

RUTH

“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Kilion went to live for a while in Moab. Now Elimelech died leaving her with their two sons died who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both sons died.”

Comment: In tragedies there are choices. One can give thanks for past blessings or blame God for their present troubles.

“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. She set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go back, each of you, to your mother's home that you may find rest in the home of another husband.’ They refused, but Naomi insisted. At this they wept and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.”

Comment: Orpah’s love was not as deep as Ruth’s. Their actions clearly show their degree of love. One’s actions toward God’s love for them also show personal depth of their love for Him.

“But Ruth replied, ‘Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.’ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.”

“So, the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor. Naomi said to her, ‘Go ahead, my daughter.’ So, she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech.”

“Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, ‘The Lord be with you!’ ‘The Lord bless you!’ they called back. Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, ‘Whose young woman is that?’ The foreman replied, ‘She is the Moabitess who came back from Moab with Naomi.’ She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She went into the field and has worked steadily from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

Comment: According to their law Ruth, as a widow of an Israelite, had the right to glean but she acted wisely and asked permission showing her respect for the owner.

“Boaz said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.’ She exclaimed, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me — a foreigner?’ Boaz replied, ‘I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since

the death of your husband — how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.’ ‘May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,’ she said. ‘You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant — though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls.’”

Comment: Love can be expressed in words; e.g., “I love you” but the degree of one’s love is more easily measured by actions such as Ruth’s actions toward Naomi, which can be observed by others.

“Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and carried it back to town. Naomi saw how much she had gathered and asked, where did you glean today? ‘Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!’ Then Ruth said ‘the name of the man in whose field I worked today was Boaz. He even said to me’, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

“Naomi said the Lord bless him adding he is a close relative; one of our kinsman-redeemers. It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.” Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished.”

“One day Naomi said, ‘My daughter, should I not try to find a home for you, where you will be well provided for? Is not Boaz, with whose servant girls you have been, a kinsman of ours? Tonight, he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don’t let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.’ Ruth did as Naomi said. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. ‘Who are you?’ he asked. ‘I am your servant Ruth,’ she said. ‘Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.’”

“The Lord bless you, my daughter, he replied. ‘This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives, I will do it.’”

Comment: A righteous heart desires to do what is right regardless of personal desires.

“Early the next morning she got up before anyone could be recognized. Boaz said, ‘Don’t let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.’ Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, ‘Come over here, my friend, and sit down.’ Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, ‘Sit here,’ Then he said to the kinsman-redeemer, ‘Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.’”

“The next of kin said ‘I will redeem it,’ Then Boaz said, ‘On the day you buy the land from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabitess, you acquire the dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.’ At this, the kinsman-redeemer said, ‘Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.’ So, the kinsman-redeemer said to Boaz, ‘Buy it

yourself.' Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, 'Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!'"

"So, Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi: 'Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.' The women living there said, 'Naomi has a son.' They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Comment: The genealogy of Jesus of Nazareth includes a Moabite – Ruth and her husband, Obed, were David's grandparents. For Jesus genealogy refer to thebiblewayonline.com/Genealogy/genealogy.htm