

Death to Life

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RUTH 1

This Week's Core

Competency:

Hope - I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope that I have in Jesus Christ.

We have this hope as an anchor of the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 6:19-20 NIV).

Using This Study

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

③ EXPAND His Word

How does this FIT? Studying cross references can help expand your understanding of a passage and discover the unity in God's word.

④ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

The school system in a large city had a program to help children keep up with their school work during stays in the city's hospitals. One day a teacher who was assigned to the program received a routine call asking her to visit a particular child. She took the child's name and room number and talked briefly with the child's regular class teacher. "We're studying nouns and adverbs in his class now," the regular teacher said, "and I'd be grateful if you could help him understand them so he doesn't fall too far behind."

The hospital program teacher went to see the boy that afternoon. No one had mentioned to her that the boy had been badly burned and was in great pain. Upset at the sight of the boy, she stammered as she told him, "I've been sent by your school to help you with nouns and adverbs." When she left she felt she hadn't accomplished much. But the next day, a nurse asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" The teacher felt she must have done something wrong and began to apologize. "No, no," said the nurse. "You don't know what I mean. We've been worried about that little boy, but ever since yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back, responding to treatment. It's as though he's decided to live."

Two weeks later the boy explained that he had completely given up hope until the teacher arrived. Everything changed when he came to a simple realization. He expressed it this way: "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?"

This Week

"When the going gets tough, the tough get going." So the old saying goes. Not so though with Naomi. The air was out of her balloon! Her hope was dead! But alas, it was harvest time (Ruth 1:22) - in more ways than one! Naomi's perception of what God was doing was totally off base. So, we begin our study of the Book of Ruth and an amazing chain of events indeed!

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

Ruth 1

1 During the time of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem in Judah with his wife and two sons to live in the land of Moab for a while.

2 The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the land of Moab and settled there.

3 Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left with her two sons.

4 Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about 10 years, 5 both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two children and without her husband.

6 She and her daughters-in-law prepared to leave the land of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to His people's need by providing them food.

7 She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.

8 She said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the LORD show faithful love to you as you have shown to the dead and to me.

9 May the LORD enable each of you to find security in the house of your new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

10 "No," they said to her. "We will go with you to your people."

11 But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands?"

12 Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am

too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons,

13 would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, because the LORD's hand has turned against me."

14 Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. Follow your sister-in-law."

16 But Ruth replied: Do not persuade me to leave you or go back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May Yahweh punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped trying to persuade her.

19 The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

20 "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara," she answered, "for the Almighty has made me very bitter.

21 I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has pronounced judgment on me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi came back from the land of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Notes

Naomi means "pleasant." (v. 2)

Orpah means "beautiful back of the neck" and Ruth

means "friendship." (v. 4)

Mara means "bitter." (v. 20)

2 EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. Verse 1 – “Moab” – Where is Moab and what modern day country is it?
2. Elimelech took his family and emigrated to Moab to escape a famine (v. 1). What do you think are some of the things in his thought process that might have motivated him to do so?
3. Ruth “clung” to Naomi. What did that include (vs. 14-18)?
4. In verses 19-21 Naomi was pretty “rough” on God. Was God really to blame?

3 EXPAND His Word

How does this FIT?

5. Verse 2 – “Ephrathites” - These were people who inhabited the region which included which famous and important city (see Micah 5:2)?
6. In Verse 12, Naomi insinuates that she had no hope because of her circumstances. Read 1 Corinthians 15:19 and Hebrews 11:1 and define true hope in your own words.
7. Read vs. 19-21. Could we compassionately counsel Naomi with Romans 8:28?

4 EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

8. How might Elimelech’s actions in vs. 1 & 2 affect your perspective on the current immigration debate in the USA?

9. Names are significant to God. See, for example: Luke 1:13; Luke 1:31; and Revelation 3:12. See, also a negative example with Naomi/Mara in Ruth 1:20. Do you have any criteria for naming newborn children in your family?

10. Ruth is, without a doubt, the positive role model in chapter one of the Book of Ruth. As the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" – what is it about Ruth that you would most like to imitate?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes:

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.