

~ Ruth's Love for God ~

Text: Ruth 1:1-18

Theme: Personal commitment to God is much more important than a family that just attends church.

Intro:

1. The events of the book of Ruth occur during the time of the judges, when there was no king in Israel.
 - a. The book records God's dealings with a Moabite woman named Ruth, who was willing to leave her home country and the gods of her people in order to serve the God of Israel and be counted with the people of God.
 - b. The book is generally taken to be a picture of God's redemptive work.
 - i. Boaz, who is the kinsman redeemer, pictures the Lord Jesus Christ who redeems his bride out of the world unto himself.
 - ii. Ruth pictures the child of the world who is redeemed by Christ and made his bride.
2. We will focus our attention on verse 16-18 for our study today and consider Ruth's godly character under two headings:
 - a. Ruth's rejection of worldly priorities (Vs 1-15)
 - b. Ruth's adoption of godly priorities (Vs 16-18)

Main:

- I. **Ruth's Rejection of Worldly Priorities (Vs 1-15)**
 - A. Ruth Rejected Worldly Places (Her Home, Moab)
 1. Ruth's decision not to return home meant giving up certain things which.
 - a. Moab was where she had been raised, but Bethlehem was foreign to her.
 - i. Ruth was willing to leave the place in where she was most comfortable in order to go to the place where God wanted her to be.
 - ii. As Christians, it isn't enough to surrender to serve God here. We need to be surrendered to serve God wherever he would have us to be.
 - iii. The place of service is just as important as the mode of service. You need to be willing to let God take your family wherever he wants to take you and be ready to serve God wherever he would have you to be.

- b. Moab was where she would find security in her father's house, but Bethlehem meant learning to depend on God.
- i. If Ruth had returned home, she would have found a place in her father's house and been provided for by her father, but in leaving Moab she was embarking on a journey that require her to learn dependence upon God for her daily provisions.
 - ii. In the past, there have been men who were called of God to go to the mission field, but who never made it there because their wife refused to go. She was unwilling to trust God with their needs and so the family never went.
 - iii. It has often been said, "Before you set out to serve God, count the cost." There are sacrifices that often must be made in order to serve God in the place that he wants you, and you will need to learn to depend upon God.
 - The world says that you shouldn't have any children because it's too expensive and you need to be a two-income household.
God's words says, **(Psalm 127:3)** *"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."*
You may need to trust God with your finances and begin having the family that God intended you to have.
 - The world says that you need to be a financially independent woman but the Bible instructs men to be providers and women to be keepers of the home.
Titus 2:4-5 *"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."*
That isn't to say that women can't help with the finances, but God's plan is that the husband will be the main provider so that his wife can focus on looking after the home.

B. Ruth Rejected Worldly Practices (Her Home Religion)

1. The religion of Moab

- a. Ruth's rejection of Moab meant a rejection of its gods.
 - i. The main god worshiped in Moab was the god Chemosh. The Mesha Stele, found in Moab, accredits this god with delivering Moab from the total domination of Israel.

- ii. Like many gods of the heathens, this god was worshiped in temples through incense and sacrifices, including child sacrifice. The King of Moab sacrifices his own son to Chemosh to secure his aid in battle against the Israelites.
 - b. Ruth rejected the god Chemosh and in doing so she rejected the religion of her family.
 - i. It is hard to choose to serve God when it means going against your own family. Many people have refused to convert from Islam to Christianity because doing so would mean instant rejection by their family.
 - ii. Ruth showed her faith in God by choosing to be rejected by her family in order to be accepted by God.
 - When serving God faithfully means being unpopular with the family, you need to be man or woman of faith and choose to serve God anyway.
- 2. The marriages of Moab
 - a. Ruth chose to seek God rather than be married to an unbeliever
 - i. Naomi encouraged her daughters to return home to their father's house because there was no guarantee that they would find a husband in Israel.

If they stayed in Moab there was every likelihood that they would marry again and secure their future financially, but if they moved to Israel they could be seen as outsiders and be condemned to be widows for the rest of their lives.
 - ii. Despite the risk of a completely uncertain future, Ruth chose to go where the people of God were and serve the God of Israel and trust that he would secure her future.
 - b. The Bible instructs the Christian not to be unequally yoked with an unbeliever.
 - i. **Amos 3:3** *"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"*
 - ii. It makes it very hard to have harmony in the home when one of the parents is a Christian and the other isn't. When the parents have different world views it will create tension in the home because they will both be trying to create a home that fits their views, but their views are contrary to each other.
 - Most marriages, where one person is a Christian and the other isn't, result in a divorce, or else, they simply live together for convenience sake because they have very little in common other than their finances.

C. Ruth Rejected Worldly People (Her Own Family)

1. Ruth gave up everyone she had known in Moab to go and serve God in Israel.
 - a. This is actually a good picture of what the sinner must do in order to follow Christ.
 - i. The sinner must be prepared to surrender their lifestyle, their comforts, and even their family to follow Christ.
 - **Luke 14:26-27** *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."*
 - The verse doesn't mean you have to actually hate your family, but that you need to put Jesus Christ first in every aspect of your life. That means that he is more important to you than your family and, if your family isn't following Christ, they may feel as though you have rejected them for this Jesus you are following.
The up side is that, if your family is following Jesus too, you will all be putting him first and serving him together.
 - b. As sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us out of the world and brought us into his family.
 - i. The Bible commands the Christian to forsake the world and its materialistic philosophies, not because God wants to spoil our fun, but because we don't belong to the world anymore. We belong to Jesus Christ.
 - ii. **2 Corinthians 6:16-18** *"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."*
2. There is another important lesson to be learned from Ruth's rejection of worldly people and that is the need to protect the home against worldly influences.
 - a. As a mother or father in your home, you are the God ordained line of defence against the world.

- i. You children need you to protect them from the wickedness of the world in which you are trying to raise them.
 - Be very careful what movies and videos you let them watch. Most of the, so called, children's entertainment today is polluted with worldly ideas about authority in the home, divorce and remarriage, and gender confusion. Don't allow the world to brainwash your children through the entertainment industry.
 - Be careful who your children hang out with. The other kids in the neighbourhood may seem innocent enough but they are already being taught to idolise wickedness, and they can have a very harmful influence on your children if you don't protect your kids.
- ii. If you are a stay-at-home mum, then you are going to have to be very careful to remain on guard against these things.
 - When dad is out at work, you are at home on duty and you are on your own there. You need to be watching what is going on and who your children are interacting with.
 - Avoid people who have a bad influence on your kids, even if that means avoiding some of the family as much as possible. You would avoid them for your own sake, how much more should that be so for your children's sake.
- b. Ruth was willing to sacrifice all that she had known in order to pursue a relationship with God.

II. **Ruth's Adoption of Godly Priorities** (Vs 16-18)

A. Ruth prioritised the people of God

1. Ruth determined to go with Naomi and to with God's people.
 - a. You need to determine that you will be in church with God's people on Sunday.
 - i. Praise the Lord if you have a husband who or a wife who also wants to be in church and spend time with the people of God, but there are those whose spouse doesn't want that, and you have to be determined that you will go anyway.
 - ii. There is no better place for your children to be on Sunday than to be in church, hearing the Word of God taught and being invited to accept the gospel and be saved.

- b. Ruth was a foreigner in Israel, but she didn't let her peculiarity keep her from serving God.
- i. **1 Peter 2:9** *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”*
 - ii. Be prepared to be seen as a peculiar family by the world around you. There are many things we do or don't do as Christians that make us stand out from the world.
 - Many Christians do home schooling rather than letting the worldly public schools teach our children.
 - Going to church on Sunday, especially if you go twice.
 - Not letting our kids have a smartphone until they become responsible adults.
 - If you chose not to have a TV in the home and you choose not to let your boys play violent video games.
 - You don't allow foul language and you won't let your kids speak back to you because you are teaching them to respect authority.
- B. Ruth prioritised the pursuit of God
1. A personal relationship with God is more important than all the comforts and friendships of the world.
 - a. Ruth was a woman who put the pursuit of God before anything else, and God rewarded her for it.
 - i. Ruth had come to realised that a right relationship with the God of Israel was more important than anything Moab had to offer.
 - ii. As Christians, we should see our personal relationship with God as being of far greater importance than our friend groups, our career, or even our family ties.
 - Closeness with God is what will sustain you through life's trials, not social clubs or even a high paying job.
 - b. As it's Mother's Day today, I want to bring things back round to focus on the ladies here.
 - Your personal relationship with God is of much greater importance and value than the people you interact with, even on a daily basis.
 - If you are a mother, or are planning on being a mother one day, you need to make sure that, even in the busyness of looking after you children, maintaining a close relationship with God is what will help you to have the right perspective on your situation.

- If you want to be known as a godly Christian lady, then you need to spend time cultivating a close relationship with God and don't let the pressures and ideals of society keep you from fulfilling the role God has given you as a wife and mother in the home.
2. Naomi eventually recognised that Ruth was determined to go where God wanted to go and to pursue the God of Israel.
 - a. We all ought to be known for our determination to serve God and be a church that please Him.
 - i. Anyone can be known as a really pumped football fan. Anyone can be known as an enthusiastic tennis fan. Anyone can be known for their passion for reading or watching films. Those things are the gods they serve.
 - ii. Wouldn't you rather be known for your passion for serving the One true God? Wouldn't you rather be known for your love for Jesus Christ and your willingness to share Christ with others?
 - b. The challenge issued to Israel by Joshua is still the challenge of today.
 - i. **Joshua 24:15** *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

Conclusion:

1. Ruth's decision to leave Moab demonstrates that a true walk with God is more valuable than comfort, culture, possessions, religion, or even family ties. Have you made a close relationship with God a personal priority in your life, or do you keep God at a distance for fear that He will ask you to make certain changes in your life that will result in separation from the world?
2. Choose this day whom ye will serve. What sort of home will you create? A godly home in which Christ is honoured, or a worldly home in which the Holy Spirit is grieved?