

Return

Ruth 1:19-22

Introduction:

1. Ruth's earnest resolve to stay with Naomi led Ruth to faithfully accompany Naomi in her return to Bethlehem
 - a. No details of the traveling from Moab to Bethlehem are recorded
 - b. Scripture jumps from Ruth's resolve to the arrival in Bethlehem
2. That Scripture does not recount the trip back to Bethlehem reminds us that much of following the will of God is a simple, step-by-step, day-by-day walk w/ God
 - a. It may not be very exciting and glamorous
 - b. Faithfulness in the ordinary is the key to achievement /accomplishment in life
3. Naomi and Ruth found blessings in Bethlehem, but to get there they had to endure a monotonous, slow, uneventful, tiring trip from Moab
4. Let that encourage and inspire us to be faithful in day to day duties

I. **Completing of the Return – vs 19, 22**

A. **Arrival of the Two**

19a So they two went until they came to Bethlehem...

1. We see two arrived in Bethlehem – not just one
2. This was a demonstration of the resolve of Ruth
 - a) *She had said, "Wither thou goest, I will go"*
 - b) *They were eloquent and beautiful words, but they were only words*
 - c) *Words are great, but action is more important*
3. We live in an age when the emphasis is on intentions and statements
 - a) *Some say wonderful things, but their conduct does not match up*
 - b) *Politicians are notorious for this*
 - c) *Some church members have great words but little conduct*

B. **Agreement of the Two**

19a So they two went until they came to Bethlehem...

1. These two traveled to Bethlehem because they were in agreement

Am 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

 - a) *The obvious answer to the question of Amos is "no"*
 - b) *There must be agreement if two are going to walk together*
2. Their interests, aims, goals and objectives were the same
3. If you want fellowship with others, you need to have the same goals and interests – this is true in churches
 - a) *Some want to play ball when they come to church while others want Bible study*
 - b) *Some want their church to be a religious country club and others want church to be a worship center*
 - c) *Some members want a Moab church while others want a Bethlehem church*
 - d) *By the looks of things the Moab crowd is winning out*
4. The early church had great spiritual fellowship because they were in agreement ←

C. Ardency of the Two

19a So they two went until they came to Bethlehem...

1. We see ardency, tenacity and stamina here
2. They did not quit until they reached Bethlehem
3. After crossing the Jordan River it might have been tempting to settle somewhere before making the 2000 foot climb to Bethlehem
 - a) *They didn't quit or give up*
 - b) *They continued until the end*
 - c) *Had they quit, there would have been no husband, baby for Ruth*
 - d) *Ruth would not have become the ancestress of Christ*
4. You will never accomplish much in life without this persistence
 - a) *If there is no persistence in your pursuit then there will be no productivity in your pursuit*
 - b) *2Th 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.*
 - c) *Ga 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*
5. The reaping comes when we persist and endure and don't quit

II. Commotion Over the Return – vs 19

- Naomi and Ruth did not walk into Bethlehem unnoticed
- Bethlehem was a small town so their return was quickly noticed
- There was a great stir when Naomi / Ruth arrived

A. Extent of the Commotion – vs 19

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

1. “All” shows the extent of the commotion in Bethlehem
2. It was not just a relative or a neighbor but “all” the town
3. The return of Naomi was the topic of conversation in the gate
4. It was the main topic of conversation for the ladies at the well
5. In today's language it would have been headline news

B. The Question in the Commotion

19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

1. The people of Bethlehem were puzzled when they saw Naomi
2. Puzzled about her appearance
 - a) *The appearance of poverty and stress were evident on Naomi*
 - b) *She had formerly been quite well-to-do but was now obviously in dire want*
 - c) *Like the prodigal son she left in riches and returned in want*
 - d) *The scars of sin are often evident in the lives of people*
3. Puzzled about Ruth
 - a) *People would probably be puzzled about who was with Naomi and who was not with Naomi*
 - (1) What happened to Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon?
 - (2) Who is this girl with you?
 - b) *People might be uneasy since Ruth was a Moabite*
 - c) *Ruth's excellent faith and conduct soon made her well accepted*

III. Complaint in the Return – vs 20, 21

- Naomi's response to the people of Bethlehem was a complaining response
- She interpreted her circumstances in a dark and dismal way
- This was not a good example to Ruth of faith in God
- Naomi's complaining was fourfold

A. Bitter – vs 20

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

1. This was not a good starting comment to make
2. What else could be expected after ten years of delinquency outside the will of God?
3. Disobedience does not make one's speech sweet, but sour
4. "Call me not Naomi, call me Mara"
 - a) *Naomi means pleasant and Mara means bitter*
 - b) *Naomi's life had not been pleasant for a long time*
 - c) *In Bethlehem, the bitterness would be replaced with joy*
5. "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me"
 - a) *Naomi accused God of making her bitter*
 - b) *What an evil and unjustified charge against God*
 - c) *This is just a symptom of the Adamic nature*
 - (1) Remember that Adam blamed God for giving him the woman who caused him to sin
 - (2) We always want to blame others – even God
 - d) *Naomi was reaping the fruit of disobedience and backsliding – it was not God's fault*

B. Bankrupt – vs 21a

21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi...

1. Naomi was empty
 - a) *She was empty of family*
 - (1) Her husband and sons died
 - (2) Sin empties people of their families – adultery, gambling, abortion, liquor and impurity
 - b) *She was empty of her fortune*
 - (1) She left Bethlehem full and came back empty
 - (2) When we live in sin our fortunes will fly away
 - (3) Sin empties the pocketbook
 - c) *She was empty of faith*
 - (1) Her speech evidenced the loss of faith
 - (2) This is more tragic than loss of family and fortune
 - (3) This is the worst emptiness of all
2. "The LORD hath brought me home again"
 - a) *Naomi spoke well of Jehovah here*
 - b) *Only by God's grace was she still alive*
 - c) *God could have left her in Moab to experience more troubles*
 - d) *She left God when she was full and returned empty*
 - e) *Some have to be emptied before they will return to the Lord*

C. Blamed – vs 21b

21b... seeing the LORD hath testified against me...

1. Rather than being repentant, Naomi criticized God again
2. Again she blamed all her troubles on God
3. God did testify against her, but that is not a fault in God's character
4. At the GWT judgment, God will testify against the Christ rejecter
5. God's testimony will be factual and faithful, full and final

D. Broken – vs 21

21c ...and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

1. "afflicted" = to break, to break in pieces
2. Naomi is speaking of the affliction and hurt of God's chastisement
3. God broke up her home
4. God broke her will to get her back to Bethlehem
5. Heb 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.
6. The pitchers with the torches inside had to be broken so the light would shine forth
7. Sometimes God has to break someone before He can use them

IV. Crops in the Return – vs 22

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

1. This verse tells us that Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem in April which is the month in which the barley ripened in Israel
2. As Naomi approached Bethlehem she could see the fields of barley ready for harvest
3. This was proof of the truthfulness of the message that Naomi had heard in Moab
4. That barley harvest would soon provide ample food for Naomi / Ruth
5. Barley harvest was a time of joy
 - a) *In Moab she had known sadness – three graves proved that*
 - b) *Here was joy in returning to Bethlehem*
 - c) *Disobedience brings sadness – obedience brings joy*

- d) *Ac 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*
- e) *Ac 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*
- f) *Ac 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,*
- g) *Ac 4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:*