

**"Coming Home the Hard Way"**

**Ruth 1**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Ruth we looked at how Naomi had lost her perspective due to the darkness which she was walking in. Her husband had walked away from God and led his family to the garbage can of the world which was Moab. It was in Moab that he died as well as both of his sons.

God desired to bring Naomi back to the land of Israel and so He was slowly stripping things from her life so that she would return. When word came to her that the famine was over she began her journey back to Bethlehem and her 2 daughters in law began to follow. It was then that Naomi did all she could to discourage them from following. Orpah turned back to the land of Moab and is forever lost but Ruth refused to go back to Moab and so the text will now begin to focus upon her and her journey with Naomi.

We are going to see in Ruth that which God desires to see in each of us. We see will see her DEVOTION and DEDICATION. We will get to that in a few minutes but before we do let me refresh your mind on a few thoughts.

When Jesus called us and we placed our faith in Him and were saved He then expects us to become DEVOTED and DEDICATED to Him.

**Luke 14:25-33**

*<sup>25</sup> And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,*

*<sup>26</sup> If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

*<sup>27</sup> And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

*<sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

*<sup>29</sup> Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*

*<sup>30</sup> Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

<sup>31</sup> *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

<sup>32</sup> *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

<sup>33</sup> *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

Let me explain this text to you to help you to see what Jesus is saying here. He is telling those who are following Him that if they are going to make a make a commitment to salvation and be a true disciple there are things they need to know.

1. **The relationships that once controlled them can no longer do so. Their number one LOVE in their life will have to be Jesus.**
2. **There are going to need to be many sacrifices along the way and it is going to be costly.**
3. **This decision is not just going to have an impact upon you but also on all those around you.**
4. **The possessions which once controlled you will no longer be important for your treasure will be in heaven and that is the way you need to live.**

These words spoken by our Lord seem to be very sharp and pointed but there was a very good reason why He spoke these words.

#### **Matthew 6:24**

<sup>24</sup> *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

On Wednesday evening in our study of Hebrews we were able to see the results of DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE.

#### **Hebrews 5:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> *Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.*

<sup>12</sup> For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

<sup>13</sup> For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

<sup>14</sup> But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1. Dull of hearing.
2. Stunted growth.
3. Unfit for spiritual battle.
4. Unable to discern between right and wrong.

So this is how many believers stumble through this world. Today I want us to see what it means to be a disciple and the blessings that come along on the journey.

### I. The Commitment

#### Notice Ruth 1:6, 16-18

When we read these verses we see that when Naomi made the choice to return this then led Ruth to also make her commitment. There is a very important lesson here that I don't want you to miss.

Before we get to the lesson however there is something which we need to know. While Naomi and Elimelech were in Moab and Ruth and Orpah were able to learn of God. Elimelech and Naomi walked away from God but He was still a part of their lives and the daughters in law were able to see that.

Now let me get you back to the lesson:

Ten years of Naomi's compromise in Moab never made Ruth confess her allegiance to the God of Israel. Yet as soon as Naomi stood and said, "I'm going back to the God of Israel, I'll put my fate in His hands" Ruth stood with her.

If you think you will persuade your friends or relatives to Jesus by your compromise, you are mistaken. Perhaps you are sincere, but you are mistaken. Only a bold stand for Jesus will really do it.

Let me show you the words of Charles Spurgeon:

*"Ah! You will never win any soul to the right by a compromise with the wrong. It is decision for Christ and his truth that has the greatest power in the family, and the greatest power in the world, too." (Spurgeon)*

Now let get you back to the commitment of Ruth.

Lessons from Ruth's commitment to seek God:

- 1. There will always be someone or something which attempts to pull us away from God.**

### **Notice Ruth 1:8-13**

Ruth and Orpah had both made a verbal commitment to walk away from their past lives. They would leave their families, their friends, and their gods. They professed they would leave all of that behind but Naomi did her best to turn them back to their people and to their gods.

### **Application:**

When we are committed to seeking God and following Him where He leads we can be sure there are going to be people who are going to do their best to discourage us. Satan will use whomever he can to do all he can to keep you from following God and the blessings He has for you.

They can be friends or they can be family. And it goes beyond that. Satan can use the things of this world to pull you away from following Jesus Christ.

I have watched the lives of many people who I know were fearful of committing to life devoted to God because they thought they would miss out on something which the world has to offer.

### **Luke 18:18-24**

<sup>18</sup> *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

<sup>19</sup> *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.*

<sup>20</sup> *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.*

<sup>21</sup> *And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

<sup>22</sup> *Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*

<sup>23</sup> *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.*

<sup>24</sup> *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*

Here is an example of how riches of this world kept this man from salvation. I have also seen the riches of this world keep believers from a life of service for God. They have been convinced in their minds that if they do not gain more of this world's wealth they will not be content or happy.

### **1 Timothy 6:6-12**

<sup>6</sup> *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

<sup>7</sup> *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

<sup>8</sup> *And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

<sup>9</sup> *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.*

<sup>10</sup> *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

<sup>11</sup> *But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.*

<sup>12</sup> *Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

The bottom line is there are many things which the enemy can and will use to keep us from following Jesus Christ but we must be steadfast and not allow anything to turn us away.

### **1 Corinthians 15:58**

<sup>58</sup> *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

## II. The Arrival

### Notice Ruth 1:19-22

When Ruth and Naomi return to Bethlehem the entire village is excited. This was a small village and everyone knew each other.

Now when we read this we need to see that while Naomi sees that everything that has happened is because of the hand of God SHE IS NOT BITTER WITH GOD. She did not fully understand all that God was doing but she did see all of this as the hand of God in her life but she never once became bitter toward God.

Naomi was very transparent with the people. She did not pretend to be ok with what had happened. She was a humbled woman at this very time. She was broken and she was coming back to God looking to be blessed.

This section makes me wonder if maybe it was her idea to go to Moab. She does not blame her husband but she seems to accept full responsibility and she has accepted the hand of God's discipline in her life.

Now I want you to see something that Naomi says here. She told the village **she went out full and had returned empty**. This reminds me of something which Job said.

### Job 1:20-22

<sup>20</sup> *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,*

<sup>21</sup> *And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

<sup>22</sup> *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

Both Job and Naomi knew that God had every right to "empty their cup". But I believe they also knew that God would not leave their cup empty. They both understood that when God emptied the cup it was to make room for more blessings.

Let me show you something that will help with this.

**Jeremiah 48:11**

*<sup>11</sup> Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.*

Moab had not been emptied from vessel to vessel. There is a principle in this that we need to see. Moab had it very easy and so there was bitterness in the land of Moab.

When wine was made in the Old Testament it was placed in wine skins and allowed to set for a period of time. The dregs would then settle to the bottom. It was then slowly poured into another skin and this process separated the dregs or the bitter part. The more this was done the sweeter the wine became.

**Application:**

Sometimes God empties us in order to eliminate things in our lives that make us "bitter". In other words He allows us to experience the trials of life so that the things in our life which block the view of Christ are then removed. This then makes us spiritually "sweeter".

**Conclusion:**

**1 Samuel 2:7-8**

*<sup>7</sup> The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.*

*<sup>8</sup> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.*