

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz Production
Week 23
Ruth

I'd like to begin with a question that I hope you would take some time to consider: If you believed that today was your last day on earth, how would you live your life differently?

I've been thinking a lot about that question this week. And I have to tell you how different I feel because of it. Those things that I thought were important and suddenly not. Those moments that I casually brushed aside before are suddenly precious moments to remember and cherish. Even silly things; like yesterday I needed to go to the gas station to get some fuel for the lawn mower and my daughter asked me if she could go with me and if I could teach her how to pump gas. Normally I would just do it and have her watch so I could get it done quickly. But as I considered this question it became very important that I teach her to pump gas and to let her do it so she has that knowledge if I'm not here to help her in the future.

It truly is a powerful question, one that will give you more patients when driving and the strength to not waste a moment doing things that have no lasting joy. Like watching TV, The desire just disappears. However, playing catch with my son; that is now top of my list of things to do.

The reason I am asking you to consider this question is because we have 2 important moments in the week's study that reflect these very important decisions in our lives. The book of Ruth is inspiring and heart breaking but it will help us make those life altering decisions if our eyes are open to it.

The story begins with a small family that is caught in a famine. Some scholars believe that this story would have fit into the timeline of the book of Judges chapter 10. There is a great famine in the land. People are struggling and times are hard. Naomi and her Husband Elimelech have 2 sons and have to make a very difficult decision. Do they stay in the land of their inheritance or go somewhere where they can find food and employment? Just for the record the correct decision would have been to stay and trust God to provide for them. Elimelech however, does not have the faith to trust God. Even though his name in Hebrew means; My God is king. In his mind at that time "his King" was his desire to make money. He leaves the land of his inheritance and moves his family to Moab. Not a great place to go, and it ended up costing him his life and the life of his two sons.

Now Maomi is a widow in a strange land with two daughters in law and in those days it was not as gender friendly as we are today. Back then a woman could not own land or even have a job to earn money to support a family. She was stuck, with nowhere to go but home. Chapter 1 verse 6 tells she finds out that back home that "the Lord had visited her people in giving them bread". So she packs up and leaves but there is a small problem, both of her daughters in law are Moabites. And now that their husbands are dead they have no familial commitment to stay with Maomi. And on top of that the children of Israel did not like the Moabites and it would not be a great place for them to go. So, Naomi turns to her to Daughters in law and says in verse 8

"Go, return each to her mothers house; the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me"

After a little back and forth Orpah says “ok” and she leaves, but Ruth decides to stay. This is the second major decision that we are studying this week. This is a major decision for Ruth. One that must be decided based on the promptings of the Holy Spirit. This is the lesson to learn this week. When we have major decisions to make in our lives are we turning to God and asking for direction or are we just casually going through life deciding based on our own logic and feelings. This can have a great impact on how things turn out. God wants to guide us to Safety and joy. Just as you care about how your children learn and grow. He has blessed all of us with that intuition, the consciousness or gut feeling that tells us that this is an important moment that we need to take seriously.

Ruth is a convert to the Gospel and learning quickly. I believe she had one of those feelings and looked deep into her soul to decide if she was going to listen to that voice and stay with Naomi, and she had the faith as well. Verse 16:

“And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.”

She is Saying to her mother in law, No matter what, I am going to stay with you. And perhaps she didn't fully understand what that ment, but she was following the spirit and that is the most important thing. But why? Why is this such an important decision? If you do a little research you will see that this decision made on this dusty road in Moab affected the entire course of the universe. That one small decision affected you and me today. Let me show you why.

When Naomi and Ruth got back to Bethlehem they didn't have anything. They were left to glean in the fields for food. In that region at that time, there were tons of farms and fields that grew barley. Bethlehem in Hebrew means house of bread. That's what that city was known for in the production industry; bread makers. So, you have these huge barley fields and the farmers would harvest the barley in the spring, you'll find this in chapter 1 verse 22. What would happen is the farmers would go through and harvest about 75% of the field and then they would not make a second pass to get it all but they would leave it for the poor to come in and harvest the rest. This was God's way of taking care of the poor in that day.

So Ruth asks her mother in law if she can go to the fields to glean the barley to give them food. Well, It just happened to be that she went to the field owned by Boaz. The reason I say it that way is because sometimes in our lives if we are striving to choose the right and follow the spirit things just happen that are small miracles that we may not even see. We just happen to be at the right place at the right time. I promise you that this happens more that we think, and a lot more often than we realize.

So, Ruth just happens to go to Boaz's field. There was a custom in that day that when a husband dies that next of kin would take the land and care for the widow and children of that man. In this case Naomi needed to get her land back, in order to do that someone (a Male) related to her husband needed to buy that land. Well, this wasn't Boaz, but he was the right guy for the job. Boaz and Ruth hit it off and he goes to the actual next in line and gives him this sales pitch. This is in Chapter 4; He brings 10 men with him as witnesses, and says to this guy: there is this land that belongs to our relative Elimelech. It's yours if you want it, but there is a catch

that you need to be aware of. If you buy that land you have to take the girl with it, and if you don't want it then I will take it and the girl with it. This guy who is unnamed, says Dude, I want the land but I'm already married and I already have kids. I can't take the land and marry someone else that will mess up my Inheritance and everything else that I have built. So Boaz buys that land and marries Ruth. That is obviously the short, modern version of the story. But... It is not the end of the story.

Naomi gets her land back and is taken care of by Boaz and Ruth and they live happily ever after. And this is where it gets really good.

Boaz and Ruth have a child by the name of Obed

Obed born in Bethlehem has a son named Jesse

Jesse also born in Bethlehem had a son David

This is the same David that fought Goliath and became king David. The direct bloodline of Jesus Christ our Savior. Born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem.

Now we can see how important that was for Ruth to make that decision on the dirt road to follow Naomi back home. Had she not followed the spirit she would have lost all those amazing blessings that God had in store for her in her earthly life and in her eternal posterity.

Just as God cared for and provided for Ruth, He cares and provides for you. All that He asks is that we follow his spirit, His direction and he will lead you along. He will not fail you or forsake you if you will not fail nor forsake him. Of this truth I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.