

Redeemed

Running On Empty
Ruth 1:19-22
August 9, 2015

“...Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty.” -**Ruth 1:20-21**

I. NAOMI RETURNS WITH RUTH

- Ruth has finalized her decision. She will remain with Naomi the rest of her life, probably as a single widow who will never see her family or homeland again (1:12-13; 16-17).
- Bethlehem is “stirred” because of Naomi’s return with a Moabite woman. Big news for a small town (vs. 19).

II. CALL ME “MARA”

- Naomi means “pleasant” in Hebrew. Mara means “bitter.” Naomi has had a hard life, but she is playing the victim (vs. 20; Prov. 19:3).
- Naomi is bitter, but she has a solid theology as it relates to God. It will serve her well in the immediate future (Ruth 2:20).

III. ...AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BARLEY HARVEST

- The story makes its turn here. God has sovereignly brought Naomi home when the blessing of God displayed in the harvest is at hand (vs. 22).
- Ruth is the means by which he will restore Naomi, the people of Israel, and the future generations of Christ (Ruth 4:14-15; Micah 5:2-5; Matt 1:1-6).

KNOW: God is waiting for you at the end of your rope. The follower of Christ should never give up hope, for God is always at work in the lives of the righteous.

DO: Place your hope in the only hope giver—God.

Suggested Reading:

The Hidden Smile of God, by John Piper

A Path Through Suffering, by Elisabeth Elliot

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ruth 1:19-22

1. What has been your response in life when you have felt as if God abandoned you? What was the result?
2. Why does God “distance” Himself from us at times in life? What are some of the biblical reasons behind our feelings of isolation? (See Psalm 32 as one example.)
3. Naomi says she left Judah “full,” and yet there was a famine in the land. What does she mean by “full”? What would a typical woman of her time consider fullness in life to be?
4. We talked some Sunday about Naomi’s theology. What were some of her ideas about God? What can we learn from them today?
5. The town of Bethlehem was “stirred” because of Naomi’s return with Ruth. How do we deal with gossip as believers? How can we learn to not engage in this behavior?
6. What are your “take-aways” from our study of Ruth thus far?