

## Resolve

Ruth 1:6-18

### Introduction:

1. The first few verses of Ruth 1 gave us a very bleak setting for the story
  - a. Famine, failure and fatalities brought great ruin
  - b. Things got darker and darker
2. But here we see the first rays of light starting to break through the darkness
3. Naomi decides that it is time to return to Bethlehem
  - a. Ruth resolves to go with Naomi to Bethlehem
  - b. Both of these women go from ruin to rewards
4. Last week we saw the graves of the three husbands and now we see the grief of the three widows
  - a. One is a troubling example
  - b. Another is a tragic example
  - c. The third is a thrilling example
5. The good news was received that the famine was over – vs 6
  - 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.
  - a. “The Lord had visited His people”
    1. The famine had been caused by sin and here we see God’s grace
    2. Israel didn’t deserve it, but God visited His people with blessing
  - b. “in giving them bread”
    1. “giving” says that the food was free from God
    2. He supplied the rain that grew the food for the people
    3. This reminds us that our salvation is a free gift  
Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
  - c. There was proclaiming of the message
    1. That Naomi heard the message tells us that someone was proclaiming the good news of bread in Bethlehem
    2. We need to be spreading the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ
  - d. There is a separation message here
    1. To go to Bethlehem, Naomi had to leave Moab
    2. If we would eat at the Father’s table, we must leave the swine-troughs of the world
    3. Scriptures tells us to come out from the world – 2Cor 6:17  
17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
    4. You cannot receive the blessings of Bethlehem while staying in Moab
      - a. You can’t be converted and stay in the world
      - b. You can’t love God and the world at the same time
      - c. Lu 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
      - d. 1Jo 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

## **I. Naomi Was A Discouraging Widow**

- We have seen her disobedient walk
- Here we hear her discouraging words
- She was still in Moab, though steps were taken to begin the return to Bethlehem
- Naomi illustrates how the life of a believer that is not living for God is often a discouragement to others knowing God

### **A. Naomi Was Being Observed – vs 6-7**

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. 7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

1. Orpah and Ruth were from Moab
  - a) *They had grown up in a land of idolatry*
  - b) *They were reared in a place that did not know the true /living God*
  - c) *They had lived lives of spiritual desolation and darkness*
2. But Naomi was from Bethlehem
  - a) *She knew the true and living God*
  - b) *Naomi was a believer, but Ruth and Orpah were not believers*
3. Naomi had departed from the land of God and she had been disciplined by the hand of God
  - a) *Now she was taking steps to return to Bethlehem*
  - b) *Her daughters-in-law followed her*
4. In their hour of despair, Ruth and Orpah were looking to Naomi for direction and guidance
  - a) *Each action and step of Naomi was being observed*
  - b) *They would do what she was doing*
5. Believers must continually be reminded that we are being watched by unbelievers
  - a) *Whether we accept it or not – acknowledge it or not*
  - b) *Someone said that believers might be the only Bible some people will ever see*

### **B. Naomi Was Being Obstructive**

- Ruth and Orpah resolved to follow Naomi to Bethlehem
  - Naomi tests the strength of their resolutions
  - There were three separate tests of their resolutions
1. The Test of Prosperity – vs 8-9

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

    - a) *The first test had to do with prosperity*
    - b) *There would be more prosperity for Ruth / Orpah in Moab*
    - c) *They could live in their mother's houses and Naomi could not promise a house for them in Bethlehem*
    - d) *The rich young ruler let prosperity destroy his resolve to follow Christ*
    - e) *Both women passed this test – vs 9-10*
    - f) *Many daily fail the test of prosperity and throw away their character*

2. The Test of Problems

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

- a) *There was a lot of emotion in this testing – “kissed”, “wept”*
- b) *Resolve must be built on more than emotion – it must also be built on facts*
- c) *They could find rest (marriage) in Moab and Naomi could not promise marriage in Bethlehem*
- d) *In this day, women needed to be married to live prosperously*
- e) *Naomi would have no more children – vs 11-12 ←*
- f) *Beware of making decisions only based on emotion – they won’t last*
- g) *Feelings change so quickly, but facts will remain through sunshine and rain*
- h) *The response to the test of problems – vs 13-14 ←*

3. The Test of Popularity – vs 15

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

- a) *Only Ruth is left – Orpah returned to Moab*
- b) *Here Naomi urges Ruth to return to Moab with Orpah*

## **II. Orpah Was A Departing Widow**

- After starting the trip to Bethlehem she turned back
- She turned away from God and refused to believe in Him

### **A. Returning to Moab – vs 14**

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

1. See the tears and hear the sobs of separation
2. Orpah decides to return to Moab
  - a) *She kisses Naomi, says “good-bye” and starts back*
  - b) *Naomi discouraged Orpah, but ultimately the decision was Orpah’s*
  - c) *There was some fanfare here*
3. She reminds us of someone who is “almost” saved
  - a) *Someone starts reading his Bible*
  - b) *He begins attending church faithfully*
  - c) *But that is all, maybe it was emotional*
  - d) *It is not real, it does not last*
  - e) *She loved God some, but she loved Moab more*
4. She is like Lot’s wife – who began leaving Sodom
  - a) *She stopped and looked back*
  - b) *She couldn’t bear to leave*

### **B. Continuing in Moab**

1. This is the last time that we ever see or hear of Orpah
2. The rest of her story is not given in God’s Word
  - a) *She probably returned to Moab*
  - b) *Maybe she found a husband and lived a good life*
  - c) *But she probably remained lost – we don’t know*
3. It is sad to see someone turn his back on the gospel and reject Christ

### **III. A Deciding Widow – vs 14**

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

- She became a believer in God
- She started out on the journey to Bethlehem and continued
- Her resolve has been used in the vows of many a wedding ceremony

#### **A. Ruth's Decision Gave Her A New Life – vs 16-17**

16 And Ruth said, Intreat 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: 17 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.

1. Ruth's decision led her to a new life
  - a) *She was leaving a cursed land for a blessed land*
  - b) *She was leaving a place of spiritual darkness for a place of spiritual light*
  - c) *She was leaving a life of idolatry for a life of serving the true and living God*
  - d) *She left the land of the curse for the land of the covenant*
2. Salvation gives a person a new life – 2Cor 5:17

17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- a) *Someone was speaking on a street corner and said, "Socialism will give you a new job. Socialism will give you a new house. Socialism will give you a new coat to wear. Can anyone tell me anything that is better than that?" Someone in the crowd shouted, "Yes, I can! Salvation in Jesus Christ. Salvation will put a new man on the job; salvation will put a new man in the house and a new man in the coat."*

#### **B. Ruth's Decision Gave Here A New Lord – vs 16 ←**

1. No doubt she had worshipped the false gods and idols of Moab
  - a) *She had only known paganism*
  - b) *But now she has a new Lord in her life*
  - c) *There is a separation here from the old life, the old gods*
2. Her life is now centered around the God of Israel and His people
3. Before God saved us, our gods were riches, recreation, and reputation
4. We now have a new Lord and Master
5. We no longer bow to the gods of this world, we bow at the feet of the blessed Savior

#### **C. Ruth's Decision Gave Her A New Loyalty – vs 17**

17 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.

1. Ruth was saying, "This decision is for the rest of my life"
2. She had no plans to return or go back to Moab
3. Just like, you and I have no plans to return to the world
4. We have fullness and hope, why go back to a life of hopelessness and emptiness?
5. Ten thousand times no!
6. There is nothing behind us and everything before us.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me?  
are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?  
12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an  
husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to  
night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them  
from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for  
your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. 14 And they  
lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law;  
but Ruth clave unto her.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat 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: