

CLEAVING TO THE CORE



HEART STEPS OF ENTERING IN
FROM THE
BOOK OF RUTH



Introduction

For the next several months we are going to embark on a journey through the book of Ruth. I pray this journey would be one of the heart and not the head, as the very emphasis of this sharing is based on love and not knowledge. We are all on a journey, a journey that is defined not by the things along the way but the heart choices made along the way. How we see things will make such a difference in our choices. Oh for eyes to see past the surface and into the core treasure within! These are the kind of eyes that Ruth had. Oh for a heart to cleave to the core rather than leave because of the outward trial. This is the kind of heart Ruth had.

Despite all outward trials and inward afflictions, deep cries unto deep for the real Jesus to be known and loved and formed

within! Choices from the heart, choices from our core to cleave to Christ Crucified define our lives, relationships, ministries, and most importantly our relationship with God.

Ruth, A Book About Buying Fields

Before we begin to dig into the scriptures found in the book of Ruth, let us consider something that will prepare us for our searching. Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to a treasure hid in a field. Interestingly enough, this precious treasure is not obvious or easy to find, but something that has to be found deep beneath the surface well past the outward appearance. Jesus shared in Matthew 13:44 that when someone finds such a treasure they will joyfully sell everything just to buy the field where that treasure is hid, dirt and all! Jesus knew that those motivated by immediate selfish gain would only inspect the outward benefits of the field, yet those seeking for true treasure would search much deeper than the surface. All throughout the book of Ruth you find people willing to sell all to buy the field because of the treasure hidden within. These people beheld precious treasure in fields that had not yet produced the rich harvest from that inward core of Christ. God ordained that at the time these ones encountered those fields the hidden treasure had no outward harvest. One would have to perceive the essence rich Seed buried deep beneath the soil.

Ruth saw treasure hidden deep in the earthen vessel called Naomi, and she bought that field. Boaz found treasure hidden deep in the earthen vessel called Ruth, and he bought that field. There is a history

before the glorious coming forth of King David, and the genealogy of Christ that is full of people who perceived the nature of the true King hidden deep in the earth of those who knew and loved God. Let us now take a look into that that history so we too might glean from the treasure in this field called the book of Ruth!

Hard Times

Ruth 1:1-5, “Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”

The first five verses of Ruth give us a short history lesson from the years leading up to a very specific moment. After reading these first verses it become obvious that this family has encountered one difficult and even tragic situation after another. Loss after loss has finally left the three women in the family as childless widows in with a lack of bread. Things have come to a breaking point, and it is at this very moment in time that the scriptures “freeze time” so that we might examine in detail all the elements that are occurring at this point. I believe that these very specific moments reveal incredibly precious things that can deeply affect us as we take a closer look.

Let us depart from our text for a moment and consider something Paul shared with us in Romans 8:28; “*All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose to be conformed to the image of His Son*”. Naomi, Ruth and Orpah could have felt the hand of God had turned against them in a manner that left them destitute from the purposes of God in their generation. How could God use these women now that they were husbandless, childless, and without provision? Would it not be wise to begin seeking to save their lives and working towards that end? Should not prudent choices for self be justified in such a time of crisis as this? Why begin a journey towards God when self is so needy? Yet “those who love God and are called to the purposes of His Heart” tend to see things differently! Those who love God begin to see things with eyes that behold His desires and needs beyond the constant demands



“All things work together for good to those who LOVE GOD”. (Romans 8:28)

of the ever needy realm of self. A new faith begins to arise in such, a faith working by love that causes us to cleave with purpose to something above our needs into the eternal purpose of God's own Heart. Glory to God, what a tremendous blessing such opportunities provide to hearts such as these. Truly in all things we can give thanks knowing they are now working together for God's desires to be fulfilled through His Son formed in us!

It would be easy to romanticize the condition in which we find Naomi, Ruth and Orpah in this first chapter, but in reality it was probably a deeply dark time in which many would fall prey to despair and depression. Particularly for the two young women who still have a future ahead of them, such tragic events would seem to push them away from Naomi back to Moab where "things could work together for the good of their needs". That would be the reasonable and understandable approach to such an awful dilemma. Consider their plight; there are two young women and one old woman, all widows and childless. Naomi's future appears to be sealed, for she can never provide another son from her womb for she is too old. She has no future to offer Ruth and Orpah. She is barren. She is husbandless. They are young. They have needs. They have hopes and dreams and many years left in which to gain all that they long for from their lives.

The Love Crisis

Ruth 1:6-14, "Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her."

Naomi and the young women have tenderness and care between them, for upon Naomi's blessing for the ladies to return and find rest in the house of their husbands, both women kissed her and cried and said they wanted to be with Naomi. Upon hearing their decision to go with her, Naomi begins to press the point and tells them to stay in Moab where they have a future, saying "WHY would you go with me?" She asks them pointed questions to help push them away, "Are there sons in my womb that could be your husbands? I am too old. I have no hope of giving you any offspring. Even if I could have sons, would you tarry to marry an old woman's son and then be an old woman yourself? Could you resist marrying while you waiting for my sons to grow? The hand of the Lord has gone against me, why stay with someone who is stricken of God?"

Many of Naomi's pressing questions relate to her ability to provide for these women to marry into and bring forth from her family's seed. I believe both Ruth and Orpah cherished being a part of Naomi's family and taking on that family name and lineage. God was in that family, for they were not of Moab but of the people of God from the line of Judah. Yet once Naomi pressed the fact that her barren aged condition could never provide that future, Orpah tearfully and affectionately left Naomi and returned to Moab. Yet Ruth cleaved to her.

It could be easy to assume that Orpah left Naomi with a bad attitude and a breach between them, but if you look closely into the scriptures this does not seem to be so. Orpah genuinely cared for Naomi and loved her. Orpah was not willing to leave Naomi upon her initial request, and tearfully with kisses committed to stay with her. It was only when Naomi pressed the matter, pointed out the logic and the loss, and urged her to go back to Moab that Orpah again kissed Naomi but returned to Moab. I believe this a point for some serious heart contemplation. Despite genuine affection towards Naomi, Orpah could be persuaded by all the "right and understandable" reasons to leave Naomi and return to her old ways in the land of her dead husband. How many times have we assumed that if it is not blessed of God outwardly, then God's will is for us to follow the blessing rather than cleave to Him? Maybe God's will has more to do with being known and loved for Who He is than outward blessings or signs.

Consider this, after being faced with the fact that your future is doomed and there is no reason to "stick with it" because of what you will gain... WHY would Ruth continue on with Naomi at this point? What did Ruth see in this barren and aged Naomi? Remember, this is the very point that the scriptures magnify down to the tiny details. I believe part of the answer to that question requires a closer look at Naomi.

******Continued next month when we will look closer at Ruth's decision to cleave to Naomi in the face of such loss.***

