

Unconditional Love

Psalm 46:1-7

Paul Cannings, Ph.D

A. Love Under Fire (vs. 23):

1. Then the king said – Solomon, after listening to a mother who came to the supreme court (King Solomon), desperate to have her child back, decided to continuously keep addressing the issue but taking control of their argument (I am sure it was highly emotional). Please note the mother of the dead child is not pressing the issue. It is clear that the mother of the living brought the issue because Solomon starts off with what she is saying.
2. The one who says – Despite hearing primary from the mother whose son was stolen Solomon spoke to both mothers. He was seeking to be fair and equitable.
 - a. What is interesting is that both women were prostitutes, two children had the same gender and ‘every child is a gift from God.’ (Psalm 127:3)
 - b. She alleges that the other can persist so obstinately in her denial, because there was no one else in the house. The latter probably took the child away to avoid the just and heavy reproach of having killed her own child, and the consequent disgrace she would incur. This is at least more probable than that she wished to continue nursing for her health’s sake (Thenius), or that she thought to inherit something in the future from the child (Hess); or, finally, that she intended to sell it afterwards for her support (Le Clerc).¹
3. The one who is living – The word Solomon chose to describe life is descriptive of how Solomon valued life. He viewed life as intrinsically good and as a premium for vitality and prosperity for all beings whether human or animals. Solomon wants to hear this case because he values all that is alive and what was lost, especially since he truly had high honor for his mother.
 - a. The fact that these two women had access to the king’s throne shows how much young Solomon loved his people and wanted to serve them.²

4. The one who is living – Even though these women are women living in a brothel and are prostitutes Solomon listens to them to fight for motherhood. He did not have the best father but he sure had a loving mother, who was abused by his father, but never neglected him no matter how he came to life. He so loved his mother he placed on a throne next to his (1 Kings 2:19).
5. The king said – Solomon has taken full control of all that is taking place especially since it is highly emotional. He is repeatedly speaking as if he has no intention of stopping.
6. They brought – Because it was obvious that the battle between these women was going nowhere Solomon does not have a DNA testing site and has no idea whose child it is Solomon repeatedly kept asking for someone (many guards near him) to do whatever it takes to bring him a sword.
 - a. “This one is saying ... this one is saying”: as if turning his head to look at each one separately. “They brought a sword before the king”: this implies a swordsman to use the sword, for the king did not intend to wield it himself (cf. v 25). “Sever the live baby ... and give ...”: address in the second person pl. implies that several men would be involved in actually cutting the baby in two and handing the parts to the two women. “Her maternal instincts were stirred”: the verb כמר, “grow hot,” “get excited,” occurs only in the niph and, except in Lam 5:10, where “skin” is the subject, it always has the subject רחמים (Gen 43:30, Hos 11:8, and here); the primary meaning of רחם is “womb” and the pl. means “maternal compassion.”³
7. They brought – The word Solomon used to have someone bring him a sword represents how sacred Solomon viewed this occasion for the child and the mother.
8. The living child – Having a baby in their day, no incubator, pre-natal care or hospitals only mid-wives was a tremendous gift from God (Psalm 127:3). Life is a great honor representing vitality, legacy and hope (Naomi the Book of Ruth) therefore to loss one’s life is a tremendous loss. The other mother had already loss her child’s life so a true mother, understanding the value of life who vehemently protect life.
9. The king said ‘Divide the child in two...’ - Solomon, having a very good mother, decided to test the heart of these women knowing they were prostitutes. His mother is probably near him on a throne he established for her (1 Kgs. 2:19).

B. A Mother's Heart (vs. 26):

1. The woman whose child was the living one spoke – The woman whose child had life could not stop speaking. Please note the king has taken over their argument and is continuously talking. She breaks in with no plans to stop speaking, even though she knows Solomon is the king which means she is over speaking the king when she begs for her child's life.
 - a. The inescapable point of the whole story is its model of true motherhood: "Give her the baby, and by no means kill him; she is his mother!" In her speech to the king, the first woman expresses her grief at two of her profession's special sorrows. She has a child; it has no father, but she will love it dearly'.⁴
2. Deeply stirred over her son – For the first time the gender of the child is mentioned. Being prostitutes having a son, like in the case of Naomi, is hope for the future because there most like would be no husband, especially in their culture.
3. Deeply stirred over her son – When this mother heard Solomon her heart became very merciful for her son. Nothing else mattered, not the loss of the other woman's child, she is standing before King Solomon, no one person mattered only her son. She was overwhelmed with a deep sense of compassion for her child.
 - a. This woman's fight for her child is done with the best and strongest soldiers standing to protect the king; warriors. The king in all is royal majesty is standing before her. Still compared to her background none of it matter. The only thing that mattered was her child.
4. Oh my Lord give her the living child – Solomon, witnessing the heart felt cry of compassion for her child spoke over her relentless pleading and commanded those around him to take the child that is alive and permanently place him in his mother's care.
5. Oh my Lord give her the living child – It is not just what the real mother said it is how her words were expressed that convinced Solomon she was the mother of her son.
 - a. The two verbs are useful together because they tell us (1) that the king reacted and (2) that he spoke out to effectuate his reaction. "Give her the baby ... she is

his mother”: the king’s first utterance is a command; his second is a formal declaration, identifying which of the two women is actually telling the truth.⁵

6. By no means kill him – Solomon repeatedly with no plans to stop talking told the executioner to not kill the boy. Solomon apparently told no one of his plans so that the heart of the mother can be purely exposed.
7. By no means kill him – You don’t have to come from a perfect background or be a perfect woman to be a great mother. You just have to love your child. It is the difference maker to have the tenderly love your child.
8. The other woman said, he shall be neither yours nor mine – The mother whose child died showed no compassion she wanted the other mother to never be able to enjoy the life her child had.

C. Love Finds a Way (vs. 27):

1. The king said (answered) - After the mother’s plea of compassion and the other woman’s response Solomon verbally overrides all the conversations and ruled as king. He was more than ever convinced who was the mother.
2. Given the first woman – Solomon commanded the executor to permanently had over the living son to his real mother.
3. By no means kill him – Solomon kept repeating, as if he still needed to stop the executor from listening to the mother whose child died, to stop the execution. Solomon has to repeatedly say this.
4. She is the mother – Solomon was convinced that God produced life through the woman who had compassion for the living son. By saying mother Solomon was also implying she is the true giver of life and the one who brings the potential for vitality and prosperity to all those who comes from her son which is a blessing from God.
5. When all Israel heard – When ALL Israel gave their undivided attention to what took place (having a child in this culture is viewed in high esteem – Sarai) and came to an intellectual understanding of all that happened they believed immediately that Solomon was truly anointed by God. In other words, of all the sons that David had, Solomon is the correct replacement.
6. Judgment which the king had handed down – They people understood that Solomon had litigated this case (a highly emotion situation), in God’s government structure, as a very wise arbitrator so he has to be their deliver from any form of oppression. He is an arbitrator that can advocate for the poor. It gave them confidence and hope. They can trust Solomon’s rule.

7. Fear - Motherhood being so highly honored and appreciated caused the nation to reverence, holding Solomon in awe for the wisdom he displayed.
8. They saw that wisdom of God – They had a clear and complete understanding that Solomon had received spiritual insight into understanding complex matters. They accepted that this insight can only come from God.
9. Administer justice – They were convinced that God had anointed Solomon to rule before the people executing justice for the oppressed and the poor, establishing peace. This made Solomon a hero before the people.
 - a. Solomon's wisdom is demonstrated in his ability to discern true justice, a quality which marks him as a "just king." This attribute is claimed by nearly every ancient Near Eastern king as he ascends the throne and establishes his rule as one concerned for the welfare of the state and even the weakest of its citizens (see the prologue to Hammurabi's Code in which he is charged by the gods "to cause justice to prevail in the land").⁶
 - b. Such obedience was the central issue of kingship in God's kingdom—knowing the difference between good and evil and obeying God. Solomon's decision in the case of the two prostitutes (3:16–28) illustrates the wisdom that God gave him. Wisdom is the practical and successful application of God's truth to life's situations. See Proverbs 2:6–22 for a description of wisdom and its benefits. The result of Solomon's wisdom was national respect by the people of the king for his wisdom and justice (1 Kings 3:28).⁷
 - c. Solomon's "understanding mind" (1 Kings 3:9) was literally a hearing heart, that is, one that was quick to listen and obey.⁸