

FOR WHITHER THOU GOEST I WILL GO RUTH 1

Text: Ruth 1:16

(Ruth 1:16) "And Ruth said, 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:"

Introduction:

We go through life making decisions. Every day is a day of decision. Today you decided what you were going to eat for breakfast, what clothes you would wear, and with whom you would spend time. This week you will make decisions that will affect where you go, what you do, and how you use the abilities that God has given you.

There are times in our lives when major decisions must be made. These decisions, being major, cause us to stop and think before we make a decision. When we come to the point of making such a serious choice, I think of it as "The Hour of Decision"! The hour of decision is a time in my life where I will end up being blessed or not so blessed based on the choice I make.

Such major hours of decision include, choosing a marriage partner, making a career move, selecting a church to join, or choosing a standard of morals by which I will conduct my life.

In Ruth 1 we meet four people who came to "The Hour of Decision". Two of them made wise decisions. Two of them made unwise decisions. Their choices are important to us because we will be forced to make the same types of decisions today.

BACKGROUND TO THE BOOK OF RUTH

- Probably written in the days of David.
- Events of this book might have taken place during the time of Gideon.
- Ruth 1:1 tells us that it was during the days that the Judges ruled that these events took place. These were not good days, as Judges 2:11-19 indicates.

1. THE HOUR OF DECISION FOR ELIMELECH HE CHOSE TO RETREAT - (VS. 1-5)

(Ruth 1:1-5) "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. {2}

And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. {3} And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. {4} And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. {5} And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband."

- A. Vs. 1 - It was a time of famine.
- B. It was a time of judgment from God.
- C. The land was dry and not producing.
- D. People were hungry.
- E. Elimelech had a decision to make.
 - 1. He was in the land that God had given the Jewish people.
 - 2. He could stay in the land and endure God's discipline, or he could leave and seek blessing elsewhere.
- F. I feel Elimelech was wrong to leave Israel.

1. The Israelites had been commanded to have nothing to do with Children of Moab.

G. Elimelech reminds me of what I would call a backsliding Christian.

1. There was a time when they were on fire, in the right place, excited, and enthused about the work of Jesus Christ.

2. Then, they chose to stop walking with the Lord and serving Him the way they once did.

3. Those who backslide should not be surprised when they receive God's discipline (Hebrews 12:5)

(Hebrews 12:5) "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:"

In Ruth 1:3-5 we find God's judgment on Elimelech and his family.

2. THE HOUR OF DECISION FOR NAOMI - SHE CHOSE TO RETURN (VS. 6-7)

A. Here is the story of a backslider who did all the things that her husband did, but came back to the Lord.

1. Results of Backsliding

a. The question

I'm sure that she was also asked about her husband and her sons.

- Had only been in Moab for 10 years.

(Ruth 1:4) "And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years."

2. A picture of a transgressor

(Proverbs 13:15) "Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."

b. The results of sin and transgression

- Often makes one bitter.

(Ruth 1:20) "And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me."

- Naomi means pleasant
- Mara means bitter
- The result of sin and transgression will empty one.

(Ruth 1:21) "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?"

- It never fails when one goes back to the world, they may leave full but they will always come back empty.

B. She heard that God's people were being blessed, and decided to return to Israel.

C. It is a good thing when a backsliding Christian hears how God is blessing His people.

1. It might influence him to repent.

2. The backsliding Christian needs to confess sin and return to the service of the King!

3. THE HOUR OF DECISION FOR ORPAH - (VS. 8-14) SHE CHOSE TO REJECT

A. Orpah looked good. She was following her mother-in-law back to Israel.

B. Instead of staying to worship false Gods, she was going to come into the land of Israel and worship the God of Israel.

C. Orpah reminds me of many a person I have met who claims to have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior.

D. They start out right by making a profession of faith, but go no further.

E. Their lives showed no change. 2 Corinthians 5:17

(2 Corinthians 5:17) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

F. Orpah decided that the cost of following Naomi was too high.

G. When professing Christians who never truly trusted Christ learn of the required commitment to Christ, they usually return back to where they came from.

Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and left. She rejected Naomi and her God.

4. THE HOUR OF DECISION FOR RUTH - (VS. 14-18) - SHE CHOSE TO RELY

Ruth gives us an example of a person who is truly born again. She would not be dissuaded from her faith and made a total commitment to Naomi and her God. Seeing her sincerity, Naomi stopped trying to dissuade Ruth.

A. When Orpah left Naomi, Ruth clung to her.

B. Ruth chose to rely on God.

C. The true Christian chooses to rely by faith on Christ!