

ORPAH'S CHOICE

--RUTH 1:1-14--

INTRODUCTION:

As promised last week we begin the book of Ruth this morning and it will be like a breath of fresh air after the book of Judges. The book of Judges ends by telling us that there was no king in Israel, the book of Ruth ends with the significant name of David, from a state of lawlessness, corruption and decay of authority, to the birth of the man who was to be God's chosen king, the man after God's own heart, who was to save the people of Israel from their enemies, who was to rule over Israel in the fear of God, and was to prepare for the building of the house of God, the temple, in Jerusalem. We will see that the book of Ruth was written and placed where we find it in our Bibles for the express purpose of showing us that even while sin and corruption were abounding and spreading seemingly without restraint or hindrance, the LORD, the God of Israel, was working, and His working was not seen by man, but He was working in order to bring about in due time His own remedy to the situation in Israel that seemed beyond remedy and it is only God's remedy that will bring about the needed change in Israel.

I. MOAB (Ruth 1:1-5)

- a. The book of Ruth begins by informing us that the history surrounding the people in this book took place when the _____ governed the people of Israel. (Judges 6:1-6)
- b. The author has given us a time period and a place and the circumstances surrounding this place and now he narrows this history down to one _____ that is living in Bethlehem.
- c. The author goes on to _____ the man and his family that he took with him down into Moab.
- d. Did the family learn from Elimelech's death, not at all because the next thing that we read is that the two sons took wives from among the daughters of _____.
- e. It is often when things are at their very _____ that God comes in and shows Himself to be, as Romans 4:17 describes Him,

“... even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.” (Romans 4:17b, NASB95)

- f. As we think about the far-reaching and _____ effects that come about from the events which begin with God's mercy being poured out on the dead house of Elimelech, we must look on with awe and wonder as we consider the way in which God, working in the background quietly intervened to restore the destitute remnant of this family, and doing so in preparation of making this family the instrument of His eternal purpose, and His channel of blessing to the whole world.

II. THE GOOD NEWS (Ruth 1:6-7)

- a. As we come to verse six, we have three destitute widows with no apparent hope as they look into the future. The remarkable thing about these verses is that within them we find the _____ point in the history of this family.
- b. This is a wonderful illustration of the Gospel, the good news which tells of what the Lord has _____ for those who deserve only His condemnation and wrath.
- c. Within these verses we also find a wonderful illustration of the effect of the Gospel on all who hear it with the “hearing of _____.”
- d. What Naomi heard in the land of Moab, and what reached her heart and became the turning point in her life was simply “that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food,” or more literally _____.
- e. The natural man whose heart is corrupted by sin is reluctant to _____ his hopelessness as a guilty sinner and his utter helplessness to do anything for his own salvation.
- f. The words, “...*the LORD had visited His people,*” (Ruth 1:6b, NASB95) remind me of the prophecy of the old priest Zacharias after the birth of his son, John the Baptist, he spoke of the imminent coming of Jesus Christ as _____.
- g. Naomi's faith in the word that reached her in the country of Moab was quickly shown in her _____.

III. FAITH TESTED (Ruth 1:8-14)

- a. Naomi departed with so much energy of _____ that she carried along with her, her two daughters-in-law.
- b. Both Orpah and Ruth accompanied Naomi when she _____ to return to the land of Judah.
- c. Those who truly believe the Gospel of God, with its exceeding great and precious promises, walk by _____ and accept as true what is written in God's Word.
- d. These two women, outwardly, in regard to their conduct and also in regard to the character and disposition of each did not make one _____ over the other.
- e. God's Word is clear that a lovely disposition, a tender affectionate heart, faithfulness in fulfilling one's obligations, and in general a good person, though as excellent as these things are in themselves, they will not take you to _____.

CONCLUSION:

Naomi was fair and truthful with her daughters-in-law, showing them that she could not offer them anything that the natural heart would desire. In the same way, the Word of God does not promise worldly advantages to the one who puts their faith in Jesus Christ. It clearly states that in this world they who follow Christ will have tribulation and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Even with that clearly stated, the life of the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only life that is worth living in this world. The question must be asked, how many friendly, good-natured, tender-hearted, and affectionate "Orpahs" are there among our friends, our family members, and our acquaintances? What about you? You have heard the Gospel message if you have attended this church, have you believed it and acted on it by faith? Or do you believe that you are good enough to get to heaven on your own? Or do you believe you will get to heaven because your family believed or always went to church? If you believe any of these things, you will be disappointed on judgment day when the Lord Jesus says that He never knew you. If you have never believed and acted on the Gospel, do so today.