

**Monday, July 13, 2026**

Ruth 1:6 and 7

When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

If you have time, read Ruth 1:1-7

Naomi's story is one of great sadness. As the book of Ruth begins, she and her family are displaced from Bethlehem, their home, because of a famine. While the prospect of food must have been a relief, leaving friends and family, leaving home, leaving the promised land, must have been exceedingly difficult. In some ways, it must have felt like a failure of God's promise. This was supposed to be a land flowing with milk and honey, but it had dried up.

And then, while in Moab, Naomi loses her husband. Within ten years of moving, she has also lost her two sons. Once again, Naomi may have felt like God's blessing had left her. Not only had she lost those she loved most, she had lost the possibility of her family continuing. She was left with nothing.

As we see in Naomi's story, joy is not always easy to find. I would argue that we miss it often. It can get crowded out by mourning, suffering, and difficulty. These realities of life tend to hit us hard and cause acute pain. That pain may never go away. And while the pain in Naomi's life is clear, her sustaining joy in life is also clear.

Naomi hears that the Lord has come to the aid of his people. Her trust in the Lord, her ability to see his joy through deep sadness, drives her to return home. She does not perceive God's promises as dead- they are simply not fulfilled yet. So when the promised land begins producing again, she returns home. To be clear, this is not an overwhelming joy. As we read later in the book of Ruth, Naomi feels that God is against her. And yet, she sees a sliver of God's joy when she hears about his provision for his people. She finds her joy in the promise of the Lord, even if she cannot see it in the present moment.

Keep your eyes open for the joy of the Lord. These moments may seem small, particularly if we are comparing them to the large challenges of life. But like Naomi, we can be assured that joy sustains when we anticipate God's rich blessing.