

"Lost Perspective"

Ruth 1:6-15

Introduction: This morning as we gather here we again return to our study in the book of Ruth. This is the 3rd message in this letter and before we get into the message today I want to do a quick review to bring us up to speed so that we see the verses in the proper context.

Notice Ruth 1:1a

The background for the letter is one that is very dark. The events of this letter take place in the days when the judges ruled. This was one of the darkest times for the nation of Israel.

After the death of Joshua Israel fell into lawlessness and idolatry and it all came about because they had become lazy and they refused to put the inhabitants out of the land as God had commanded. So Israel became involved in the worship of the false gods of the people of Canaan. When this happened God delivered them over to some sort of difficulty and the purpose was to bring them back to Him. When the oppression became too much Israel cried out to God and He then would work through a judge to deliver them.

The judges would rise up and when God gave them the victory the people would walk in obedience for a while. They would then fall back into sin again and it was the same thing over and over. Each time they fell back into the sin they fell deeper than the time before.

So as the days of the judges progressed Israel slid further and further away from God. They were going deeper into the darkness.

The events of this letter transpire within that darkness and to be more specific the letter opens up in the midst of the affliction which God has allowed to come upon Israel. They are in the midst of a famine.

Notice Ruth 1:1-5

Here we are introduced to a family. The husband is Elimelech whose name means "MY GOD IS KING". When the famine hits he lives the opposite of his name and he takes his family to Moab which was the GARBAGE CAN OF THE WORLD. Elimelech showed no faith in God and so he turned to the world to fill the emptiness within him. While he is there he dies. His sons, Mahlon and Chilion both take wives from the land of Moab.

This tells us a great deal about Elimelech. Let me show you what God had commanded concerning the Moabites.

Deuteronomy 23:3

³ An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

This, along with the move to Moab tells us there was not a deep devotion to God within the family.

It was ten years after the marriages that Elimelech's 2 sons both died. This left Naomi alone with her 2 daughters-in-law. Elimelech had led his entire family away from God and out of His will. We do not know for sure but the reason for the 3 deaths in the family was because they were out of the will of God and were getting rooted in the land of Moab. We do know that all of this was designed to get Naomi back to her home land.

Application:

Last week I had told you that we can see in the beginning of this story the danger of walking away from God. There are always consequences and if you go too far there are often consequences that irreversible. That was the case here in the family of Elimelech.

Now as we move on I want you to notice that the Holy Spirit will begin to focus upon Naomi after the death of her husband and her 2 sons.

Notice Ruth 1:5-6a

I. The Darkness

Notice Ruth 1:6-7

God has been working in the life of Ruth because it is His desire to get her back to the land of Judah.

She gets word while she is still in Moab that God has visited His people and He has again provided food. This tells us they have repented and called out to God and He has heard their cries and He has delivered them from the famine.

Now before we go any deeper into the text we need to look into the mind of Naomi.

Notice Ruth 1:13, 19-21

I show you these verses because I want you to see that Naomi sees her situation as PUNISHMENT from God. She feels as though God is AGAINST her. She cannot see that all of this is for her good and God's glory.

Naomi is walking in darkness because of stepping outside the will of God.

Application:

This is what happens to us when we turn away from God. The moment you turn your back upon God you begin to walk in spiritual darkness. You get away from the Word of God and you begin to grieve the Holy Spirit in your life and you find yourself under a cloud of gloom and despair. As God begins to work to bring you back to where you need to be you cannot see that it is for your good. You begin to feel as though God is against you and then you begin to turn bitter.

You lose sight of the blessings which God has brought into your life and the bitterness within you begins to affect your family and everyone around you. Basically you are miserable and deep down inside you may blame God or maybe you blame people around you.

YOU HAVE LOST YOUR SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE!!!

You don't even see that what you are going through is because of the choices you have made in your life. You cannot see that in all of what you are going through you God is working to bring you back home. You cannot see this because you have stepped into the spiritual darkness.

John 8:12

¹² Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

I want to take you to the book of Esther to see a picture that can be seen within the verses. But before I do let me explain to you some of the picture in the book of Esther; The kingdom that is found in the book of Esther is a picture of the believer. The king represents our heart. Mordecai represents the Holy Spirit. Haman represents our flesh/sin nature. The king's ring represents authority.

There is tension between Haman and Mordecai within the book and the tension represents the battle that is within each believer between the sin nature and the Holy Spirit.

Now in Esther 3 the king gives his ring and his authority to Haman.

Esther 3:10a

And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman...

With the authority given to him Haman made a decree that on a certain date all the Jews under the king's rule were to be put to death. Let me show you now the response of the people.

Esther 3:14-15

¹⁴ *The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.*

¹⁵ *The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.*

The kingdom was in confusion and disarray.

This is a picture of the believer who allows his or her self to be controlled by the flesh/sin nature. It sends your entire life into disarray.

James 1:8

⁸ *A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

This was exactly where Naomi was at in chapter 1. Let me show you some of the results of walking in the darkness.

Notice Ruth 1:8-15

1. You lose sight of the dangers in this world.

I am taken back in this text that Naomi would suggest to both of these young ladies to return back to Moab! She was sending them back into a land where the god Chemosh was worshipped! This was the god to whom they sacrificed children!! How could Naomi ever suggest that these 2 young ladies, who were married to her sons, return to the GARBAGE CAN OF THE WORLD?

This is what happens when we step away from God and begin a journey into the darkness. You become blinded to the dangers of the world.

If you step away from God you can be just like Naomi and you too can ENCOURAGE others to turn to the world. Many times the believer who chooses to walk away from the Lord and take a journey into the world ends up encouraging his or her own family members that it is ok to be friends with the world. You do this with the lifestyle you live.

Let me show you some of the dangers of exposing you family to the world.

James 4:4

⁴ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

To be a friend of the world is to be the enemy of God. This means you are working against the kingdom when you join with the world. So to join with the world and lead your family into the world is to set your family against God.

Let me show you what can happen. I want to step you back to Genesis into the life of Jacob. In Genesis 33 I see a mistake which Jacob made.

Genesis 33:18-19

¹⁸ And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.

¹⁹ And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

He bought a parcel of land which tells me he was getting rooted in. The Patriarchs were to dwell in tents and to be prepared move when God called them to move. But at this time Jacob choose to settle down and appently he became very comfortable with the people. Let me show you.

Genesis 34:1

And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

Jacob allows Leah to spend a night on the town. He did not see any danger in her associating with the girls of Shechem. Let me show you what happened.

Genesis 34:2

² And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

That night on the town Dinah was raped. The young girls she was with apparently were connected with the young men of the city and that night one thing led to another and Dinah ended up in a situation where she was defiled. I believe Jacob lost sight of the dangers in the world when he became rooted in. For Jacob to purchase property there tells me there was something there which was appealing to him. When he became attached to the world he lost his perspective on the dangers of the world. The end result was the rape of Dinah as she was permitted to join up with the girls of the city.

2. You lose sight of other's need for Christ.

When Naomi encouraged her daughters-in-law to return to Moab she was blinded to their spiritual needs. In Moab they would worship the god of Chemosh but if they were to travel back to Judah they would be exposed to the God of Israel. He was the salvation which they needed.

Application:

When you step away from God you too lose your burden to reach people for Christ. You begin to live like HELL is just a "MAKE BELIEVE PLACE". Let me remind you that hell is real and people go there every day.

Luke 16:19-26

¹⁹ There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Hell is real and people need to know. When you meet someone always remember that you may be the only Jesus they will ever meet in their lives. If you don't tell them of Christ no one will.

Conclusion:

Here is the point in all of what I have said today, when a believer walks away from God they lose their perspective.

Now maybe that describes your life and you are ready to turn everything around. Let me remind you that God welcomes you back and He will grant you forgiveness, but if you go too far there will be permanent scars. But even with the permanent scars God can bless you in a special way.