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# GETTING TO KNOW HIM

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## Part 4 – The God of Hope in the Hopeless Situation

Ruth 1:1-21



# Ruth 1:1

<sup>1</sup> In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.

# Ruth 1:2

<sup>2</sup> The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

# Ruth 1:3-4

<sup>3</sup> Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup> They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years,

# Ruth 1:5

<sup>5</sup> both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

# Ruth 1:6

**6** When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there.

# Ruth 1:7

**<sup>7</sup> With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.**

# Ruth 1:8

**<sup>8</sup> But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the Lord reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me.**



# Ruth 1:9

**<sup>9</sup> May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage.”**

**Then she kissed them good-bye,  
and they all broke down and  
wept.**

# Ruth 1:10

<sup>10</sup> “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”

# Ruth 1:11

**11 But Naomi replied, “Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands?”**

# Ruth 1:12

**12 No, my daughters, return to your parents' homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what?**

# Ruth 1:13

**13 Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me.”**

# Ruth 1:14

**14 And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi.**

# Ruth 1:15

**15 “Look,” Naomi said to her,  
“your sister-in-law has gone  
back to her people and to her  
gods. You should do the  
same.”**

# Ruth 1:16

**16 But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”**



# Ruth 1:17

**17** Wherever you die, I will die,  
and there I will be buried. May  
the Lord punish me severely if I  
allow anything but death to  
separate us!”

# Ruth 1:18

**18** When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

# Ruth 1:19

**19 So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”**

# Ruth 1:20

<sup>20</sup> “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.”

# Ruth 1:21

**21 I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”**

# Ruth 1:22

**22** So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

# Background to the Text

# The Realities of Widowhood:

- Women didn't work; no income
- Women couldn't own land; no security
- Widows were forgotten and not cared for by society
- Childless widows had no future
- Widowhood came with a stigma: wife wasn't right with God



# PRINCIPLE #1

Suffering doesn't always mean we are being punished or that we need to "get right with God".

# Ignorantly Blaming the Victim:

- God caused the famine, because Israel was so evil (v.1)
- God was angry with Elimelek, because he took his family to Moab (v.1)
- God was angry with Elimelek's sons, because they married Moabite women (v.4)

# Ruth 1:6

<sup>6</sup> When Naomi heard in Moab that **the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them**, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there.

# Ruth 4:15

**15 ... your daughter in law who loves you has been better to you than seven sons!**

## PRINCIPLE #2

Just because God allows certain things to pass through His permissive will, that doesn't make Him the author of bitterness, affliction, or misfortune.

## **PRINCIPLE #3**

**In our sufferings, we're constantly tempted to think that God does not really care about our situation, our suffering, or our pain.**

## PRINCIPLE #4

God is NOT the cause of unjust suffering, God does NOT delight in our suffering, and God is NOT cruel to us in order to teach us a lesson.

# PRINCIPLE #5

Suffering is NOT the end of the story, it's only a part of the story.



# Ruth 4:13

**13 So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.**

# Ruth 4:14

**14 Then the women of the town said to Naomi, “Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel.**

# Ruth 4:15

**15 May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!”**

# PRINCIPLE #6

God NEVER wastes pain! The  
Lord is the God of ALL  
Comfort

# **2 Corinthians 1:3**

**<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ, the  
Father of compassion and the  
God of all comfort,**

# 2 Corinthians 1:4

<sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

# 2 Corinthians 1:5

<sup>5</sup> For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

# 2 Corinthians 1:6

**6 If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.**



# 2 Corinthians 1:7

<sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

H.O.P.E

**HOLD ON.**

**PAIN ENDS.**

# PRINCIPLE #7

God has a Holy, Good,  
Perfect, and Loving overall  
plan for the world and for His  
children.

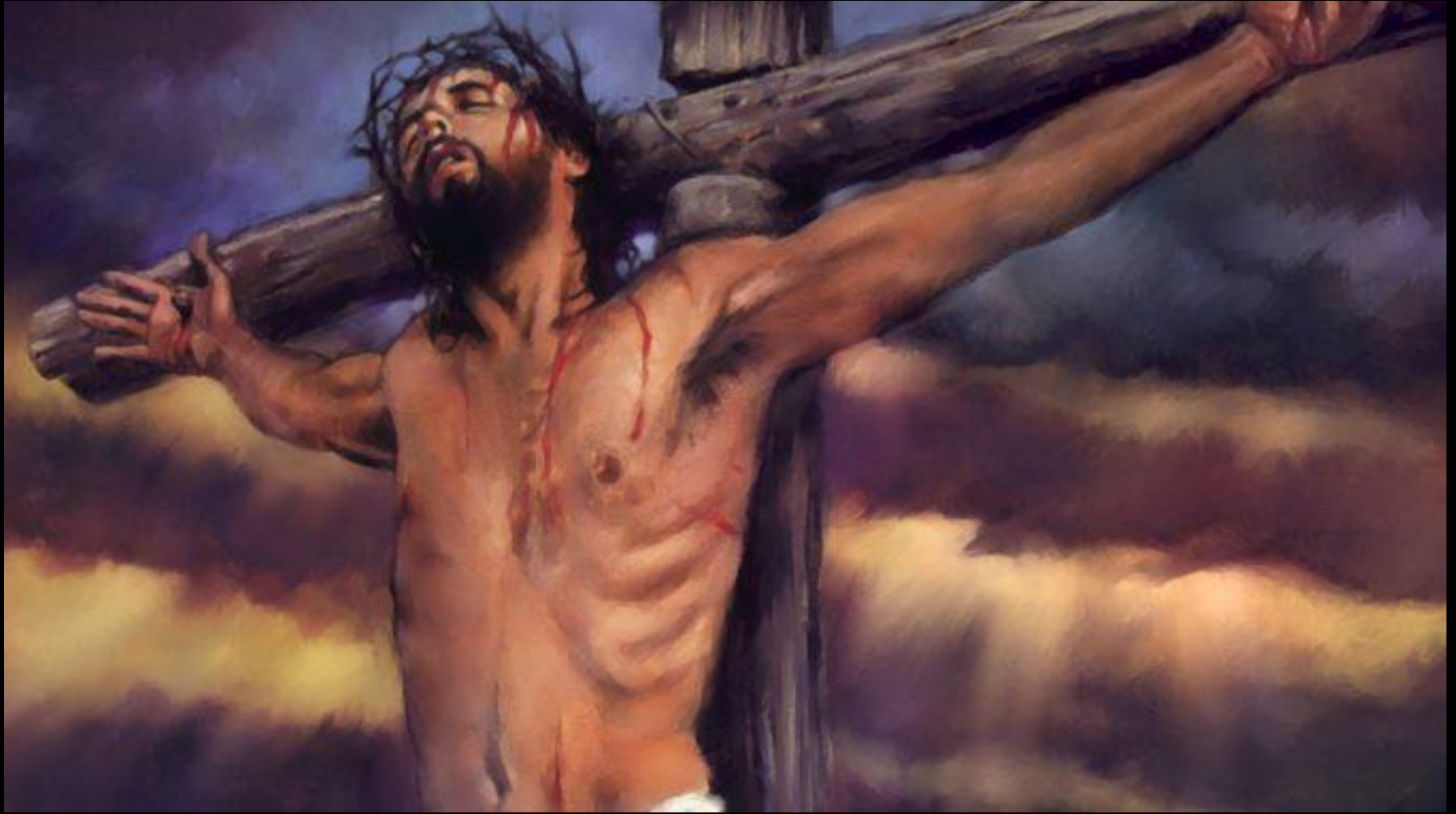
# Ruth 4:16

**16 Naomi took the baby and  
cuddled him to her breast. And  
she cared for him as if he were  
her own.**

# Ruth 4:17

**17** The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

**Don't Allow Suffering to Distort**



**the Reality of God's True Character**