

In the Mix

Message Notes

Intro:

We have been in a series called Power Family. Week 1, the message was entitled “Power Couple.” It was all about having great marriages. Week 2, the message was entitled “Raising Champions”. It was all about parenting. It was one of the best messages I’ve heard on parenting. This week I’m teaching a message entitled “In the Mix”. It’s all about Blended Families. If you are in a blended family, you are In the Mix!

Let’s pray.

? When I think of blended families, the first thing that comes to mind is the Brady Bunch. (video theme song)

I’m not sure if I’ve heard many messages about blended families. I’m not sure why. Statistics say that 50% of families are blended families. I’m sure there are many blended families in our church. I’m also sure you have questions. I know that over the next 30 minutes, I won’t be able to answer all of those questions, but I hope to start some conversations and make you think.

In the Bible, there are not many examples of blended families as they are defined today, but there is a story of a family that blended with another family, and by the end, it felt like a Hallmark movie. It’s the story of Ruth. I believe that as we look at this book, we see some takeaways that can help us that are in the mix.

The story starts with a man named Elimelech. He was an Israelite who moved from Bethlehem to Moab because of a famine. He died and left his wife Naomi with their two sons in Moab. The blend begins when the two sons marry two Moabite women. They weren’t supposed to marry foreigners, but they did. One was named Orpah, and the other was named Ruth. Elimelech and both sons died which left Naomi with Orpah and Ruth. Naomi decides to leave Moab and return home and tells the two ladies to return to their families. Both originally said they would stay with Naomi, but Orpah decided to return home. Ruth was determined to stay with Naomi. This is the reason why. She valued her voice in her life. She knew if she was to marry again, she needed wisdom.

5 practical tips regarding blended families.

1. Counsel should be a prerequisite.

1. **Ruth 1:16-18 (NLT)** 'But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I

allow anything but death to separate us!” When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

2. When considering entering a blended family, you should seek as much counsel as possible. **Proverbs 11:18** says, There is safety in a multitude of counselors.
3. Ruth knew she needed a voice in her life for guidance and wisdom. We all need a voice in our lives. If you are considering getting into a blended family or if you are already in one. Seek counsel.
4. You can go and try to figure it all out yourself, or you can talk to someone who’s been there and get some advice from them.

2. Healing is a priority

1. **Ruth 1:19-22 (NLT)** 'So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked. “Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?” So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.'
2. Naomi's sentiment is the same feeling that many people carry from one family to another. She was very bitter because of her loss. c. When a marriage fails, or something happens, it's very easy to carry bitterness, unforgiveness, and unresolved feelings into the next family.
3. 50% of those who have been married and divorced still have feelings for their ex 10 years later.
4. Tony Evans says it is like an umbilical cord that you never detached. You must not bring any wrong expectations into the mix and not make someone new pay for what someone did in the past
5. My encouragement to those in blended families is to make sure all parties (kids included) are healed or pursuing healing from the previous situation.
6. Something that’s noteworthy is that it doesn’t say Ruth was bitter, but you don’t see any indications that she was.

3. Security is established with placement

1. **Ruth 2:14-17 (NLT)** 'At mealtime Boaz called to her, “Come over here, and help yourself to some food. You can dip your bread in the sour wine.” So she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her some roasted grain to eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over. When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without stopping her. So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. And pull out some heads of barley from the bundles and drop them on purpose for her. Let her pick them up, and don’t give her a hard time!”'
2. Boaz placed Ruth in a position of favor.
3. Placement is important in blended families. Everyone wants to know their place. The step-mom, step-dad, stepchildren, and biological parents. They want to know their place.
4. In blended families, it’s important that conversations are had to let each person in the family know their place.

5. Often times the one spouse says, “My kids come first”. I understand the heart behind that, but your spouse will always feel insecure.
 1. Value your marriage first (it’s going to last when the kids leave)
 2. Love your kids (They should still feel like a priority)
 3. Be amicable with your ex. (They should not get your priority)
6. Be amicable with your ex. (They should not get your priority)
4. Be amicable with your ex. (They should not get your priority)

5. True connection is a process

1. **Ruth 3:8-13 (NLT)** 'Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet! “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she replied. “Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer.” “The Lord bless you, my daughter!” Boaz exclaimed. “You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. Now don’t worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman. But while it’s true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another man who is more closely related to you than I am. Stay here tonight, and in the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing, then as surely as the lives, I will redeem you myself! Now lie down here until morning.” '
2. When Ruth said, ‘Cover me,’ she was saying I trust you.
3. Marriage is trust
4. I trust you with my life. Trust you with my kids. I trust you with my finances I trust you.
5. You cannot compartmentalize your trust. If don’t feel like you can trust someone with your entire life, it might not be wise to get in the mix with them.
6. The key to blended families is building trust with everyone. Trust is earned, not given.

6. Restoration and redemption is God’s plan

1. **Ruth 4:13-15 (NLT)** 'So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women of the town said to Naomi, “Praise the, who has now provided aredeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!” '
2. God has a plan for your family. It’s very easy to focus on the past and not embrace God’s plan of restoration.
3. God’s plan is a plan of redemption. God didn’t kill Ruth’s husband, but he used it to connect a Moabite woman to an Israelite man to have a son named Obed, who had a son named Jesse, who had a son named David. Which is ultimately the line Jesus came from.
4. It’s a not coincidence that all of this happened in Bethlehem, where our kinsmen redeemer would come from

I know this story may not identify with the modern-day blended family, but a woman in Moab who never thought she would have been a part of the lineage of Jesus through a series of events, finds herself In the Mix!

Final Thoughts:

We are all part of a blended family. The family of God. We have been grafted in the vine. We are grateful for our kinsmen redeemer, Jesus, for redeeming us and bringing restoration to us.

My encouragement to blended families is:

1. Seek counsel
2. Make sure you are healed or pursuing healing.
3. Have important conversations
4. Remember, it's a process (don't compare yourself to others).
5. Be encouraged that God is in the middle of it all!