2. It was through this young virgin that the second person of the Godhead became flesh and dwelt among us.

3. We can only imagine the fear and wonder she must have felt when, for the first and perhaps only time in her life, the angel Gabriel, spoke to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28).

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4. We recognize her humble faithfulness in the words she spoke before Gabriel departed, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).
5. We cannot begin to imagine the treatment Mary received once word got out that she was expecting a child and that Joseph was not the father.
6. In that day, according to the Law of the Covenant, a woman who had committed adultery was to be stoned to death (Leviticus 20:10).
7. Even after Jesus began his ministry, there were those in his home town who still questioned his parentage (Mark 6:3).
8. Regardless, Mary's humble faith and strength of spirit guided her to the cross and beyond.
9. Ladies, do you have the faith of Mary, a faith that sustains you no matter how dark the days?
10. Always know that your strength comes from the Lord who has promised never to leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).

Conclusion

1. I would like to conclude with a look at one final woman, a prophetess of whom we read in the New Testament.

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2. Her name was Anna.
 - a. Luke tells us that she lost her husband after only seven years of marriage (Luke 2:36).

- b. She remained a widow after his death and was 84 years of age.
 - c. She never left the Temple there in Jerusalem but continually worshiped with fasting and prayer, night and day.
3. Joseph and Mary had just come into the Temple with their newborn son, Jesus.
 4. A man named Simeon blessed them and began telling them what lay ahead for their son.

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5. As he was speaking, Anna came up, and as Luke tells us, she gave thanks to God and “continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).
6. My point is this, at the end of her life, Anna was finally able to see with her own eyes what she had been praying for all her life.
7. What have you been praying for throughout your lifetime?
 - a. Is it to finally see our Lord in all His glory?
 - b. Is it to enter into that home which God has prepared for His saints?
8. If so, then may your reward in heaven be great!