

“From Bad To Worse”

Ruth 1: 7-22

⁶When 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 from there.⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me."⁹ May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them and they wept aloud¹⁰ and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

¹¹But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands?¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—¹³would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!"

¹⁴At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

¹⁶But 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.¹⁷ 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."

¹⁸When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

¹⁹So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"²⁰ "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

²²So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.
Ruth 1: 6-22 (NIV)

Ruth 1:7-22

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Study:

1. What is it that you are going through in life? What is it that you may be facing that gives you no hope and no purpose?
2. Why did Naomi decide to return to the land of Judah? How difficult was it for her to make that decision? What were the underlying circumstances that would have made it difficult?
3. In her hopelessness, Naomi discouraged her daughters-in-law from returning with her? Why did she do this? And how did they each respond? Why did Ruth cling to Naomi?
4. Naomi's situation went from bad to worse. Have you been bitter towards the Lord before? Be honest. Who or what do we cling to in our times of hardship and hopelessness?
5. What does it really mean that God is sovereign? Think about it and discuss it. Have you experienced the providential hand of God in your life? "Not everything comes from the hand of God but everything passes through the hand of God." (How does Romans 8:28 speak to this?)
6. Who in this passage can you relate to most? (ie. Elimelech, Naomi, Orpah, or Ruth)
7. Reread Ruth 1:22. How's this verse like a turning of the tide?

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