

“Freedom to Love Others More Than Yourself:
God’s Faithfulness in Loving Others First”
Ruth 1:6-18

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:24; Romans 13:8 & 10; Matthew 6:33-34)

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him; a threefold cord is not quickly broken. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored all rejoice together. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 1 Corinthians 12:26; 1 Thessalonians 5:11 & 15)

- Overview of the text:
 - Naomi had heard of the kindness and faithfulness of God in the fields of Moab (Job 1:21). She knew that there would be provision for her according to the Levitical Law (Leviticus 19:9-10).
 - Both the famine (Judges 6:3-4; Leviticus 26:14-16a & 20) and the blessings of crops were from the hand of God and had a sovereign purpose (Ephesians 1:11).
 - Naomi knew as a widow (Psalm 68:5; Psalm 146:9) she had no means to offer provision, protection, and a heritage (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:28) to her Moabite daughters. Her desire was that God would show His “hesed” (Exodus 34:6-7) towards them as they had shown her and her sons “hesed”.
 - Children were viewed as a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5) in the Jewish culture and Naomi wished this for both Ruth and Orpah.
 - Our sins can and will affect others (Romans 5:19). Naomi believed that her family’s sin had caused God to act in this way towards her husband and her sons (Acts 5:1–11; 1 Corinthians 11:31-32).
 - Pain can lead us at times to say things that are not true and question the goodness of God and we need to be reminded of the truth of God’s Word (Psalm 73: 1-22 & 77:7-14; Job 6:26).
 - Suffering can be used to draw us back to God, lead people to salvation, and be more thankful for His blessings (Psalm 119:67-68 & 71-72 & 75; Luke 13:1-4; Job 42:2 & 5; Hebrews 12:11).
 - Ruth shows “hesed” to Naomi in clinging to her, and showed she wanted to be a part of the covenant people of Yahweh by making a vow to Yahweh (Numbers 30:1-16) and taking on the customs of the Jewish people (Traveling: Luke 2:44; Living amongst their tribe: Ruth 1:2; Being buried amongst their ancestors: Genesis 49:28-33; Identifying with the Jewish people and their God).