

## Sunday Night Message

February 10, 2018

*Returning with Ruth*

Series – *Ruth*

Text – Ruth 1:6 - 22

### Introduction

In the last message we studied the first five verses of this little Book of Ruth, and we discovered that the family of Elimelech had spent the last ten years of their lives “sojourning” in Moab.

All of the family is now gone, save Naomi, and two daughters-in-law that they had picked up in the land of Moab.

In tonight’s study, we will see that Naomi, will turn her eyes back toward home – Bethlehem-Judah. This place represents the will of God for her. She has had enough wandering around outside of the will of God, and she is ready to go home.

Note – It really wasn’t Naomi’s fault that she was wandering outside the geographic place of God’s will. She was following her husband. Sometimes, we find ourselves negatively affected by the decisions of others. Praise the Lord, however, that as soon as she could, she determined to get back to the place of God’s will.

### I **Naomi Releases Her Two Daughters-in-law from Any Family Obligation.** (vs. 6 – 14)

v. 6 – Naomi hears that the famine is over in the land of Israel. Remember, we mentioned last time that God uses famine to judge his people. This time period of the Judges was a time when people “did that which was right in their own eyes”.

Perhaps the land of Israel was moving back toward God. Perhaps, God was just being merciful with His people. For whatever reason, the famine that caused them to leave Bethlehem was over.

Naomi had enough of the land of Moab. The land of the Heathen was far worse to her and her family than the Land of Promise.

Vs. 7 – 10 – Naomi recommends that her two daughters-in-law stay in the land of Moab. She releases them from any obligation they may have felt that they had toward Naomi.

In verse 8 – Naomi prays that the Lord will “deal kindly” with the women. The Hebrew word, *chesed*, is the word translated “deal kindly”, and it speaks about God’s covenant love for his people. It is translated in other places as mercy, kindness, and loving-kindness. She is asking God to bestow His favor upon these two women as He would upon a person that was in a covenant relationship with Him, as Israel was.

Explain why they may have felt obligated: (See Deuteronomy 25:5 – 10)

It is interesting that these two Moabitish women felt compelled to fulfill this custom that was mandated for Jews under the Mosaic Law.

Vs. 11 – 13 – Naomi reasons with her daughters-in-law the futility of expecting to find a husband through her.

v. 14 – Orpah decides that she will stay in the land of Moab, and look for a husband there.

It is interesting that for ten years these two Moabitish women had chosen to walk down the same road together, and now their paths will part. (The two thieves on the Cross parted company also)

*"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" - (Amos 3:3)*

## II Ruth's Refusal To Leave Naomi (vs. 15 – 18)

Notice the language that Naomi uses in v. 15. She says that Orpah had "gone back" to her gods, indicating that she had left the worship of Chemosh (the official god of Moab), and at least for a while participated in the worship of Jehovah.

Ruth, on the other hand refuses to leave Naomi, or Naomi's God. She makes a declaration of faith, and also confirms with an oath that she will follow Naomi, and the Lord – "the Lord do so to me also, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

I realize that this family had left the will of God by sojourning down in the land of Moab, but I cannot help but think that they must have maintained their love and devotion for the Lord in the land of Moab; especially Naomi. She must have made her God look good.

*"Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." - (Titus 2:10)*

By the way – if Boaz is a type of Christ; and Ruth is a type of the Church; then Naomi is a type of the Holy Spirit, or at least a picture of a soul winner who goes into the world and plucks the sinner out of the fire.

## III Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem (vs. 19 – 22)

Notice in v 19 that Naomi's appearance had changed from the last time that the people of Bethlehem-Judah had seen her. She was no longer pleasant or lovely. The world had taken its toll on her.

*"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard." - (Proverbs 13:15)*

Sin had taken its toll on Naomi. It affected her appearance – her countenance. The innocence was lost.

Remember last time, we said that this family was like the New Testament prodigal son. They wandered out of the will of God and into the far country; and the far country will tear you up eventually. You may get back from the far country, but you usually don't get back without scars. Even the innocent victims like Naomi who was just following the leadership of her husband.

Jesus took a trip into the far country and He came back with some scars too.

Living in this world will affect you. We are to be in the world, but not of the world.

Illustrate – compare Atlantic City with Paradise, Texas.

Vs. 20 – 21 – Mara – bitter. Naomi thought that the Lord had done all of this too her, but she had really just experienced the “woodshed” of walking out of the will of God.

