

Ruth

Mike Bonner

The book of Ruth begins during the time of the Judges. Remember how Judges ended? Every man doing what is right in their own sight (21.25). Elimelech, a Bethlehemite, of Judah, was a married man in the midst of a famine (1.1). The land of his fathers was Bethlehem, the same place where the birth of the Savior was prophesied to be and it was fulfilled thousands of years later (Micah 5.2; Matt. 2.1). Elimelech would take Naomi and two sons to the land of Moab, some seventy miles away, and there begin their lives with one another. It would be in the land of Moab, that their lives would make drastic changes, and of course to the glory of Almighty God.

The land of Moab was the home of the Moabites. The Moabites begun in a very horrific way, and it would not be profitable for many of the descendants. Lot's daughters, who actually committed incest with him, began this fiasco (Gen. 19). Who would have known, when reading Genesis nineteen, God could bring something good out of something so evil. Ruth would come from these people and be a blessing to all, especially us in the New Covenant. Ruth would later be in the historical record of Jesus' genealogy and forever be the great woman of God who saw the benefit of following God through Naomi.

Hard times hit every family, we have accounts of Job, Joseph and now Naomi's was hit with despair. Man born of woman is of a few days and full of trouble (Job 14.1). After ten years of marriage, Ruth and Orpah were widows, and nothing in the story tells us about why they died (1.4). However, we see the grief they encountered and the steadfastness of them all. Situations like these bring about change, for example, Naomi who was known as "pleasant" would later be "bitter", Ruth who was known as "friend" and Orpah

as "mane" would have their lives altered forever. A great lesson for us is this, if we hang in there and trust in the Lord and lean not on our own understanding, He will direct our path (Pro. 3.9).

The Lord had blessed the land of Judea with fruitful seasons and the Naomi heard about it. She had to have been reminded, as we should be, the earth is the Lord and the fullness thereof (Exo. 9.29; Deut. 10.14; Psa. 24.1). Naomi was heading back to Bethlehem and was refusing to take Moab with her. In other words, she desired to leave the daughter-in-laws there and go home. After some convincing, Orpah remained in the land of Moab, however, Ruth had a different spirit about her. Ruth wanted to remain with Naomi, her true familial connection (1.16-17). She tells Naomi, "entreat me not...", the word entreat is the Hebrew word "dabaq" and figuratively means, "to catch by pursuit, to over take or pursue hard". She begged her not to make her go back home to her people.

Being intentional of her relationship with Naomi, she said some things worthy of our observation. She said, "wherever you go, I will go, and wherever 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. The Lord do so to me, and more also if anything but death parts you and me" (1.16-17). Boaz in chapter two gives us divine commentary on this passage, he says, "the Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (2.12). This sounds like the words of the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (46.1). Naomi lays a charge against God, saying, "for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me" (1.20). Even though Naomi was

bitter, the Lord took care of them, and this caused her to have a change of heart. It's true, the goodness of God leads to repentance (Romans 2.4).

The Lord was working out His plan in their lives, for the better. Ruth goes to work in the field of Boaz, not knowing he was a near kinsman, and would be her future husband (2.16-23). Boaz was a great man of God, wealthy and kind (2.4). He was a landowner who treated his workers (reapers) with respect and honor, "The LORD be with you!" (2.4). He was an observant man as well (2.5; 10). He was protective of the family, knowing she of the family of Elimelech, he made sure they watched over her (2.8-9). It would be through Boaz' great wisdom and knowledge of Deuteronomy 25.5-10, that he would position himself to challenge the near kinsman to buy Naomi's inheritance and marry Ruth. However, he refused and this put Boaz to buy the land of Elimelech and marry Ruth himself.

Ruth's lifestyle was evidence that the Lord provides for His own people (Matt. 6.24-34). The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from him that walks uprightly (Ps. 84.11). This book shows the stability of God's people when they trust Him. God would take care of Ruth immediately and remotely through the birth of her son, Obed. Obed would be the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David and in the lineage of Christ (Matt. 1.5). The name of Mahlon is perpetuated, the inheritance is secure and we have a Savior because of the providence of God and great faith of a Moabite woman who had the right heart.

Let us learn a few things from Ruth and cultivate a heart that is willing to do the will of God, no matter what. What will we do for the kingdom of God that the name of Christ is magnified?



Congregational Shut-ins:

Opal Palmer; Evelyn Wyatt; Mary Popejoy; Pauline Sessoms

Prayer List:

Linda Harris: continues to be challenged with health issues.

Edith Harmon: is recovering nicely at home after a short stay in Shannon.

Charles Kellogg: [brother-in-law of Velton].

Maureen Wood's: brother (David Barton & Nathan) health challenges.

Reading Tree:

There are several leaves to be placed... is yours one of them? This knowledge should help us impart God's word from one generation to another. (Psalm 145:4)

Bible Academy:

One more night of extra studies in History & Redemption. Coming this Monday in February 26th, from 7-9.

Q & A:

If you have some Bible questions, please place them in the box on the back table.

Teacher's:

Our new quarter will start on March 4th. If you need any supplies please see Randy Scott. We now have quite a few visuals to choose from in our organized workroom.

Thank-you:

Our second banquet went off without a hitch. We had a wonderful evening of Bible encouragement, fellowship, food and games. Thanks to all those who attended and for all the work prior to and during the evening. Our young people did a great job learning to serve our older members.

Wedding Shower:

We will honor Paden Reed and bride elect Reagan Gray on March 17th. If you would like to help with this shower, please see Crystal.

First Week

Matthew (28)
Hebrews (13)
Galatians (6)
Ephesians (6)
Colossians (4)
1 Peter (5)
2 Peter (3) [65]

Second Week

Mark (16)
Romans (16)
1 Corinthians (16)
2 Corinthians (13)
Philippians (4) [65]

Third Week

Luke (24)
Acts (28)
1 Timothy (6)
2 Timothy (4)
Titus (3) [65]

Fourth Week

John (21)
1 John (5)
2 John (1)
3 John (1)
1 Thessalonians (5)
2 Thessalonians (3)
Philemon (1)
James (5)
Jude (1)
Revelation (22) [65]

We are building for eternity by speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent, by calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things in Bible ways.