

CLEAVING TO THE CORE



PART TWO: NAOMI

Introduction

We concluded our last article considering what motivated Ruth to choose to abide with Naomi in the time of loss and crisis. What did Ruth see in this barren and aged Naomi? Remember, this is the very point that the scriptures in Ruth chapter one magnify down to the tiny details. I believe part of answering that question requires taking a closer look at Naomi.

Naomi, A Type of Christ Crucified

Ruth 1:20-21, "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

In John 5:39 Jesus exhorts us to search the scriptures to find HIM, and at that point only the Old Testament was written! Again, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus expounds in the Old Testament scriptures of the things He would suffer as a crucified Christ (Luke 24:25-27). I believe that the book of Ruth is scripture because it testifies of Christ and Him crucified. I also believe that it requires SEARCHING the scriptures in the unveiling of the Holy Spirit to actually find the crucified Christ therein! In my personal searching in the Book of Ruth I believe the Holy Spirit showed me the crucified Christ in the person of Naomi. May our eyes behold the Lamb of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as we search the scriptures to see Jesus.

As we search the scriptures found in Ruth chapter one we find Naomi as the prominent person being focused on. Her life is one loss after another until she is bereft of almost everything except her two daughters-in-law, both foreign women from Moab. This is a woman who once had a husband and two sons. Rather than increasing in her old age with sons, grandchildren and a home, Naomi is decreasing, loss after loss, until all that is left is a barren old widow journeying back to Bethlehem to get some food. In the latter years of her life, Naomi finds all that was precious to her is sown into death. Deep within her heart she is bearing the death of all the men of her family, partaking of that bitter portion alone. She has

no desire to inflict that portion on her daughters in law. The way of decrease is not one to be forced upon anyone, and can only be truly known when the heart has deeply turned from self to the Lamb. Naomi once had many blessings to offer these ladies: her sons as husbands, a home, and a future. Her name was “Pleasant” then and so was the portion she could offer. But now Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to no longer call her “Pleasant” but to call her “Bitter” (Mara). In her older age Naomi is bearing more of the image of the Lamb, rather than a Christian who is blessed of God with outward benefits. Naomi is emptied, for she “went out full, and the Lord emptied her,” much like Isaiah 53:12, *“He poured out His soul unto death.”* She is afflicted of God, “the Almighty hath afflicted me,” much like Isaiah 53:4, *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”* Her name is no longer pleasant but bitter, “Call me Mara/Bitter, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me,” much like Matthew 27:33-34, *“They came to a place called Golgotha, which means, ‘The Place of the Skull.’ There they offered Jesus wine mixed with a bitter substance.”* At this point Naomi appears barren and impotent, much like the cross appears to those who know not the power of God released through His slain Lamb (I Corinthians 1:18). There was no beauty that would cause someone to desire her for the outward beauty or benefit.

There is NO BEAUTY that we should DESIRE HIM (Isaiah 53:2). All the attractive outward things have been torn off in the death, all the beauty that would make someone desire to follow Him, much less cleave to Him has been removed.



Pleasant Becomes Bitter

It is as if Naomi and her followers (Ruth and Orpah) have journeyed together through many pleasant things (pleasant is the translation of Naomi’s name), just like Jesus and His disciples walked together for three and a half years with wonderful teaching and miracles and hopes of a grand future with Jesus as the King. Yet at a certain juncture, the pleasant Jesus the disciples affectionately journeyed with began to taste “bitter” as His teaching and emphasis all became focused on His upcoming death. Many of Jesus’ disciples turned back as the “bitter” Jesus focused on His death rather than the miracles, just like Orpah did with Naomi. For those who continued on with this “bitter” Jesus, things only got worse outwardly, until finally He came to the place called Golgotha, which means, “the place of the skull.” It is here, where Christ was crucified, that there is NO BEAUTY that we should desire Him (Isaiah 53:2). All the attractive outward things have been torn off in the death, all the beauty that would make someone desire to follow Him, much less cleave to Him has been removed. There is nothing left but the core Spirit of a slain Lamb being released from this emptied shell of a man in a bitter death of rejection, barrenness, and loss. Who hath believed such a report and to Whom is the arm of the Lord revealed (Isaiah 53:1)? Who has eyes to see that within this cursed and afflicted vessel is the very image and nature of God Himself in all fullness and beauty? Ruth saw it. She saw it in Naomi. She saw something more valuable than everything one could gain, she saw the very image and nature of the one true God she loved.

Perceiving the Lamb with Love

Ruth did not understand that life comes out from death, and that resurrection would follow. Ruth did not study the John 12:24 dying seed principle because Jesus would not be born for hundreds and hundreds of years from her time. All Ruth was sure of was that Naomi knew the one true God, and that His essence was in Naomi's bones and deep within her being. Ruth cleaved to that "hopeless old woman" because in her she found the God she loved more than her own life. Naomi would never have fully comprehended Ruth's relationship with her unless they had "come to this place of bitterness/Golgotha" where all that Naomi had left was her core with no hope of it bringing forth any future for Ruth. All of Naomi's outward beauty and benefits had melted away at the time of Ruth's decision. Naomi in this condition was a type of Christ when He came to the Place of the Skull (Golgotha) where there was no more flesh on the bones and outward beauty by which to desire Him, just the Spirit of the Lamb within Him. Ruth was not drawn to a certain person, ministry, position or reward. Ruth was drawn to the very core being of God's person. That was what she wanted... HIM.

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Whether abasing or abounding, Ruth was cleaving to the core and not the external blessings or trials. The impact of this choice is even more profound when you consider that, to Ruth, such a decision meant no future seed in the earth. All Ruth would gain was the God she loved in His Lamb nature and a fellowship in that nature that made the bitter (Naomi's circumstances) sweet (the Lamb in her). Notice the word "fellowship." Most people fixate on the words "suffering and loss," not realizing that when such bitter things are the result of the Lamb's selfless giving and sowing, it brings a joyful fellowship in WHO HE IS in His eternal being. James exhorted the Christians in the first church to "count it all joy" when they go through trials (James 1:2). This is impossible without a fellowship in the beautiful core nature of the Crucified Himself.

Many seeds refuse to fall into the ground and die because all they see is the loss and not the fellowship of the suffering. Many ministries never find a true beginning at the Cross in the Crucified because they want immediate blessing, and are willing to leave God to find it. Yet, to show the end from the beginning would remove the blessedness of cleaving to the Lord's core during the bitterness of Golgotha. Truly, to those who love God simply for Who He is, it does not matter what the future holds because they are already holding their future deep within as they cleave to the Lord they love. As long as He is with and in them based on His eternal Lamb nature, it does not matter what events, blessings or trials the future holds, for "thou art within me".

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**To be continued next month.*

Personal Notes

