

Meditations from the Book of Ruth Part 1

“1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. 3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. 6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.” (Ruth 1:1-6 KJV)

The book of Ruth has many beautiful lessons that we can apply in our lives.

“1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.” (Ruth 1:1 KJV) The book of Ruth took place at the time of judges. The characteristic things of this stage is the following: ***“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25 KJV)*** There was no king and there was no head spear leader or leadership to direct the affair of the Kingdom and to direct the people and dictate to them of what they needed to do. Moses before he died, he pleaded with God to raise up a man instead of him, to lead the people, to take them out and to bring them in as a shepherd who is leading the sheep. Therefore the Lord raised up Joshua who led the people after Moses and who brought them into the Promised Land. But Joshua did not appoint any man to take his place and position to lead the people and direct them in the way that they need to go. So after Joshua there was a gap in the leadership and that gap made the people rely on themselves in any decision they needed to take when they were facing trials and hardships. Therefore every one of them resorted to do what seem good in his own eyes.

That is here the hazard of such a gap in the life of the people of God, that there is no leadership in the church who direct the people and guide them of what they need to do when there is problem happening in their lives. This gap will also appear in people who leave the church because they don't want to be checked and scrutinized by the leadership of the church or who does not want the church to interfere in their lives and who want to do their own will.

Therefore we as a church should do all what we can to keep and maintain our leadership, that will reach out peoples' lives from our brethren in order to help them in their struggles to take the right decision that they need to do to continue to serve God and to continue to do His will.

“1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.” (Ruth 1:1 KJV) This family was located in Bethlehem, and the meaning of Bethlehem is the house of bread, and Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.” Jesus was born in Bethlehem, so this family were in the best place that God wanted them to continue to be there. They had land that they can plant, they have house, they have family and children. They have everything they need and they have God with them. But their decision to leave Bethlehem was harmful to them. It was a departure from God. The famine that came, was not the real reason, but was the excuse that they use to depart.

God allowed famine for multiple reasons. It could be as discipline and they need to bear it. It could be a trial that God allowed it to teach them to live in suffering and to pass through the narrow gate. Or He was testing the faith of the people; who will stay with God and who will go away from God; therefore Elimelech when he took his family and move out at this time of famine, he did not do good. God was waiting for him to stand firm and persevere with God and with His discipline.

Christians should not be opportunistic. They should not only stay with God when they are receiving the fatty things and honor and the blessings of God. But the more they need to abide with God in trials, in famine, in scarcity, and continue to stay with God, with His Word, with Jesus Christ, in Bethlehem, in the house of Bread, with His Word that we need in life, with the Church of God, the body of Christ that He placed us in. ***When you move away during trial from where God had placed you, you are moving away from God and you are breaking out your commitment and covenant with Him, and that is sin and will bring death, as the death that had entered the family of Elimelech.***

“2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.” (Ruth 1:2 KJV) The meaning of ‘Elimelech’ is ‘My God is king’. God truly is King over the life of His people and He knows how to deal with them when they do their own. But He restores them when they repent and come back to Him. ‘Eli’ is God and ‘melech’, is ‘king’ or ‘owner’. So when they will ask ‘Elimelech’ what is his name, he will answer and say, God is my king, or God is my owner. But he was not behaving as such that God is the king or the owner over his life. Many they speak the Word of God but they don't allow God to be the Lord over their lives; their names, God is the King, but in reality, they are the kings over their own lives. They do their own, they make their choices based on their own flesh desires, and not led by God and His will, that is why you find them end up in Moab choices.

The meaning of ‘Naomi’, is ‘delight’, or ‘blessing’, but when she departed from God she lost what He gave to her, that is why when she came back she told the people, to call her ‘Mara’, ***“20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.” (Ruth 2:20 KJV)*** The meaning of ‘Mara’ is bitterness. Because she lost the blessing of God when she departed from Bethlehem, the house of bread; from Jesus Christ, His church and from God. She further testified, ***“21 I went out full and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?” (Ruth 1:21 KJV)***

So from what she said from her mouth we can see clearly that this family was blessed and they were with the full blessing of God. Sadly to speak that many they cannot see the blessings of God in their lives. They grumble, quarrel, they have envy, jealousy, they lack of contentment and satisfaction, and they take wrong decision, they depart from peace and they make to themselves problems because they fail to recognize the blessings of God in their lives. Such suffering is not because of the lack of blessings but because of their worldliness and their enticement to such wrong choices, that they will depart easily from God for any coming reason whether famine, trial, persecution, sickness, discouragement, etc. This family has no problem but they created problem for themselves in what they decided to do because of their enticement. I say the same to some people who are blessed and are behaving like the family of Elimelech, 'You don't have problem, but you are creating problem to yourself'. Naomi did not delight in the Lord that is why she lost what she had and she fail to receive her heart desire, but finally when she learned how to delight herself in the Lord He gave her her heart desire, ***"Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." (Psalm 37:4 KJV) Learn to humble down, and learn to behave, learn to heed the rebuke and delight yourself in the Lord so He will give you your heart desire.***

The meaning of 'Mahlon' is 'sick'. ***Sickness will come to you when we move away from God. But when you repent no sickness shall hinder the plan of God.*** The meaning 'Chilion' is 'longing', or 'yearning'. * ***When you move away from God your longing will not be fulfilled until you come back to Him.*** * ***When you long to receive something from the Lord you need to persevere to be close to God so you will receive what you are longing for.***

"... And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there." (Ruth 1:2 KJV) It means their decision to leave Bethlehem was something ready in their heart, and once the famine came they depart to Moab and they continued their; it seemed they were comfortable with their decision because it is fit of what is inside of them of the worldly desire.

"3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons." (Ruth 1:3 KJV) Wrong decisions in life might seem right at the beginning but later on it will prove that they are wrong and harmful. With such of unexpected death, the family should take it as warning from God to go back. But they did not heed to that first discipline of God. ***Many who are hard headed and stubborn, when they will do wrong and God discipline them for it, they will insist on their stand although they know it is wrong and against God's will. Therefore God would discipline His people when He is seeing them doing their own will and plan.***

"4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years." 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband." (Ruth 1:4-5 KJV) They did not take the warning of the first death, and they did not humble down in the hands of God and went back. God wanted them to go back, because there is ministry and service to them that they needed to do for God. But instead they did another wrong thing. They went and married Moabites woman whom

God had prohibited them from marrying and intermingle with such nations. After they did such we can observe God's displeasure with them in causing two things to happen:

1. Barrenness: Both Mahlon and Chilion did not have any children.
2. Death: It is so strange that both died and they are young men.

It is not so coincident what had happened to both of them. They were young to die. Both of them were too young to die. God through such was sending clear message that those who go against His will, shall not prosper. ***The more you rebel and go away from God, the more you suffer. The more you are stubborn, the more you will suffer. Better to humble down and take warning from the first discipline so you will not receive the next blow of God's displeasure.***

The discipline of God is painful in certain times. But the message now is very clear that this family had cross the red light and they needed to be restrained from their wrong doing. ***You notice and compare, which is better, a church who control you and restrict you and discipline you and who work to stop the wrath of God from reaching you, or a church to let you alone to do what you want and later on to receive God's discipline and God's revenge?*** Which is better that Elimelech family will be blocked and stopped from leaving Bethlehem or to let them go in their own way and face God's wrath and death?

I am convinced and I fully believe that if the churches had clearly disciplined their members and restrict them from doing their own will and stop them from crossing the red light, and if the members of God's church had humbled themselves in front of the instruction of God that the church is giving, then I believe that the pandemic of COVID that crossed and affected greatly the whole world would not take place. But what I can say now, that the people chose the hard way to get their lesson.

As for me as I see what God is doing and how He is disciplining the whole world I would rather prefer to be strict and obey God and discipline His people and the ministry under my care, and that will be safer and more beneficial to the people than not to discipline them and let the wrath of God fall on them.

People usually express that I am a scary person because I am strict. But myself I am a weak person in body. I spent most of my life in fasting. Now almost I cannot run, I walk slowly, I cannot carry heavy things, I am just saying that to tell you that physically I cannot do any harm to the people, so why they need to be scared of me? But rather they should be scared of God and fear Him and repent of their sins. I can only give the Word of God that may cause pain to them because it will show them their sins that they don't want to give up, but God can inflict on them a painful discipline that can be of many types and of more consequences if they will not heed and repent.

Such what we read here in the book of Ruth is a real terrible story and painful scenario that God executed against the family of Elimelech. ***That is not the only painful story in the Bible. There are more painful stories in the Bible, even more painful than such. Therefore we read the Bible to learn lessons from the Scriptures so we will not fall in the same mistakes of others and got hurt.*** ***"4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."***

(Romans 15:4 KJV) “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” (1 Corinthians 10:6 KJV) So we should not be lusting after the things that they lusted. People who do not know what is in the Bible or who do not read their Bible, and many they are like that, they cannot see how much harsh the discipline of God us. * *Therefore you read your Bible daily to get reminded, and take warning and stop doing your own will, and stop lusting after worldly things.* * *The portion that you daily read from the Bible is the Word of God, and is what God wants you to know and get refreshed of what you knew before to avoid falling into the same mistakes and errors that will cause you troubles.* A good amount of 3-4 chapters daily are good to give you the right mind. Yes that portion that we read from the Bible in our daily program of Bible reading, as we are reading in sequence from the beginning to the end, is the portion that God had ordained for us to read to get enlightened to resist the devil and to avoid temptations.

“... And they dwelled there about ten years.” (Ruth 1:4 KJV) They stayed in Moab ten years. * *You see here to evaluate certain decision if it is right or wrong, time will help us to see things in a more clear way. Certain wrong decision will look good at the beginning but later on will prove it is wrong. As well as certain right decision it might look wrong at the beginning but later on it will prove the opposite.* * *So the best thing for us to decide is not to depend on what we see of events around us or what we can understand in our minds. These may lead us to wrong decisions, therefore we finally need to rely on what God’s voice is telling to us.*

“5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.” (Ruth 1:5 KJV) So here the widow of Elimelech ended that she had in her house two widows of her two sons who died. Both of them are young and without children. And most likely Naomi had good thoughts of these two widows that ultimately they will have families with children. *We need to have good thoughts and have a concern of the people who are around us or those who are linked with us in one way or another.*

“6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.” (Ruth 1:6 KJV) Naomi after what had happened she got a clear conclusion and decided to go back to Bethlehem. God also is faithful, He made a way. He made her heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited His people in giving them bread. That news that she heard confirmed to her the decision that she took to go back to God. I believed after what had happened of the three deaths Naomi decided to go back, but she was just waiting for something to initiate her journey to go back. *God allow certain news that we need to hear to come to us. We don’t need to get disturbed or got worried about what is going on around us, and we don’t need to get worry to listen to all the news, because God will let us hear the news that we need to hear to help us to take the decision that we need to take.*

My Dear and Beloved: “The LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.” God is gracious, He will allow famines and trials and problems to come, and will let it be for a while, but then He is compassionate, He will come on His time and relief us. Therefore

we need to humble ourselves and to wait upon God till he come and resolve the issue. So here, we can understand that there were other people in Bethlehem who were passing the same problem but they did not leave it, but persevered with God and got rewarded on due time. Certain times when we pass through trials and persevere in enduring them, while others around us cheat in order to bypass the discipline of God; we notice ourselves that we became leaner and we may got upset and discouraged. That is not the correct response. Let us be glad, and no need to compare ourselves with those who disobey God because we know that God is faithful and He will not let the wicked prosper or go unpunished. God come and visit His people to make a way to those who left to come back. Like the lost son who left the father house, then when he got hungry he remembered how many servants in his father house, those who serve, they eat and have plenty.

Why God will take such action that ultimately He will punish the wicked and reward the obedient and those who persevere in doing His will? Because God wants everyone to know that He is supreme and His Word is over all.

This time I encourage you to come back from Moab, to return from sin, and back to the house of God and back to the ministry and to the calling of God and what He needs you to do. Don’t wait late and don’t wait for another blow to decide to come back.

My Prayer: Father God, I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I thank you for the teaching that I had received from your Word, and the rebuke that I received in this message that made my faith sound.

Lord I repent from the following sins _____. Lord I renounce worldliness, doing my own will, unfaithfulness, departing from you, non willingness to suffer, taking my own decision and non willingness to serve you.

Lord I commit myself to the principles that I received from your Word. Lord I am going back to you, to your word, and to your will and to the plan that you had ordained for me. Lord I cast my burden unto you because I know you love me, you care for me and you will restore me. Lord gives me more of the fruit of the Holy Spirit to have the character and the attitude of Jesus in my life. Lord fill me with the Holy Spirit to go and preach your Word and to evangelize and to reach new people and to disciple them.

Lord I pray for my Brothers and Sisters who committed themselves to the principle of this message of yours and humble themselves before you to obey and apply your Word in their lives, Lord bless them, give them more grace, Lord comfort them and lift them up in due time. Lord care for them and solve their problems.

Lord I pray that you will go before us as a church and lead us to streets, buildings, cities, villages to reach new people and to bring Jesus into their lives. Lord helps us that our life example will be attractive to others to know you and to follow you. Lord refills us once again with the Holy Spirit so that we can go and evangelize and make new disciples and complete the work that you ordained for us to do. Lord fulfill your vision to the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God’. Lord helps us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us and enlarge our

territory let your hands be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain.
May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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