

Harvest- Part 2

“Ruth and Naomi”



***Title Page **Harvest!**

Review...

***Harvest is :

- the consequence of an effort or activity;
- to reap and gather, as of natural products;
- the gathering of a ripened crop

Anyone that has planted knows through only one season that a harvest gathered before it is ready is of little value and a harvest gathered after it is ready is of little value.

***1. The Law of sowing and reaping is universal.

***2. What you sow determines what you reap.

***3. There is a time lapse between sowing and reaping

***4. The quality of your harvest is determined primarily by what YOU do during the time lapse.

Ex) Story about the Wedding I sang at “Whether Thou Goest”...

Those, words, whither thou goest I will go, believe it or not, were not spoken by a bitter aging diva singing at her nephew’s wedding, these poignant words weren’t even spoken by an Israelite...God’s chosen people. These words, ironically, were spoken by a woman from Moab who exhibited genuine spiritual maturity.

And Ruth was her name...she said

*****Ruth 1:16**

“ Entreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will **lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God”**

AND TODAY’ S TEACHING IS THE HER STORY...



Ruth

*****TITLE PAGE**

Sadly, the fact that a moabitess was the one to exemplify such character is indicative of how bleak life had become in Israel. For although Moab was not within the promise land’s borders, the Israelites were commanded by God to not associate with them. Friendly relations with the Moabite was discouraged, but probably not forbidden since moab was outside of the promised land. Marrying a Canaanite and all those living within the borders of the promised land was forbidden by God’s law. God’s people were not to intermarry or associate with Pagans who worshiped false God’s. Moab was a pagan nation. The Moabites had not let Israel pass through their land during the Israelites exodus from Egypt.

*(put map of moab and Judah here)

We see that during the time of the writing of Ruth which has an unknown author (some have said Samuel wrote it, but some believe it was written after his death) the Judges were ruling Israel. Joshua had led people into the promised land and led them to begin to conquer the inhabitants so that they might lay claim to the land that God was giving them. Here we see a continuous cycle during the time of the Judges...the people would forget about God’s provision and laws and worship other Gods. His anger would burn against them, He would allow their enemies to defeat them, He would answer them in their distress and send a judge to save them like Gideon or Samson or Deborah. This cycle would continue over and over. At the end of the book of Judges it states...

Judges 17:6

The Story of Ruth has very little to do with Politics, however, or civil uprisings. Social stigmas and not even about heroes and wars that would impact history. It's a story about two women, Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi whose lives seemed a bit like this tapestry...

(Sermon illustration) show back of rug or tapestry

Sometimes our lives take on a look that resembles the back of this tapestry more than the front. There is no apparent purpose or pattern to the things that happen to us, rather our lives seem to be a tangled mess of unrelated colors, loose ends, and unraveled knots.

Naomi's situation with Ruth was just that...a seemingly tangled mess...

Ruth chapter 1...

We see in Ruth Chapter 1 that a man named Elimelech took his wife Naomi and two sons to Moab because of a great famine in the country of Judah. Elimelech then died leaving her with her 2 sons who married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Then these two sons **also died, leaving her with no sons, no husband, no grandchildren, and in a foreign land.**

1. Law of sowing and Reaping...

We could easily say her lot in life was her own fault. God did look after His people in the time of judges . The famine was temporary and Elimelech should not have left land that God had given them. Grass always seems greener on the other side of the street or in another's pasture. We often question the promise or way of God and try to do it our way but this does cause consequences.

Jim said last week that we sow our wild oats and then hope for a crop failure. It doesn't work that way with God. The law of sowing and reaping is universal. God is not mocked.

God says in Leviticus...

Leviticus 26 3-4

If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them then I will give you your rains in their season and the land shall yield its increase.

Naomi left a good situation for a bad one in v 21 she says,

²¹“I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me.

In her own words, she went out full and came back empty. If you sow disobedience a negative result will come back to you.

This doesn't mean we are responsible for everything that happens to us, but we do need to examine ourselves and our role in some of our circumstances.

Naomi never loses her faith in God, although embittered by her situation, she still seeks God's favor and presence because she sees that God has come to the aid of Judah and makes plans to return there.

Perhaps God will come to her aid. She is willing to leave the only 2 people who remain in her life in order to find God's favor. She tells her daughters-in-law - Ruth and Orpah in vs 8-9 ...

“Go back each of you to your mother's home May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to your dead and to me May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband”

2. What you sow determines what you reap.

As said Naomi's faith remained despite circumstances, this faith must have been a witness and a testimony to Ruth who now shows her faith in Naomi's God. Ruth also calls Him Yahweh and regards herself as one of God's covenant people The faith we have even if weak in hard times is strong witness to others I have seen this in those who are sick or dying. The faith a dying man can have more affect on faith than 1 000 sermons might.

This is where, even after being encouraged to leave and go back to her own family, Ruth states the famous words in vs. 16, “

“Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die and there I will be buried.”

Naomi's faith in God leads Ruth to be faithful to her mother-in-law

Naomi obviously had sown some very positive seeds into the life of Ruth. Naomi's example of love and commitment and faith came back to her in the reaping of Ruth's

love and faithful commitment. And now there is a flicker of hope in N's future - she is not alone.

3. There is a time lapse between sowing and reaping.

We know from the rest of the story of Ruth and Naomi that Ruth is obedient to all of Naomi's plans. She goes to Boaz because of the Mosaic law of kinsmen redeemer. In **this** law, if a man should die, his closest male relative must lay claim to his wife or children in order to see the dead relative's family name continue. We know that in this instance, from the time that Naomi and her family were in Moab. They lived there 10 years. From the time Boaz and Ruth had Obed to the time we see the harvest of the Christ's birth in their lineage, it was several generations. There is a huge gap between the sowing of seed to the Harvest, but do not be deceived. It will come if we stay the course.

(Go back to tapestry...)

As we said for Naomi and Ruth, life seemed to be a tangle of unrelated colors and loose ends But this is only one side of the tapestry. When we turn it around there is a pattern that develops and those threads receive a meaning She may not see other side – which shows a pattern for her life that God is still there and cares.

But I ask each of you this morning, Are you having trouble seeing the other side of the tapestry Does your life seem to go from one unrelated event to another. From one bad experience to another. Are you bitter about your life?

4. The quality of your harvest depends on what you stick to during the wait...

The only way to try to get some comfort of hope or understanding is from God. Do not walk away from the only source of hope that you have. Even in her deepest despair Naomi turned to the one whom she thought had dealt wrongly with her. There is a meaning to each of our lives God created us and watches over us. The only security we have is to see the face of the Lord.

**Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face**