

Ruth 1

Tears and Trust

SIMPLE Beautiful STORY, Biblical NARRATIVE of Redemptive History

God's KINDNESS for Covenant People in Hardship

Only Bible BOOK Named after GENTILE, 1 of 2 books Named after Woman

Part of David's BIRTH RECORD / Written for GLORY of King David

DAVID is DEAD and BURIED > David's Son & Lord RISEN in GLORY

Jesus READ and STUDIED Ruth – Word of God – Profitable for Discipleship

1. God of Slogans

Ruth >>People NOT CALLED Christian Yet > OT: ANCESTORS of Jesus X

FAMILY of FAITH in SAME God – God of Abe, Isaac, & Jacob – OUR GOD

Some of us say we come from Christian Countries – Cross on our Flags

Follow Christian Traditions and Holidays – We have Christian Names

Follow Same GOOD GOD – BUT His PEOPLE Not Living in GOOD TIMES

a. Right Talk v. 1 In the days when the judges ruled...

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 21.25

Judges = no king and chaos ruled - little social order in the land

strong men imposed their will upon the weak

Israelites were continually invaded by the surrounding nations

time of chaos and instability

v. 1 ...there was a famine in the land // F. Terrifying > SLOW DEATH!

RUTH > BRIGHT Moment in DARK Period of HISTORY of God's People

vs. 1,2 and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.

ELIMELEK = God is King, or My God is My King > At TIME of JUDGES!

NO QUESTION – His Name is GREAT SLOGAN!! – MAYBE ALL??

IRONY – BETHLEHEM = House of BREAD – In Famine, Empty HOUSE!

Very BRIEF, CONDENSED Account of People & Their Lives

3 VERSES – 10 years of TORRENTIAL TRAGEDY – Famine, DEATH

vs. 2-5 They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died

b. Wrong Walk > God of Bible was NOT the KING Elimelek Followed

Moses: “I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God. I have done according to all that you have commanded me... bless your people Israel and the ground that you have given us, as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.’... high above all nations that he has made” Deuteronomy 26.14-19

NO BREAD in HOUSE of Bread > Famine in LAND of Milk and Honey

FORSAKEN their God – GOD was NOT their KING

RUNNING to MOAB NOT SOLUTION to Problem > REPENT of SIN

Moab was the land of Israel’s distant cousins, the Moabites.

You could SEE Mountains of MOAB from Bethlehem

TODAY – Land is known as Kingdom of JORDAN

Nation BIRTHED in INCEST - Between Lot & Daughters in CAVE

Worshipped GOD CHEMOSH > known as Especially VILE GOD

Go to MOAB? WRONG! Forbidden to MIX with PAGANS

BAD Enough Elimelek goes to MOAB – Even Worse Sons Marry Moabites

During DAYS of BALAK AND BALAM > Israel...the people began to whore with the daughters of Moab. These invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. Numbers 25.1-5

“No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the LORD. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the LORD forever... You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever.

Deuteronomy 23.3,6

You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for your sons, for they would turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the LORD would be kindled against you, and he would destroy you quickly.

Deuteronomy 7.3,4

NOT Matter of ETHNICITY or a SUPERIOR RACE

HOLINESS / SPIRITUALITY – God’s People devoted to God

Marriage is HIGHEST Level of Human Devotion – Spouse serves IDOLS

Nearly IMPOSSIBLE to Maintain White Hot Devotion to God / Then & Now

vs. 3,5 she was left with her two sons.... the woman was left without her two sons and her husband - QUICK AS THAT! 3 Men Dead! Pillars Collapse!

NAOMI is CHILDLESS WIDOW in Foreign LAND

Great SHAME in ISRAEL > END of your FAMILY LINE

DANGEROUS to draw CLEAR Line from Disobedience to DESTRUCTION

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Proverbs 14.12

New Covenant -Today you CAN Move! RISEN Lord sends to ENDS of EARTH

But our MOVES are to MAKE DISCIPLES – Seek FIRST His KINGDOM

If MOVE > How will it IMPACT your WALK, WORSHIP, WITNESS

What good to MOVE and GAIN Whole World but LOSE your SOUL?

What is Spiritual Climate for You, for Kids, Fellowship? Friends for your Kids?

Friends of Young People MOST IMPORTANT Influence > HOLY Kids?

They lived there about ten years....

10 YEARS! Think that just WANDER from God for a LITTLE WHILE

2. God in Suffering

Different Bible Teachers / Commentators – Widely Different Opinions NAOMI

NAOMI has become ONE of My HEROES – SPIRITUAL Mother to ME

Book could RIGHTLY be Called NAOMI – She is Clearly LEAD ACTRESS

a. Follower

Jewish WIFE from about 3000 years ago – No Feminism, Little Women’s Rights

DOUBT she had Much VOICE in MOVE to Moab or MARRIAGE of Sons

But she was NAMED “Pleasant” for REASON – Kind, Gentle, Supporter

She LIVES & SPEAKS what Elimelek does NOT – God is Naomi’s KING

But she FEELS the FULL Weight of God’s HAND of DISCIPLINE...

v. 5 so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband

THE WOMAN – No Husband, Sons, Food, Hope, Future OR NAME

NAOMI Under CURSE – FRUITLESS, HOPELESS, SWORD Pierced Heart

Sword LUNGED in Heart – then TWISTED – then TWISTED Again!!

b. Faithful

NAOMI – HEART BROKEN and WEARY but still CALLS on the LORD

NAOMI – Even with TRIALS and TROUBLES – has Powerful TESTIMONY

v. 14 And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

CLUNG is SAME Word used by Moses in First Book of Bible

a man shall leave his father and his mother and *hold fast to* his wife, and they shall become one flesh
Genesis 2.24

My THEORY is Godliness we see in RUTH was LEARNED from NAOMI

Ruth CLUNG to Naomi as she had SEEN N. Cling Loyal to Foolish Husband

As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.
1 Peter 3.6

c. Fortright

v. 6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food

AMAZING TURN - BREAD at Home from THE LORD, 1st Mention Yahweh

v. 7 So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

Naomi's despair > puts on a brave face for her daughter in laws

WALKS Away from Home – Not TOO Far Away – Creates SPACE to THINK

Make Daughters FEEL “This is IT” Leaving Comforts of MOAB Home Behind

vs. 8,9 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

1st Words Spoken in STORY > God's Words, KINDNESS, LOVE

CHESED = LOVE > Never stopping, never breaking, never giving up

Naomi will BLESS them and FREE them > TEARS and TRUTH

LOUD Weeping – Broken Hearts – Women Carried Eachother thru Life & Death

Naomi FREES the Girls – No OBLIGATION – Go back to Mother's House
You have shown Me KINDNESS – Now may God show You KINDNESS

vs. 10-14 And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of

the LORD has gone out against me.” Then they lifted up their voices and wept again.

IF MOSAIC – Levirate Law says I need to FIND you Husband, IMPOSSIBLE!

Be SENSIBLE – I will have No More Sons / You’ll have NO Husbands

Naomi has NOT Lost her Faith in GOD > But she has REALISTIC FAITH

Daughters have NO LOGICAL/GOOD REASONS to Stay with Naomi

No Kids > Husband > Family > Future

Naomi knows God is Sovereign – Creator, CONTROLS our LIVES

v. 13 No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”

v. 20 for the Almighty - El Shaddai - has dealt very bitterly with me

Bible doesn’t say that a comforter came right in and cheered her up.

Bible doesn’t say that God told her to get over it and have a stiff upper lip.

Naomi is not condemned for her feelings.

Naomi is allowed to wallow in her grief.

God doesn’t promise some quick easy fix to our problems.

God doesn’t promise life will be easy > does promise he will never abandon us

God doesn’t say that we must be happy all the time

He DOES say that we must trust in him all the time.

NOT ALL OUR CIRCUMSTANCES are Good – Sometimes LIFE STINKS!

Note then the kindness and the severity of God

Romans 11.22

God NEVER Sins – God is NOT EVIL – But God ORDAINS EVIL!

Worst EVIL in History of Human Race – MOST WICKED Thing EVER

Meticulously DESIGNED, PLANNED, ORDAINED, PROPHECIED by God

CROSS of His Son – PLANNED before FOUNDATION of the World

See Jesus Christ as Greatest DISPLAY of God's Goodness & Mercy

Book of Ruth > Always see God's Hand behind the scenes guiding events

NOT Spectacular Miracles

ordinary people in ordinary circumstances > our extraordinary God

Naomi attributes Misfortune to God's Hand, but also...

v. 6 she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food

vs. 8, 9 May the LORD deal kindly with you...The LORD grant that you may find rest

Profound Understanding > Events are Direct Result of God's Intervention

God moves in a mysterious way

His wonders to perform;

He plants His footsteps in the sea

And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never failing skill

He treasures up His bright designs

And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;

The clouds ye so much dread

Are big with mercy and shall break

In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,

But trust Him for His grace;

Behind a frowning providence

He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding every hour;

The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

God Moves in Mysterious Ways by William Cowper

3. God of Surprises

a. Power of Conversion

vs. 14,15 And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

KIND Advice from NAOMI > Go home my DAUGHTERS

ORPAH – lives out her Name “back of the neck” last SAW as Walked AWAY

IF you Hurry you can CATCH your SISTER > Return Home & gods

ONE Reason Naomi PUSHED Daughters – Know they Not Welcome Israel

MOABITE Not allowed to JOIN the ASSEMBLY of God’s People

Ruth is as welcome in Bethlehem as a ham sandwich at a Bar Mitzvah.

Don Carson

v. 19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

Sure TOWNSPEOPLE gave her STINK LOOKS but NO WORD of Welcome

Jesus is WITH – Foreigners, Refugees, Strangers, Unclean, Unwelcome People

God takes Unwelcome, Unclean, Unholy Stranger > Makes her DAUGHTER

Point of Book > WHAT is God DOING in the DARKEST of Times??

Can we Believe God is AT WORK – In SYRIA, S.SUDAN, ERITREA, IRAN?

Persecution threatened to wipe out Iran’s tiny church. Instead, the church in Iran has become the fastest growing in the world, and it is influencing the region for Christ...Despite continued hostility from the late 1970s until now, Iranians have become the Muslim people most open to the gospel in the Middle East...Two factors have contributed to this openness. First, violence in the name of Islam has caused widespread disillusionment with the regime and led many Iranians to question their beliefs. Second, many Iranian Christians have continued to boldly and faithfully tell others about Christ, in the face of persecution...more Iranians have become Christians in the last 20 years than in the previous 13 centuries put together since Islam came to Iran. In 1979, there were an estimated 500 Christians from a Muslim background in Iran. Today, there are hundreds of thousands—some say more than 1 million. Whatever the exact number, many Iranians are turning to Jesus as Lord and Savior. Mark Howard

Naomi BLUNT HONESTY like Jesus – GO BACK, I promise you Nothing!
 NOT Sugar Coated Seeker Sweet and Light Message – HARD CORE
 God has FORGOTTEN Me here – He MIGHT Forget YOU TOO!

NOTHING Promised in this Life – Go BACK to your OWN GODS!

RUTH understood that gods of Moab offer NOTHING Now and in Eternity

Better Chances to get Nothing BUT God of Israel – Get Him, get ALL!

YAHWEH + NOTHING = EVERYTHING

Most Detailed Account in OT of CONVERSION > Wonder of Saving Grace

MAIN Idea in CHAPTER is CONVERSION > TURNING word used 11 times

Turn, Turn Back, Returning > Constant Punctuation > Melody Line

This Story is ALL ABOUT Turning, Returning, TURNING to God

Vs. 16,17 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

RUTH – Looked at CIRCUMSTANCES and STAYED

Embraced UNKNOWN – Naomi taught her GOD is BEHIND all THINGS

Not about Food, Husband, Family, Earthly Future - ETERNAL ISSUE

Going Back to MOAB is to go to HELL!

...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
1 Thessalonians 1.9,10

NAOMI Only sees DARK, HOPELESS, FUTURE > Ruth Sees with FAITH

Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31.25,26

b. Promise of Covenant

God is IN the DETAILS of Life – We are TEMPLES and GOD Comes to US

Other RELIGIONS – GO to Temple to Try and FIND God THERE

Presumably He/She/It – This god – STAYS in Such Temples

Jesus “I am WITH YOU Always!” – Every Area of Life

v. 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

No Other Word Spoken in Several WEEKS HARD Journey > Thinking

vs. 19-21 “Is this Naomi?” She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

RETURN of Naomi: Grey Hair, Lines of Pain & Loss drawn on her Face, Frail

Naomi > Real Reasons to COMPLAIN – NO Family, Kids, Fortune, Future

HONEST Hurts – Life has been MORE than I can BEAR

Back with NOTHING! God has brought ONLY CALAMITY

Picture of the Lord's Affliction --- T.M.I.

Go Home people Ask – So how was CHINA?? – Gush out Feelings of Heart
 Awkward Look – Conversation goes COLD – Too Much Information
 How was China? – They just want ONE Word Answer – Good, Fine, Fun, OK!
 NEED for Community – Honesty – Sharing – Someone to Go Deep, Be REAL

Does NOT See Ruth Standing NEXT to her
 SOURCE of Blessings RIGHT WITH HER!

“I am EMPTY” – Right NEXT to her is FULNESS OF GOD
 WONDERFUL Plan of God way BEYOND her Wildest IMAGINATIONS

Ruth the MOABITE more Committed to GOD, More Excited than Israelites
 Bilquis Sheik – Could not FIND a BIBLE in Pakistan – No Church BUILDING
 Came to AMERICA – Churches on Every Street – BIBLES in Every Home
 Sunday Morning – First Sunday in Christian America – Crowds on Road
 Parks – Shopping Malls – Trendy Restaurants – New Movies – Sporting Events
 Churches are NEARLY EMPTY!

Fred – Football Player / American – WW2 – Serve in US ARMY

Sometimes Soldiers entertained by USO Shows – Met Jean Beautiful SINGER

Fred & Jean Married Started Family – had a SON

Fred > Job, supplement income – gambling on horses – Win Big / Lose Bad

Jean pregnant w/#2 – Like 1st Son, schedule Cessarian

Saw Doc on Friday said lets Deliver 2nd Son on Monday

Saturday – Jean confronted Fred – NO Money for Baby – Lost on Horses

Fred – Shame, Rage, Anger – 3 yr old Son given Mother gift of Rock

Jean put Rock on Bedroom Nightstand – Fred in Foolish Rage grabbed slammed

Jean's Head – DEAD, Son inside her was DEAD

Fred Called Ambulance/Police – Waited on Front Porch for them to Come – Weeping Told Police as Arrested “I killed Most Precious thing God gave Me” Fred – Confessed his Guilt – Went to PRISON

3 yr Old Son – Slept Peacefully through Tragedy – Losing Mom, Bro, Dad Got Took Care – Adopted by Great Family – 57 yrs + Has Own Family Now HUGE Family – Family of Jesus Christ – Brothers and Sisters from Everywhere It was MY ROCK – Slept Peacefully – Lost Family – God gave ANOTHER! God of Mercy and Providence > Plans we cannot FULLY UNDERSTAND

v. 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Tied Together w/ v. 1 – Back from Moab with HARVEST

Small SHAFT of Light Breaking thru DARK Sky – GOD About to WORK FAMINE to HARVEST – Physical and Spiritual, Food and FAITH

Peter to Jesus: “See, we have left everything and followed you.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.”
Mark 10.28-30

RUTH is God’s Answer when NAOMI Cried Out “God, WHY Me?”

Why BOOK is CALLED Ruth, Not NAOMI > Story about Life for RUTH

Story is Not about God’s PUNISHMENT of SIN > PARDON for SINNERS

RUTH had No Idea that there would be MORE than Food, even FAMILY

ROYAL FAMILY – Grandmother of KING DAVID, Great Gran of JESUS

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the

father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.
 Matthew 1.1-6

God is WORTHY of our TRUST – Need to Repent, Believe, Follow, Serve
 God of RUTH, NAOMI, BOAZ, OBED – God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus ALSO REJECTED ALIEN > also Poured OUT God's CHESED
 Deliver us from OURSELVES, MISTAKES, FAMINES, FOOLISHNESS
 Cross > ULTIMATE Example, things DO NOT Always go WAY WE WANT
 Cross shows SIN does have TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Romans 8.32

Ruth 1.1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. 3 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4 These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, 5 and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. 6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. 7 So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." 14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more. 19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" 20 She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who

returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.