



Sowing the Word

*And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee,
or to return from following after thee:
for whither thou goest, I will go;
and where thou lodgest, I will lodge:
thy people shall be my people,
and thy God my God:
Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the
LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but
death part thee and me*

Ruth 1:16-17

Ruth 1

September 6th - September 11th, 2012

*So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God;
and they gave the sense, and
helped them to understand the reading.
(Nehemiah 8:8)*

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Online Helpful Sources:

Precept Austin - Amazing Online Resource with many commentaries and helps: Including David Guzik, Chuck Smith, John MacArther, Ray Steadman CH Spurgeon, John Piper and many more!

http://preceptaustin.org/romans_commentaries.htm

You Version - with multiple translations

You can get this online or with a mobile device.

They even have audio files you can listen to of the Bible

<http://www.youversion.com/>

Calvary Roswell - Previous messages and overview studies by Pastor Jim

http://www.calvaryroswell.com/biblestudies/WednesdayBibleStudies/45_Romans/Index.htm

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Study Questions for Ruth 1

1. Naomi wanted her daughters-in-law to return to their parent's home so that they may have a full life after the deaths of their husbands. Why do you think Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi? Was her loyalty not only to Naomi but to God also? Why?
2. In verses 16-17, Ruth swore an oath in the name of the Lord to seal her firm commitment to Israel's God and to Naomi. She knew if she went back to her homeland, she would not show any respect to the God of Israel and break her communion with God. Are there places where you go back to that disrespect the Lord and break your relationship with Him?

3. In verse 20, Naomi response to the town's excitement of her return is bitter. Even though her complaint of being brought back home empty was real, God provided exactly what she needed. Do we find ourselves in this same situation? Doesn't God always give us what He knows we need?
4. Naomi's sin was that she was angry with God for her circumstances. We know that bitterness can ruin not only our lives, but those people around us. How can we avoid carrying grudges? How to we pray for God's favor on this?

With the Word Bible Commentary

Naomi and her husband sinned when they left Judah for enemy country. Better to be hungry in the will of God than to have a full stomach and be out of His will. They planned to stay in Moab a short time, but their “sojourn” was long enough for their sons to marry. Then the sons and father died. You can run away from famine, but you cannot escape death. Naomi sinned by urging her daughters-in-law to go home. She did not want to take two Moabite women back to Bethlehem with her and reveal the family’s disobedience to God (Deut. 23:3). Imagine a Jewess sending them back to their false gods! But Ruth had come to trust in the God of Israel (vv. 16–17; 2:12), and she refused to go back. Naomi sinned by getting bitter and blaming God for her plight. Naomi means “pleasant” and Mara means “bitter.” But it was her decision to go to Moab, so why blame God? A “root of bitterness” can poison your life and the people around you (Deut. 29:18; Heb. 12:15), so avoid carrying grudges. Although God does not prevent the painful consequences of our sins, He does overrule so that His purposes are fulfilled. By the grace of God, Naomi’s emptiness will become fullness, and her sorrow will turn to joy.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1991). *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Ru 1:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Matthew Henry

In this chapter we have Naomi's afflictions. I. As a distressed housekeeper, forced by famine to remove into the land of Moab (v. 1, 2). II. As a mournful widow and mother, bewailing the death of her husband and her two sons (v. 3–5). III. As a careful mother-in-law, desirous to be kind to her two daughters, but at a loss how to be so when she returns to her own country (v. 6–13). Orpah she parts with in sorrow (v. 14). Ruth she takes with her in fear (v. 15–18). IV. As a poor woman sent back to the place of her first settlement, to be supported by the kindness of her friends (v. 19–22). All these things were melancholy and seemed against her, and yet all were working for good. The first words give all the date we have of this story. It was in the days when the judges ruled (v. 1), not in those disorderly times when there was no king in Israel; but under which of the judges these things happened we are not told, and the conjectures of the learned are very uncertain. It must have been towards the beginning of the judges' time, for Boaz, who married Ruth, was born of Rahab, who received the spies in Joshua's time. Some think it was in the days of Ehud, others of Deborah; the learned bishop Patrick inclines to think it was in the days of Gideon, because in his days only we read of a famine by the Midianites' invasion, Judges 6:3, 4. While the judges were ruling, some one city and some another, Providence takes particular cognizance of Bethlehem, and has an eye to a King, to Messiah himself, who should descend from two Gentile mothers, Rahab and Ruth. Here is, (I.) A famine in the land, in the land of Canaan, that land flowing with milk and honey. This was one of the judgments which God had threatened to bring upon them for their sins, Lev. 26:19, 20. He has many arrows in his quiver. In the days of the judges they were oppressed by their enemies; and, when by that judgment they were not reformed, God tried this, for when he judges he will overcome. When the land had rest, yet it had not plenty; even in Bethlehem, which signifies the house of bread, there was scarcity. A fruitful land is turned into barrenness, to correct and restrain the luxury and wantonness of those that dwell therein. II. An account of one particular family distressed in the famine; it is that of Elimelech. His name signifies my God a king, agreeable to the state of Israel when the judges ruled, for the Lord was their King, and comfortable to him and his family in their affliction, that God was theirs and that he reigns for ever. His wife was Naomi, which signifies my amiable or pleasant one. But his sons' names were Mahlon and Chilion, sickness and consumption, perhaps because weakly children, and not likely to be long-lived. Such are the productions of our pleasant things, weak and infirm, fading and dying.

The marriage of his two sons to two of the daughters of Moab after his death, v. 4. All agree that this was ill done. The Chaldee says, They transgressed the decree of the word of the Lord in taking strange wives. If they would not stay unmarried till their return to the land of Israel, they were not so far off but that they might have fetched themselves wives thence. Little did Elimelech think, when he went to sojourn in Moab, that ever his sons would thus join in affinity with Moabites. But those that bring young people into bad acquaintance, and take them out of the way of public ordinances, though they may think them well-principled and armed against temptation, know not what they do, nor what will be the end thereof. It does not appear that the women they married were proselyted to the Jewish religion, for Orpah is said to return to her gods (v. 15); the gods of Moab were hers still. It is a groundless tradition of the Jews that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon king of Moab, yet the Chaldee paraphrast inserts it; but this and their other tradition, which he inserts likewise, cannot agree, that Boaz who married Ruth was the same with Ibzan, who judged Israel 200 years after Eglon's death, Jdg. 12. V. The death of Elimelech and his two sons, and the disconsolate condition Naomi was thereby reduced to. Her husband died (v. 3) and her two sons (v. 5) soon after their marriage, and the Chaldee says, Their days were shortened, because they transgressed the law in marrying strange wives. See here, 1. That wherever we go we cannot out-run death, whose fatal arrows fly in all places. 2. That we cannot expect to prosper when we go out of the way of our duty. He that will save his life by any indirect course shall lose it. 3. That death, when it comes into a family, often makes breach upon breach. One is taken away to prepare another to follow soon after; one is taken away, and that affliction is not duly improved, and therefore God sends another of the same kind. When Naomi had lost her husband she took so much the more complacency and put so much the more confidence in her sons. Under the shadow of these surviving comforts she thinks she shall live among the heathen, and exceedingly glad she was of these gourds; but behold they wither presently, green and growing up in the morning, cut down and dried up before night, buried soon after they were married, for neither of them left any children. So uncertain and transient are all our enjoyments here. It is therefore our wisdom to make sure of those comforts that will be made sure and of which death cannot rob us. But how desolate was the condition, and how disconsolate the spirit, of poor Naomi, when the woman was left of her two sons and her husband! When these two things, loss of children and widowhood, come upon her in a moment, come upon her in their perfection, by whom shall she be comforted? Isa. 47:9; 51:19. It is God alone who has wherewithal to comfort those who are thus cast down.

Of the discomposure of the neighbours upon this occasion (v. 19): All the city was moved about them. Her old acquaintance gathered about her, to enquire concerning her state, and to bid her welcome to Bethlehem again. Or perhaps they were moved about her, lest she should be a charge to the town, she looked so bare. By this it appears that she had formerly lived respectably, else there would not have been so much notice taken of her. If those that have been in a high and prosperous condition break, or fall into poverty or disgrace, their fall is the more remarkable. And they said, Is this Naomi? The women of the city said it, for the word is feminine. Those with whom she had formerly been intimate were surprised to see her in this condition; she was so much broken and altered with her afflictions that they could scarcely believe their own eyes, nor think that this was the same person whom they had formerly seen, so fresh, and fair, and gay: Is this Naomi? So unlike is the rose when it is withered to what it was when it was blooming. What a poor figure does Naomi make now, compared with what she made in her prosperity! If any asked this question in contempt, upbraiding her with her miseries ("is this she that could not be content to fare as her neighbours did, but must ramble to a strange country? see what she has got by it!"), their temper was very base and sordid. Nothing more barbarous than to triumph over those that are fallen. But we may suppose that the generality asked it in compassion and commiseration: "Is this she that lived so plentifully, and kept so good a house, and was so charitable to the poor? How has the gold become dim!" Those that had seen the magnificence of the first temple wept when they saw the meanness of the second; so these here. Note, Afflictions will make great and surprising changes in a little time. When we see how sickness and old age alter people, change their countenance and temper, we may think of what the Bethlehemites said: "Is this Naomi? One would not take it to be the same person." God, by his grace, fit us for all such changes, especially the great change! Of the composure of Naomi's spirit. If some upbraided her with her poverty, she was not moved against them, as she would have been if she had been poor and proud; but, with a great deal of pious patience, bore that and all the other melancholy effects of her affliction (v. 20, 21): Call me not Naomi, call me Mara, etc. "Naomi signifies pleasant or amiable; but all my pleasant things are laid waste; call me Mara, bitter or bitterness, for I am now a woman of a sorrowful spirit." Thus does she bring her mind to her condition, which we all ought to do when our condition is not in every thing to our mind. When our condition is brought down our spirits should be brought down with it. And then our troubles are sanctified to us when we thus comport with them; for it is not an affliction itself, but an affliction rightly borne, that does us good.

Henry, M. (1994). Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: Complete and unabridged in one volume (Ru 1:19–22). Peabody: Hendrickson.