

Wisdom Writing
Ruth 1:1-18

In the days when the judges ruled,
there was a famine in the land,
and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah
went to live in the country of Moab,
he and his wife and two sons.

²The name of the man was Elimelech
and the name of his wife Naomi,
and the names of his two sons
were Mahlon and Chilion;
they were Ephrathites
from Bethlehem in Judah.

They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died,
and she was left with her two sons.

⁴These took Moabite wives;
the name of one was Orpah
and the name of the other Ruth.

When they had lived there for about ten years,

⁵both Mahlon and Chilion also died,
so that the woman was left
without her two sons or her husband.

⁶Then she started to return
with her daughters-in-law
from the country of Moab,
for she had heard in the country of Moab
that the LORD had had consideration for his people
and given them food.

⁷So she set out from the place where she had been living,
she and her two daughters-in-law,
and they went on their way

to go back to the land of Judah.

⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,
'Go back each of you to your mother's house.
May the LORD deal kindly with you,
as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

⁹The LORD grant that you may find security,
each of you in the house of your husband.'

Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud.

¹⁰They said to her,
'No, we will return with you to your people.'

¹¹But Naomi said,
'Turn back, my daughters,
why will you go with me?
Do I still have sons in my womb
that they may become your husbands?

¹²Turn back, my daughters,
go your way,
for I am too old to have a husband.

Even if I thought there was hope for me,
even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons,
¹³would you then wait until they were grown?
Would you then refrain from marrying?

No, my daughters,
it has been far more bitter for me than for you,
because the hand of the LORD has turned against me.'

¹⁴Then they wept aloud again.
Orpah kissed her mother-in-law,
but Ruth clung to her.

15 So she said,
 'See,
 your sister-in-law
has gone back to her people
 and to her gods;
return after your sister-in-law.'

16 But Ruth said,
 'Do not press me to leave you
or to turn back from following you!
 Where you go,
 I will go;
 where you lodge,
 I will lodge;
 your people
shall be my people,
 and your God
 my God.

17 Where you die,
 I will die—
 there
will I be buried.

 May the LORD
do thus and so
 to me,
and more as well,
 if even death
parts me from you!'

18 When Naomi saw
that she was determined
 to go with her,
she said no more to her.

Epistle ***Hebrews 9:11-14***

11 But when Christ came
 as a high priest
of the good things
 that have come,

then through the greater and perfect tent
(not made with hands, that is, not of this creation),

12 he entered
 once for all
 into the Holy Place,
not with the blood of goats and calves,
 but with his own blood,
thus obtaining eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls,
with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer,
sanctifies those who have been defiled
so that their flesh is purified,

14 how much more
will the blood of Christ,
who through the eternal Spirit
offered himself
without blemish
 to God,
purify our conscience
 from dead works
to worship the living God!

Gospel
Mark 12:28-34

28 One of the scribes came near
and heard them disputing with one another,
and seeing that he answered them well,
he asked him,
'Which commandment is the first of all?'

²⁹Jesus answered,
'The first is,
"Hear, O Israel:
the Lord our God,
the Lord is one;

³⁰you shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength."

³¹The second is this,
"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."
There is no other commandment greater than these.'

³²Then the scribe said to him,
'You are right, Teacher;
you have truly said that
"he is one, and besides him there is no other";
³³and "to love him with all the heart,
and with all the understanding,
and with all the strength",
and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",
—this is much more important
than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.'

³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely,
he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'
After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Reading Wisdom this Week

We're back to Wisdom,
On this second week of my holiday
And another fabulous fiction, of Ruth

The story carries itself –
Tempting us with an air of universality
But imagine reading from within a tribal identity,
Struggling with intermarriage and assimilation
Over centuries of Judaism, and as Christians since

Christian tradition reinforces Ruth's importance,
In the lineage of David and of Jesus,
Defying 'racial purity'
Celebrating 'inclusion'

As a marginalized minority,
Can we reclaim some empathy
For the original driving issue:
Who's 'us', who's 'them'
And who can you count on?

Reading the Epistle this Week

Here's the 4th of 5 clips from Hebrews this season
Perhaps you'll doubt the sincerity of my regrets
Missing this discussion for my holiday
But next week you can explain c.9 to me again!

I can offer you a take on these texts from 2018
Where we mourned loss of a cathedral home:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2018/11/mundane-and-sublime.html>

Reading the Gospel this Week

I'm guessing that the gospel is our 'happy place' this week,
The familiar reduction of Torah to the *shema* –
But do note how wrong Mark's Jesus gets it –
Turning a 3-part rhythm to a 4-part version!

Go ahead –
Compare: Matt 22:37 and Luke 10:27
Better: Deuteronomy 6:4-5
Ever stumble over the Lord's Prayer?
Me too.

Here again, from 2018:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2018/11/mundane-and-sublime.html>

Or from 2012

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2012/11/two-plus-two.html>