

CHRIST EMPOWERED

Freedom

The Book of Ruth

Part 12

**If You Want to Live Free,
Your Circumstances
Must Be Filtered Thru the
Entirety of the Scriptures**

Ruth 1:1

In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him.

Ruth 1:2

The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

Ruth 1:3-4

Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth.

Ruth 1:5

But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

Ruth 1:6

Then Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland.

Ruth 1:7

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

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

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

“No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”

Ruth 1:11

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

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

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

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

Ruth 1:15

“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

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

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

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

Ruth 1:19

So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked.

Ruth 1:20

“Don’t call me Naomi,”
she responded. “Instead, call me
Mara, for the Almighty has made life
very bitter for me.”

Ruth 1:21

I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?"

Ruth 1:22

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.

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Principle #1

Our life circumstances are not always an accurate reflection of whether we are righteous or unrighteous before God.

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But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

Naomi's Circumstances

- **Women did not work, so they could not generate their own income.**
- **Women could not own land, so they had no security.**

Naomi's Circumstances

- **Childless widows had no hope for the future.**
- **Widowhood came with a stigma, which was that the woman was somehow not right with God.**

Naomi's Circumstances

- **Widows, especially childless widows, were often forgotten and abandoned, even though God had made specific laws about taking care of them.**

Evaluating Circumstances

- **Sins with direct consequences**
- **Christian vs. Church Attendee**
- **Comfort and Ease:**
 - **Current prosperity**
 - **Safe city, safe country**

Evaluating Our Circles

- **Self**
- **Family: Immediate/Extended**
- **Friends**
- **Neighbors**
- **Co-Workers**

Principle #1

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Principle #2

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

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Principle #3

When our life circumstances are full of pain, suffering, or brokenness; we must avoid making or accepting ignorant, false conclusions.

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Ignorant Conclusions

- **Elimelech sinned when he took Naomi to Moab during the famine.** (Jacob, Elijah, Elisha)
- **Mahlon & Kilion sinned marrying Moabites.** (Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Ruth)

Ignorant Conclusions

- **Naomi's circumstances were the consequences of her family's sins.**
- **Naomi thought that God had raised His fist against her to make her life bitter. (v.13, 20)**

Ignorant Conclusions

- **Naomi thought it was better for Orpah to go back to her people's gods instead of the God of Israel.**

Ruth 1:15

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

Principle #3

When our life circumstances are full of pain, suffering, or brokenness we must avoid making or accepting ignorant false conclusions.

Principle #4

Living free regardless of our circumstances ultimately comes down to knowing the Father's heart, while we balance the Letter of the Law with the Spirit of the Law.

Principle #5

Faithfully and biblically speaking, pain, suffering, and brokenness are NOT the end of our story, they are only a part of God's story.

Ruth 4:13

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

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

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!”

Ruth 4:16

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

Ruth 4:17

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.

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