

them wives of the women of Moab.

b. The sons continued down Dad's wrong road.

- 1) We find no indication that these young men turned their hearts toward God. They had merged into the sinful culture. They were so worldly that the Moabite fathers did not object to them marrying their daughters.
- 2) If they ever had a light to shine for the Lord, it had long ago blown out.
- 3) When a professing Christian **acts, talks, listens** and **looks** no different from his worldly peers, his testimony is worthless. God's command for us to separate from the world is to protect our spirituality, our character, our morality, and our testimony. (2 Corinthians 6:17)
"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"
- 4) **Peer pressure is so strong among young people that they desperately need help.** As parents, we must teach our children both **why** and **how** to live separated lives. Then we must **regularly inspect what we expect.**
- 5) In Moab, God's longsuffering eventually ran out and He caused both of the young men to die. Naomi was now left a childless widow in a pagan land.

📖 *Solomon warned, (Proverbs 13:20) "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Later God added, (1 Corinthians 15:33) "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." These are not idle words. They are sober warnings.*

Conclusion: These first five verses are a bitter backdrop to this beautiful book. They soberly remind us of the danger of leaving God's will, dwelling with the ungodly, becoming worldly and marrying those who do not truly love the Lord. May we heed God's warning! Parents, please help your children know **why** and **how** to do the same. (Psalms 1:1-2)
"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

Song: Yield Not to Temptation - 364

Foolish Choices

1 November 2020 PM - Ruth 1:1-5 - Ru20 - Scott Childs

Introduction: The book of Ruth takes place sometime during the 300 years of the Judges. Judges 21:25 describes the general spiritual and moral mindset during that period (read). The book gets its name from a young Moabite woman named Ruth, the central figure in the book, who converts to Judaism. She becomes the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestress of Jesus Christ. In this record, we see the mercy of God in receiving a Gentile who placed her faith in Him.

Transition: The backdrop of this exciting book is sad as an Israelite family made several foolish choices that cost them dearly. As we examine their foolish choices, I want us to focus on principles that can help us avoid similar mistakes.

Their first foolish choice was that ...

1. They went from Bethlehem

a. They owned property in Bethlehem.

- 1) Elimelech was a landowner in the region of Bethlehem.
 - a) Bethlehem is called Bethlehemjudah to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in Zebulun.
 - b) Bethlehem means "the house of bread". It was a fertile and productive area.
- 2) *Elimelech's* name means, "My God is King". His wife *Naomi's* name means, "My delight". As we will see, neither of them lived up to their names.

b. Because of a famine, they went to Moab.

- 1) God had sent a famine in the land; however, on the other side of the Dead Sea, in the land of Moab, just 50 km southeast, there was no famine. This is a strong indication that the famine was directly sent by God to chasten Israel for their sins (cf., 1Ki 8:35-37). Remember that during the judges, the cycle of **Prosperity – Sin – Slavery – Repentance – Deliverance** repeated itself many times. Restoration is always God's goal in chastening.
- 2) Moab may have been a place of food and material prosperity, but it was a pagan land. Moab was a land of

idolatry, a land of open licentiousness and crime. ^{Bl}

- 3) We do not read that Elimelech prayed about going. It appears that he made the choice himself. He had not learned from the history of Abraham and Isaac who both got into trouble by going to pagan lands during famines.
- 4) "They went to Moab, but only "to sojourn there." Just as Lot went to sojourn in Sodom. Just as every wanderer from God goes into the world. It is but for recreation. It is only a harmless indulgence. It is but for a season of enjoyment." Biblical Illustrator
- 5) Elimelech made a foolish choice in going to Moab. If God sent the famine to chasten His sinning people, Elimelech should have repented and drawn close to the Lord. If the famine was not chastening, he should have trusted the Lord to sustain him through it. Many others like his relative Boaz remained in Bethlehem and survived.

☞ *It is always foolish to try to run away from God's chastening. It is equally as foolish to stray away from the Lord to seek prosperity in the world. Those who try never truly succeed.*

Their second foolish choice was that ...

2. They *continued* in Moab

a. They planned to sojourn.

- 1) Famines generally are not long lasting. It is true that the famine in Joseph's day lasted seven years, but that was unusually long. Elimelech planned to *sojourn* or dwelt briefly in Moab to avoid the hardships of the famine.
- 2) Leaving Israel meant leaving God's Promised Land. Their steps were obviously in the wrong direction. They left behind spiritually minded friends. They forsook God's promise of blessings. They entered into a land of temptations. Moab may have been a land of prosperity, but it was not a good place to rear a family.
- 3) Their intent was only to stay until the famine passed. However, by the time the famine was over, they had established themselves and settled in among the godless Moabites. They had become accustomed to the sinful culture. Their boys had made many Moabite friends.

b. They continued there ten years.

- 1) Time passed quickly as they continued in Moab. Before they realized it, their sojourn turned into 10 years.
- 2) Someone has wisely noted, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay."
- 3) Charles Spurgeon comments, "That is generally what happens; those who go into the country of Moab continue there. If Christians go away from their separated life, they are very apt to continue in that condition. It may be easy to say, "I will step aside from the Christian path for just a little while;" but it is not so easy to return to it."
- 4) While continuing in Moab, God took Elimelech's life. He died evidently before his boys were old enough to marry. The wages of sin had been painful for that family.

☞ *We must beware that we never turn from the will of God to sojourn in the world. God clearly warns us in (1 John 2:15) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."*

Their third foolish choice was that ...

3. The sons *took* Moabite wives

a. The sons chose Moabite wives (v.4)

- 1) Living among the unbelievers, befriending them and learning their ways had a tragic impact on the two boys. Close friendships with unbelievers have corrupted the lives of many young people. Youths who long for peer acceptance struggle to take a stand against wrong.
- 2) God had clearly told the Jewish people not to marry unbelievers. (Deuteronomy 7:3) "*Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.*" In the New Testament God adds, (2 Corinthians 6:14) "*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*"
- 3) The boys had no father to counsel them. Their mother was a weeping widow. Thus, they (i.e., the boys) took