

Tragedy and a Choice

Ruth Chapter 1

Read Ruth 1:1-5.

What tragedies did Naomi face during those hard ten years described in these first five verses?

Have you ever suffered a time of tragedy? If you have you can most likely understand the feelings that Naomi must have felt. Describe the emotions she might have been feeling.

Read Ruth 1:6-7.

What news convinced Naomi it was time to return home?

Why do you think Naomi would want to return home to Judah?

Read Ruth 1:8-18.

Why do you think Naomi left with her daughters-in-law and then changed her mind and sent them home?

At first, both Orpah and Ruth refused to leave Naomi. What do you think finally convinced Orpah to return home? (Verses 11-13 give us a clue.)

Ruth refused to return home. Instead, she makes a vow to her mother-in-law. Each of these statements are a rejection of her past and an act of devotion to something new. What is it that Ruth is pledging to leave? Whom is she committing her life to?

Read Ruth 1:19-21

Why do you think the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

Why did Naomi change her name from Naomi (meaning pleasant) to Mara (meaning bitter)?

Naomi identified with her affliction. Is there a part of your past or current struggle that you identify with?

Read Romans 8:28.

This verse reminds us that everything we go through (even the bad, painful and hard things) work for our good. Can you think of how Naomi’s tragedies worked for her good? (If not – don’t worry – we aren’t done yet. We’ll see just how God had a plan for even the tragedies that made her life ‘bitter’. How about you? Can you look back at a hard time of your life and see how the experience worked for something good in your life? Are you stronger? Wiser? In a different place?

Read Romans 8:37-39.

Nothing that you have experienced, nothing that makes your life 'bitter' can every separate you from God's love. That means that even those tragedies in our life that hurt the most, can never steal us from God's loving embrace.

Read Ruth 1:22.

Why does the fact that they returned to Bethlehem at the start of the barley harvest show us God's perfect timing?

The story of Ruth and Naomi starts off with tragedy. So do a lot of our own. As we study these courageous and strong women, and the man who cared for them, I hope you see God's hand in your own life.

See you next week!