

RUTH 1

INTRODUCTION...

- **THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD**
 - Our desire to is to teach through the whole Bible - Genesis to Revelation
 - **Acts 20:27** – “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”
 - We have finished Judges - and will continue on to the Book of Ruth...
 - We have already completed the 5 ‘book of the Law’ Genesis - Deuteronomy...
 - Ruth is the 3rd of the 12 books of the History of Israel in the Old Testament...
- **OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF RUTH...**
 - We do not know who wrote the book - many believe it may have been Samuel...
 - The book of Ruth takes place during the time of the book of Judges...
 - Israel was ‘doing what was right in their own eyes’ - **Judges 21:25**...
 - And the book of Judges showed us how that devastated Israel as a nation...
 - The book of Ruth shows us how that devastated a single family...
 - But also how God took that family from the ashes - and did something incredible!
 - The book of Ruth is one of the most beautiful love stories ever recorded...
 - The whole story is an ‘illustration’ of the Love story of Jesus and the church...
 - Making the book of Ruth one of the most powerful books of the Old Testament!
 - Ruth is one of only two books in the Bible named after women...
 - Ruth is also the great-grandmother of King David...
 - And is one of the four women named in the genealogy of Jesus in **Matthew 1:5**...
- **THE OUTLINE OF RUTH...**
 - There are 4 chapters / 85 verses – in the book of **Ruth**...
 - We will cover 1 chapter a week (*1 months*) - because Ruth is a very important book...
 - **Chapters 1** - INTRODUCTION - the background of the Love Story
 - **Chapter 2** - THE HERO OF THE STORY - the introduction of Boaz - the kinsman redeemer...
 - **Chapter 3** - THE MATCHMAKER - Naomi tells Ruth how to get to know Boaz
 - **Chapter 4** - THE PROBLEM / THE MARRIAGE - the climax and conclusion of the Love Story!

THE INTRODUCTION TO THE LOVE STORY... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST - A TRAGIC BEGINNING...VS. 1-5 READ: RUTH 1:1-5**
 - 1st - There was a severe famine in the land of Israel... vs. 1
 - We are not told the exact timing of this famine - likely one of the rebellions of Israel...
 - The cycle of sin that characterized the book of Judges brought trials on Israel...
 - As a result of their sin - God would cut off the rain - causing a terrible famine...
 - **Leviticus 26:19** - “I will break down your arrogant spirit by making the skies above as unyielding as iron and the earth beneath as hard as bronze.”
 - God knows how to get our attention - one of the best ways is food...

- When we are full/in need nothing - we tend to get arrogant - ignore God...
- **Deuteronomy 31:20** - “When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them...”
- So God will allow us to go through times of ‘famine’ - no food / no money...
- He ‘punishes us’ for our sin - not cause He is angry with us - but because He loves us...
- God desires to teach us - His kids - how to live a pure and holy life!
- o 2nd - Elimelech (*God is my King*) from Bethlehem - left to live in Moab... vs. 2-5
 - Bethlehem means - ‘the house of bread’ - Moab was a land cursed by God...
 - So Elimelech left the ‘house of bread’ to find food in a cursed land...
 - Because he believed the world was a better place to find help than the Lord...
 - Often in life rather than going to the Lord in times of trouble - we run to the world...
 - If we listen to the advice of the world – we might find what looks like and answer...
 - But in the end we only find we have left the blessings of God...
 - Only to have ended up in the curse that comes from being apart from God!
 - He took his whole family with him...
 - Naomi (*Pleasant*) / and two sons Mahlon (*sickly*) and Chilion (*failing*)...
 - But While in Moab - Elimelech died - leaving Naomi with two sons...
 - Afterwards the two sons married two women from Moab...
 - Chilion married Orpah (*strong neck*) and Mahlon married Ruth (*Friendship*)...
 - Moab was a cursed nation - because of sin of Balaam - **Deuteronomy 23:3**...
 - Israel were never to help them - and they were certainly not to marry them...
 - A consequence of living for the world – is sacrificing our kids to the world...
 - If we are living for the world – then they will follow our example...
 - Do our kids see us always caught up in the care of this world...
 - Or do they see us living our lives for Jesus – just on Sunday – or every day!
 - Shortly afterwards both sons died - leaving Naomi all alone...
 - The family left the security of the Promised Land / married pagans...
 - Far from the better life they were expecting - instead everything in life fell apart!
 - When things do not go the way we want in life - there is a temptation to blame God
 - It is your fault God - why did YOU let things go wrong - I do not want you anymore...
 - Yet often we are actually suffering from our own poor decisions - sinful choices...
 - When we get sick - we ‘shake our fists’ at God - and say ‘this is all your fault’...
 - Forgetting that it is the lifestyle we have lived for years that led to our sickness...
 - When we have no money - we want to blame God for not providing...
 - Forgetting that all we foolishly spent on things we did not need...
- 2ND - GOING BACK HOME...VS. 6-13 READ: RUTH 1:6-13
 - o 1st - Naomi heard the Lord had blessed His people... vs. 6-7
 - It is possible this was during the time of Gideon - **Judges 6-7**...
 - After God had given the victory to Israel - to Gideon and his band of 300 old men...
 - Prosperity returned again to the land of Israel - because they returned to God!
 - So Naomi packed up with her daughter-in-laws and prepared to leave Moab...

- They were going back to Bethlehem - going back to the where they left God!
- When we make that mistake of running to the world or depending on ourselves...
 - When everything begins to fall apart - and life seems to be a disaster...
 - The answer is simple – pick up where you left off – go back to Jesus!
 - He does not go anywhere – He is right where we left Him...
 - Waiting for us to find Him – the one and only answer to every problem!
 - **James 1:17** - “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”
- o 2nd - On the way - Naomi wanted to send back her daughter-in-laws... vs. 8-13
 - She loved both girls - but realized there was not future for them with her...
 - Though the Law obligated the daughter-in-laws to stay in the family...
 - **Deuteronomy 25:5** - “A widow must not marry outside the family.”
 - A widow of the dead man was not allowed to re-marry a stranger...
 - Instead she was to marry one of the brothers of her husband...
 - Naomi had no more sons for the girls to marry - and no husband to have more sons!
 - Even if Naomi remarried that day - would the girls wait for her sons to grow up!
 - There was no reason for them to remain widows - they should go and remarry...
 - There is a stigma in the culture that says a widow should not remarry...
 - But if a widow is under the age of 60 - the Bible says they should remarry...
 - **II Timothy 4:14** - “Younger widows [should] marry again, have children...”
 - The reason is because otherwise they will have too much time on their hands...
 - **I Timothy 4:13** - “They are likely to become lazy and spend their time gossiping from house to house, getting into other people’s business...”
 - This was a huge step of faith on the part of Naomi...
 - It meant she would have no family at all left - no one to take care of her...
 - But she had learned it was not family / or a nation you could count on...
 - Naomi had learned the only one to depend on was the Lord!
 - If we are depending on family / or a support check from the government...
 - We will inevitably learn that these things cannot be depended on...
 - Often the family we are looking to - is looking back at us for financial help...
 - And the government more often than not is too corrupt!
 - But whether the economy is good or bad – good times – or times of famine...
 - No matter what - God promises to take care of all of our needs... food / clothing...
 - **Psalms 37:25** - “I have never seen the godly forsaken, their children beg for bread.”
- 3rd - THE VOW OF RUTH...VS. 14-22 READ: RUTH 1:14-22
 - o 1st - Orpah and Ruth did not want to leave Naomi... vs. 14
 - But they had a choice - did they want to have an easy life / or suffer with Naomi...
 - Did they want return to their home land - Moab / or go on to Israel...
 - Did they want to go back to their pagan ways / or continue on their walk with God...
 - Unfortunately Orpah choose to leave - she wept with Naomi...
 - Then she turned away and returned to her family / and to her pagan religion...
 - In the end she choose this world / over eternity with God in heaven...
 - You cannot go in two directions at the same time - you cannot worship two things...
 - **Matthew 6:24** - “No one can serve two masters...”
 - We are either going to be devoted to the world - to the pursuits of this life...
 - Or we are going to be devoted to the Lord - worshiping and following Him!

- o 2nd - Ruth refused to leave - she 'clung' to Naomi and would not let go... vs. 15-18
 - Naomi argued Oprah had returned to her people / to her gods - return with her...
 - But Ruth refused - and gave one of the most beautiful vows in all the Bible...
 - It is a vow that I have used many times in marriage ceremonies...
 - It is a vow that reflects the relationship we should have with Jesus Christ!
 - Where you go I will go / where you live I will live / your people shall be my people...
 - Ruth was no longer considering herself a Moabite - she saw herself as a Jew...
 - When we choose to follow Jesus - it means we walk away from our past...
 - We follow Jesus wherever He wants us to go - we no longer belong to this world...
 - Hebrews 11:13-16 - "[We are] strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a home... that is, a heavenly country."
 - And that often means having to walk away from the people we knew before Jesus...
 - Walk away from the negative influence they have on our lives - start a fresh...
 - Luke 14:33 - "Whoever does not [say goodbye] to all he has cannot be My disciple."
 - Your God will be my God...
 - Ruth was turning her back on her pagan religion - instead believing in God!
 - When we choose to follow Jesus - it means letting go of our religion...
 - If we have been raised in religion that can be very challenging - it was our identity...
 - But Religion has no power - only a relationship with God can save us from our sin!
 - Where you die I will die - the Lord punish me if anything but death separates us!
 - Ruth was in it for the long haul - she was not going anywhere...
 - She had made up her mind - and her relationship was the most important thing!
 - When we choose to follow Jesus - it means nothing is more important than Jesus...
 - The best this world has to offer – only last only a few years...
 - 10 million pesos – President of the Philippines – Movie star/singer...
 - What Jesus has in store for us is eternal! Why would we sell ourselves short!
- o 3rd - Do not call me Naomi... vs. 19-22
 - Ruth and Naomi went together and returned to the city of Bethlehem...
 - When they arrived there was a stir - 'is it really Naomi!'
 - Much like if someone has gone away to Manila / oversees to work...
 - When they come home (and they always do) there is a buzz at their arrival...
 - She told the people to call her Mara - meaning bitter...
 - She had left full - with a husband and two sons / and come back empty...
 - The Almighty had made life 'bitter' for her - she was no longer Naomi/pleasant...
 - But what Naomi did not see - was she came back with far more than she left with...
 - She came back with Ruth - one of the greatest women in history!
 - Too often we focus on the negative - and as a result miss what God is doing...
 - Anytime we get our eyes off Jesus and onto our circumstances we are in trouble...
 - If we focus what is happening around us: money (or lack of), or our job (or lack of)...
 - We are bound to be overwhelmed – filled with doubt and fear...
 - It is when we keep our eyes on Jesus that we see this great truth...
 - II Corinthians 4:18 – "So we don't look at the troubles we can see right now; rather, we look forward to what we have not yet seen [Jesus]. For the troubles we see will soon be over, but the joys to come will last forever."