

## Ruth 1:14-21 Choose Hope, not Despair

**14 And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.**

At this point that Orpah \_\_\_\_\_ with Naomi, that the best course of action is for her to return to her people

What Ruth does, goes above and beyond any obligation that she has to Naomi, and demonstrates that *Hesed*, that loving-kindness, that \_\_\_\_\_, self-sacrificing love for her mother-in-law.

**15 Then she said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”**

Naomi uses a kind of subtle peer-reminding her that Orpah has already gone back.

The reminder that returning meant returning to the false gods of Moab made Ruth realize the \_\_\_\_\_ of her decision, and why she \_\_\_\_\_ go with Naomi. And the One True God is going to use this \_\_\_\_\_ Moabite woman Ruth to \_\_\_\_\_ the Israelite Naomi, when it comes to faith.

**16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.**

In verse 16, we have these words that stand as a monument to the kind of overflowing lovingkindness, self-sacrificing, covenant commitment, the above and beyond love, kindness and compassion, the \_\_\_\_\_ that characterizes God’s relationship toward us, and should characterize our relationships with each other.

**Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.**

Ruth is \_\_\_\_\_ her people, her past, her family, and her former gods, and is adopting Naomi’s people as her own, and choosing to \_\_\_\_\_ Yahweh, the God of Israel from then on. This is the moment of \_\_\_\_\_—the choice that every human being must make—are you going to serve the One True God, or are you going to make something else your God?

Ruth has chosen this path to \_\_\_\_\_ God and emulate His love for us in the way that she treats others. In choosing to follow God, Ruth is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ gentiles in the Old Testament that we see choosing to renounce their old life and serve God.

Rahab in Joshua 2:11, Naaman in 2 Kings 5:15 (and v.17), and Ruth. And Ruth’s \_\_\_\_\_ is by far the strongest in terms of a statement of faith!

This is the \_\_\_\_\_ upon which the whole book of Ruth revolves. This one decision affected the \_\_\_\_\_ of these two women, and not only of these two women, but of all of us.

Salvation came to this \_\_\_\_\_ because of the witness of Ruth. Who is it in your life who needs to \_\_\_\_\_ your good example? Who are you \_\_\_\_\_ as you lead your life. Are you pointing people \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord or away from the Lord by the way that you live your life?

**17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.**

What Ruth is saying is that she's going to be a part of the people of God, and worship God, and live amongst the people of God until \_\_\_\_\_ dies, even if Naomi dies many years before her. She's going to \_\_\_\_\_ where Naomi has died and live out her life among the People of God, worshipping God, throughout her life, and be buried with the people of God. The covenant-relationship that's brought to mind here isn't just the marriage covenant of until death do we part, but it pictures \_\_\_\_\_—which goes beyond death.

**Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but death parts you and me.***

But Ruth saying this tells us two things. First, and most obviously, Ruth is very \_\_\_\_\_ about the vow that she is taking.

In the very same breath that she's claiming God to be Her God from then on, and making a covenant with Him, she's calling to mind the \_\_\_\_\_ that God had made with Abraham, promising him a son, who was the forefather of the very people she's binding herself to, and saying are her people from now on. She's joining herself to God and to his people permanently, and she's doing it in a very \_\_\_\_\_ way.

It was a believing family, and in particular \_\_\_\_\_, who was living in a land full of idol-worshippers who showed Ruth how to be saved.

**<sup>18</sup> When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.**

Naomi had \_\_\_\_\_ left to say. What could Naomi say after Ruth had put it into the hands of God? While Naomi had seemed resolute, like an immovable rock determined to make sure that Ruth did what was "best for her" and returned to her own people; With one step of faith in God, Ruth \_\_\_\_\_ Naomi, and the conversation was over.

Salvation came to this gentile because of the \_\_\_\_\_ of Naomi. Naomi had \_\_\_\_\_ Ruth to God, but it is Ruth who will \_\_\_\_\_ Naomi to the Kinsman Redeemer.

**<sup>19</sup> So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them,**

Notice that now they are treated as equals—the Bible says "they both went", no longer saying Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth. They are \_\_\_\_\_ together, and are travelling toward Bethlehem.

**And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"**

It may be that the years had \_\_\_\_\_ her—and it is likely that they did. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ can age a person beyond their years.

**<sup>20</sup> She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me <sup>[h]</sup>Mara, for <sup>[i]</sup>the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.**

She's blaming God for her \_\_\_\_\_ to what He has allowed. This is kind of the classic example of letting our \_\_\_\_\_ define us—she actually is asking that her name be changed to bitter—and by saying this, she's saying that what has happened to her is the \_\_\_\_\_ of her story. This is how she "ends up".

**<sup>21</sup> I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and <sup>[i]</sup>the Almighty has afflicted me?"**

She says that she went out full—with a husband and two sons—but the LORD has brought her back \_\_\_\_\_. But, is that really true? She has Ruth, who, although she overlooks her, and takes her for granted, demonstrates a \_\_\_\_\_ that is probably above that of most children toward their parents.

She has a lot of bitterness and lack of hope and lack of faith to work through at this point, but the healing has already begun—even if she doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ it yet.