



RUH

— grafted in

The Suffering Believer

Ruth 1:8-22; Hab. 1:1-5



Ruth: Review

- Date: During reign of Judges c. 1050-1350 BC
- Place: Israel consists of 12 tribal lands
- Author: Unknown; c 650-950 BC?
- THEMES:
 - Human Suffering and God's Sovereignty
 - Commitment to God and Family
 - Gospel truths! Foreigners with no hope



v 8-13: Naomi releases Oprah and Ruth

- Go back to your people; at least you'll have a chance to remarry
 - Provision/protection ONLY in marriage
 - Levirate custom: Deut. 25:5-10
- The Believers Response to Suffering
- “The Lord’s hand has turned against me”
 - Faithful in suffering but struggling



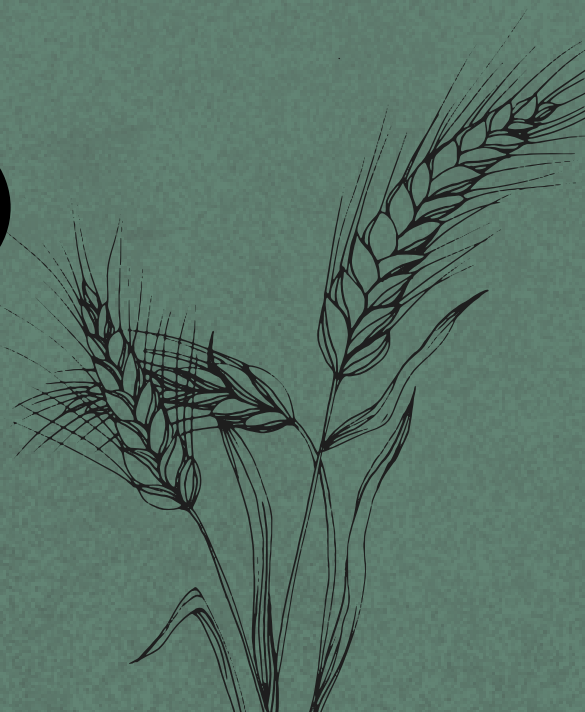
v 14-18: Ruth Stays with Naomi

- ‘Weeping’: an element of healthy mourning
 - after which Oprah returns home.
- But Ruth ‘clings’ to Naomi w/ COMMITMENT
 - (Gen 17:7-8; Ex. 6:7; Deut 29:13)
- The Believers Commitment to Christ
 - Aware of/Counting the Cost: “I give You my ALL”
 - Matt 14:44-46; Luke 14:25-33



v 19-22: The women return to Bethlehem

- 50-75 miles; 4-5 days? “barley harvest” = April/May
- “the whole town was stirred because of them”
 - Ephrathites: well-to-do; people of means
 - What happened? A rough 10 years....
- Naomi suffers publicly
 - Naomi (“pleasant”) to Mara (“bitter”)
 - Attributes suffering to God (El Shaddai/Yahweh)



The Suffering Believer

- 1. Admires anger/ambivalence about God's hand in suffering
 - IS He good? IS He all-powerful?
 - Hab. 1:1-4; 5; John 9:1-3
- 2. Is open/honest/vulnerable with her pain
 - With herself; with Oprah/Ruth; with fellow Believers
 - Does not hide/retreat/deny/pretend



What does faith in Yahweh mean in times of affliction? Later we can look back on suffering and sometimes discern good that has come from it. Sometimes not. Suffering... can open us to deeper dimensions of the spiritual life. Suffering... can be the pathway to growth and maturity of character; pain can heal...



...But at the time, it does not feel like that. The essence of trust throughout the experience of affliction, is humbly to bow beneath the hand of God from whom we feel the blow, in the firm belief that - despite all appearances then - it is the hand of the Loving Father.” Atkinson, p. 40



- Praise: Spend time Praising God for His loving kindness to you even during times of suffering.
- Confession: Confess times you have forgotten to rest in his plan b/c it is easier to focus on our pain.
- Intercession: Pray for people you know who are enduring hardship. Pray they would honestly express their pain AND come to know the Father deeper in it!

