

# RUTH 1:6-22 "LOVE'S RESOLVE"

[1 Corinthians 10:11](#) Now all these things happened to them as **examples**, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come... airing dirty laundry so you and I learn to keep ours clean. May you be a church that learns from the mistakes of others and from those who do right.

**Elimelech** "God is my King"

**Naomi** "my Pleasant one, sweetness"

**Mahlon** "weakness; sickly"

**Chilion** "wasting away" **two boys might have been sickly at birth... after all they both appear to die prematurely.**

**Bethlehem** "House of Bread"

**Judah** "place of praise"

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, **400 year period of** **ciaos, confusion, catastrophe, calamity, uncertainty... urgency** **JUDGES**... The repeated theme of this time is found in [Judges chapter 21 verse 25](#)... **In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.** that there was a famine in the land. **QUITE POSSIBLY A DIVINE JUDGMENT.** And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, **Moab was the result of an incestuous act between Lot and his daughter when she got him drunk and slept with him. In Psalm 108,** God refers to Moab as His washpot. A more correct literal translation would be, **"MOAB IS MY TOILET BOWL"** So, in taking a trip to Moab, Elimelech and Naomi were saying, "It's getting tough here in the House of Bread, the Place of Praise. Let's go swim in the toilet for awhile." he and his wife and his two sons. <sup>2</sup> The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. <sup>3</sup> Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; **IN MOAB, ELIMELECH DIED. "GOD IS KING"** always dies in

**Moab.** If I'm swimming in the toilet bowl of the world, I can no longer say, "God is my King."

Once I leave Bethlehem-Judah—the House of Bread and the Place of Praise—**the rule and reign of God in my life will dissipate and die.**

and she was left, and her two sons. <sup>4</sup> Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. <sup>5</sup> Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

No life insurance; no social security; no medical; it doesn't get much worse for a woman in this part of history.

1. Remarry 2. Slavery 3. Prostitution **Too old to do this...**

The road back to God is sometimes hard and humbling... Naomi will take this road... how humble... how broken she must be. [Psalm 147:3](#) He heals the **brokenhearted** And binds up their wounds. **PRAY!**

In an analogous Old testament story to the prodigal son we will now see Naomi return to **BETHLEHEM THE HOUSE OF BREAD... IN JUDAH, THE PLACE OF PRAISE. Not quite in a place of praise but returning to the house of bread where she heard once again has bread...** hold on to your seats because it's time to see our spectacular God make **beauty for ashes**, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. [Isaiah 61:3](#) God is in the business of making sweet the sour of life, of turning ugly monochrome into **TECHNICOLOR. IT ALL BEGINS WHEN WE COME TO OUR SENSES, REPENT AND GO HOME!**

**Verse 6 of chapter 1 in the book of Ruth...** Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. **Once again "the house of bread has bread... no family in Moab, time to go home!** From distant Moab, Naomi heard that God was doing good things back in Israel. She wanted to be part of the good things that God was doing. Not exactly sure of the timeframe of this story... most likely the people of God repented as a judge was raised up and once again God brought bread back to the "house of bread".

Our life with God should make others want to come back to the LORD just by looking at our life. Our walk with the LORD should be something that makes others say, "I want some of that also!"

Courson... "If you have been in a place of loss—materially or internally, vocationally or relationally—know this: You are experiencing loss not because God is mad *at* you, angry *with* you, or disappointed *in* you—but because He wants to speak *to* you. And He knows that sometimes the only time we will listen is when we are at a place of loss where we can do nothing else."

<sup>7</sup> Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup> And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, **deal kindly**... is the ancient Hebrew word *hesed*. "*Hesed* encompasses deeds of mercy performed by a more powerful party for the benefit of the weaker one." (Huey) as you have dealt with the dead and with me. **"Why are you traveling with me? I'M GOING BACK WITH NOTHING AND I'M GOING BACK TO NOTHING.** I lost everything in Moab, but you have been good to me. May the Lord bless you. Now go back to your people." <sup>9</sup> The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." **NAOMI DESCRIBED MARRIAGE AS A PLACE OF REST: THE LORD GRANT THAT YOU MAY FIND REST, EACH IN THE HOUSE OF HER HUSBAND. GOD INTENDS THAT EACH MARRIAGE BE A PLACE AND SOURCE, OF REST, PEACE, AND REFRESHMENT IN LIFE.**

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. **The writer includes this to let us in on the fact that this is a very close relationship. Suffering is a catalyst... it will produce... bitter or better. Brings a family closer together or the family allows it to tear them apart. Naomi lost her husband, Orpah lost her husband and so did Ruth. Naomi lost both her sons. I would say this qualifies as suffering.** <sup>10</sup> And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people." <sup>11</sup> But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? **Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? According to the laws of ancient Israel, if a young woman was left widowed, without having had a son, then one of her deceased husband's brothers was responsible for being a "surrogate father" and providing her with a son. Naomi here says that she has no other sons to give either Orpah or Ruth.** <sup>12</sup> Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, <sup>13</sup> would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands?

No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!” **No doubt Naomi felt the guilt of her disobedience... It is highly possible this reveals she was the reason they left Bethlehem. She might have been the one that encouraged the marriages as well. This is not the hand of the Lord punishing her but getting her attention. God is redeeming the situation... working behind the scenes. What an awesome God we have.** If Naomi was bitter or angry against God, she probably would have gone another way - *further* from the God of Israel, rather than back to Him. She has no idea what redemption God is going bring!!!!

<sup>14</sup> Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. **All Naomi has to show for her life is two foreign women... oh how she wishes she could have a “do over”. She needs to go home but showing up with no husband, no sons, and two foreign pagan women without husbands. UGLY! But God!**

<sup>15</sup> And she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law. **Orpah goes back, off the pages of Scripture, into oblivion.**

**What happened to Orpah?** Of course, we don’t know. But men have always concocted traditions to make up for what they don’t know. Jewish traditions say this request of Naomi came four miles outside of Moab; and that Orpah shed only four tears over the thought of parting from her mother-in-law Naomi. But the rabbis go on to say that in recompense for the four miles that she went with Naomi, Orpah gave birth to four sons - **GOLIATH AND HIS THREE BROTHERS.**

“...**HER GODS**” Their national god called Chemosh (**Numbers 21:29; 1 Kings 11:7, 33**). Chemosh accepted human sacrifices (**2 Kings 3:26-27**). This was noted in the inscription of King Mesha on *the Moabitish Stone*:



## The Moabite Stone

The Moabite Stone is a black basalt memorial stone discovered in Moab by a German missionary in 1868. Nearly four feet high, it contained about 34 lines in an alphabet similar to Hebrew. The stone records a military victory. The passage shows that Mesha honors his god Chemosh in terms similar to the Old Testament reverence for the Lord.

**THE VERY SAME CAUSE THAT INDUCED ORPAH TO RETURN HOME IS WHAT CAUSED RUTH TO STAY. THE FACT THAT NAOMI WILL NO LONGER HAVE A HUSBAND OR SONS MEANT THAT SHE NEEDED SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF HER.**

**I LOVE HOW ONE MAN PUT IT...** In this verse we see Naomi grieving, Orpah leaving, and Ruth cleaving.

*Orpah*, whose name means "Youthful" or "Immature," shows the reaction of an immature believer—much emotion, but no devotion; conviction, but no commitment. Jesus talked about this in the parable of the sower (Mark 4)...

*Some hear the Word and spring up quickly, but when the hot sun comes out, they dry up and wither away because they have no roots.*

*Some believers get totally excited when they hear a sermon, or a testimony, or a concert—but their roots are not grounded in the Word of God. **THERE IS NO DEVOTIONAL LIFE, SIMPLY AN EMOTIONAL HYPE.** And when the hard times come—when there's a price to pay to follow Jesus—like Orpah, they turn away.*

Ruth, on the other hand, cleaves to Naomi. The same remains true today, for, there are those who kiss with emotion—but others who cleave with devotion. The Bible indicates that God isn't impressed with how **high we jump**, but how **straight we walk**. Ruth stayed with Naomi. She walked the walk. **BOTH FELT THE SAME WAY ONLY RUTH PUT FEET TO HER FEELINGS!**

**SO GLAD GOD DIDN'T JUST FEEL FOR US HE LOVED US BY GIVING HIS SON!**

Verse 16... the words quoted at many weddings... But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you, *Or to turn back from following after you;*  
**RUTH IS COMMANDING HER... DON'T ASK AGAIN IT'S SETTLED... I'M GOING WITH YOU... YOU STUBBORN JEWISH MOTHER**

For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people *shall be* my people, **Crazy devotion but what she says next tops them all...** And your God, my God. **People should be able to look at your life,**

just as Ruth looked at Naomi's, and say **"I WANT YOUR GOD TO BE MY GOD."** Your trust in God, and turning towards Him in *tough* times, will often be the thing that draws others to the LORD. Not perfection but when broken.

**Your God, my God:** Ten years of Naomi's compromise in Moab never made Ruth confess her allegiance to the God of Israel. Yet as soon as Naomi stood and said, "I'm going back to the God of Israel, I'll put my fate in His hands" Ruth stood with her.

Compromise will not convince anyone God is worthy of following. As Spurgeon said, "Ah! You will never win any soul to the right by a compromise with the wrong. It is decision for Christ and his truth that has the greatest power in the family and the greatest power in the world, too." (Spurgeon)

Verse 17 Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, "...LORD": *Yehovah*. Ruth invoked the name of God in her oath and not the name of Chemosh. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If *anything but* death parts you and me." **THIS IS RADICAL! WHAT A RELATIONSHIP.**

**EVEN IN HER BROKEN STATE NAOMI WAS MORE THAN ANYTHING BACK IN MOAB...** Ruth was saying, "*the worst God gives is better than the best the world offers.*"

<sup>18</sup> When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. **Silence for the last 25 miles of the journey... most believe this conversation took place at the Jordan. The dividing point between pagan lands and the promised land.**

<sup>19</sup> Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" **Small village, everyone knows everyone. Remember Naomi's family was the founding family of Bethlehem.**

**Is this Naomi** "Is this my Pleasant one, sweetness? "Look at the lines in her face and the sadness in her eyes." The journey through the desert was not easy so she wore the weariness of travel as well. **NAOMI CAME BACK**—but without **•God is my King,** without her sons and without a song. The effects of **SIN AND DISOBEDIENCE** were bitter upon her.

<sup>20</sup> But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, (no longer pleasant... now I'm bitter) for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

<sup>21</sup> I WENT OUT FULL, AND THE LORD HAS BROUGHT ME HOME AGAIN EMPTY. This single verse speaks to the results of sin to all of us!

**backsliding is ludicrous**, "It's getting tough here in the House of Bread, the Place of Praise. Let's go swim in the toilet for awhile." **ludicrous always leaves you empty.**

**The mathematics of sin are always the same, for sin adds to your sorrows, subtracts from your peace and joy, multiplies your troubles, and divides your heart and loyalty. Proverbs 26:11** As a dog returns to his own vomit, *So* a fool repeats his folly.

**The scars and the consequences will last a lifetime.** Naomi went out full, but returned empty. God in His amazing grace will turn ashes into beauty.

Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?" <sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. **Ruth is brought into the Land of Promise by a BROKEN Naomi.** Marrying into the perfect Jewish family didn't bring Ruth to Jehovah. **People are touched and moved not when you and I preach from the pulpit of perfection, but rather when we share from the place of brokenness and humility—not pointing to our togetherness, but to God's graciousness. My brother Greg! We are all sinners saved by grace... maybe they have not been saved yet but none are ever saved by anything but the grace of God!**

**Verse 22...** Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. the time of Passover. A celebration of How the Angel of death passed over the houses that had the blood of the lamb on their doorposts. A yearly prophetic picture of the Messiah that would come to take away the sins of the world.

Have you left the place of praise and the house of bread to swim in the toilet of the world? **DID YOU LEAVE FULL AND RETURN EMPTY?**

God loves to restore and refill. He loves to redeem and bless. Repent, turn from and know His grace and mercy.

When you return and see His grace covers you He will actually use you to bring a whole lot of Ruths back with you.