

Ultimate Favor

Text: Ruth 1:6 ⁶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

There are only two books in the entire Bible that are named after women: Ruth and Esther.

My goal is for us to all see that God has a plan. God has the interwoven details of your life ironed out. God can use what we think are horrific happenings in our lives. Sometimes when we think an event is marking the end, it really is marking the beginning.

Our very own United States First Lady, Laura Bush, endured a very difficult tragedy in her youth. At the age of 17, she was borrowing her parent's car with 3 of her friends driving across Midland, Texas. They were on a "farm to market road" only driving 55 in a 65 zone. Laura was not breaking the speed limit, but she did not see the stop sign. Laura went through the intersection and hit a car broadside.

Laura and her friends had only minor injuries, and they went to the hospital for the night. Laura's parents had the horrific duty of telling her that the person she hit passed away. Laura was devastated to say the least, but the bad news was not over.

Two days later she learned that the man who died was not just any man, but it turned out to be a young man by the name of Michael Douglas who was her high school sweetheart.

Laura Bush had hit her own boyfriend and he died. Laura did not come out of her bedroom for weeks. She had been an honor student, but she could not bear going back to school.

We look back on this many years later and President Bush says, "Laura Bush is the strength and balance of my life. I don't know what I would do without her."

Fate would have been different perhaps if the accident had never happened, because at that time she felt like she was totally in love with that young man. She had no idea who George W. Bush was.

What you sometimes may think is destiny for your life may take a drastic

turn. Somehow God will work through our worst storms in life and become our destiny.

There are some interesting facts about Ruth that are noteworthy:

**Ruth is the only book in the Bible that is entirely written about a woman as the central figure. As opposed to Esther being a book containing a lot of other characters of detail, with much other than Esther.

***Ruth is a ten-generation redemptive story.

- From Adam to Jesus there are sixty generations named; sixty men and women who were in the genealogy of Christ; six groups of ten each.
- If there are sixty and six is the number for man, or flesh... Ten is the number for redemption. When it's multiplied, that shows that God is involved.
- So sixty is six times ten, which means man's redemption being worked by God.
- It starts with Adam. He falls. It ends with Jesus. He redeems. But every group of ten was a pronounced and distinguished redeemer.
- Start with Adam, you read nine more names that you hardly know, then you get to Noah. Noah was the first tenth generation redeemer.
- Then you go nine more names that you hardly know and you come to a second huge name with implications for our faith and that's Abraham.
- Then you go through nine more names and you come to the name, Boaz.
- Do that six times you will end with the name of Christ. So the third group of ten ends with the name, Boaz.

Our story takes place in the days when the judges ruled.

Ruth was David's great-grandmother, even though she was a gentile. In the listing of the genealogy, it ends with David.

Ruth was written at a very low time in Israel's history, which was the time of the judges.

This was the era of Samson when some very foolish people tried to lead who were very dysfunctional themselves.

The first verse of the book says this: *Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled^a, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.* ¹

We want to make some identities and understand meanings:

- The city of Bethlehem means house of bread. Beth meaning the house, and le hem means bread
- Bethlehem proves to be prophetically significant throughout the Bible because of heavenly Bread coming out of Bethlehem. Mathew 2:1 tells us that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In John 6:35 Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life."
- Bethlehem was a place of bakeries.

Ruth 1:2: *The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion – Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.*

- Ephratites came from the tribe of Ephraim
- (Genesis 19:37) Moab was one of the sons of Lot.
- The Moabites were a nation of people who came from Lot's lineage.
- They were not under Abraham's covenant so they were Gentiles.
- Gentile means "one who has no covenant with God."
- The Moabites were Gentiles and they lived east of the Dead Sea
- and they lived worshipping many gods and did not know or
- worship the one true God of Israel.

d. Ruth 1:3-9: *Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there*

^a ruled: Heb. judged

¹ The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

about ten years. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had visited His people by giving them bread. Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead (their two husbands) and with me. The Lord grant that you find rest, each in the house of her husband.

- This word "rest" is a Hebrew word that means the protection or covering of your husband's house.
- Naomi was inviting her daughters-in-law to go back to Moab and remarry, as young women, and start another life.

e. We need to understand the prophetic implications and meanings of these names.

1. Elimelech was Naomi's husband, in Hebrew you see the root word Eli, which Eli means God.

- "Me lech" meaning "our King."
- Elimelech, the father of this family, meant, My God is King.

2. Naomi means "Favored of God" or "the favor of God." "Naomi" means Favor. We also find that she desires to be called "Mara", which mean Bitterness. The Favor of God, Naomi, was changed to Bitterness because of her experience.

3. The first son, Mahlon, means "Joy" and/or "Song," according to how it is used. So it means "Joyful Song."

4. The second son, "Chilion," means "Perfectness," or in religious terms we would use the word, "Righteousness." The root word of righteousness is right. So, "Rightness before God" or Perfectness is the name, "Chilion."

5. "Ruth" means "comeliness" or "beauty."

1. Apparently Ruth grew up to be a beautiful woman. Most accounts that talk about her looks at all tell us that Ruth was taller than the average woman, and that she was strikingly beautiful.

What are some of the prophetic implications?

- a. Naomi represents the favor of God, but the whole system that Naomi represented is Israel, as the ancient covenant people of God.
- b. Ruth comes to represent a latecomer, or a chosen outsider, which has to be the church of Jesus Christ, which becomes the bride of Boaz.
- c. Boaz is a type of Christ.
 - i. “Boaz” means “Redeemer” and, in fact, he is called the “kinsman redeemer” because he is relative to Ruth
- d. Elimelech means God is King and is the father of the family, so it’s natural that he would marry a woman called The Favor of God, because when your God is King you will come into a place of favor.
 - i. Because God was King then Naomi brought the favor of God to the family.
 - ii. Then borne of that union, they have a son named Joy or a Joyful Song
 - iii. Then the second son that they give birth to is called Perfectness or Righteousness.
 - iv. So we have a family whose God is King, living with the favor of God and birthing Joy and Righteousness.
- e. Everything is wonderful but then Bethlehem ran out of bread.
 - i. When The House of Bread ran out of bread, which is an irony in itself, that a place could be called The House of Bread and have no bread, then they looked to the more fertile fields of Moab.
 - ii. Sometimes your faith will be tested and this is where they failed the test.
- f. The geography of Moab.

- i. From Bethlehem, which is just out of Jerusalem, Moab is about fifty miles away.
 - ii. If you went south to the Dead Sea and across, crossing the Dead Sea, north or south of it, it's only twenty or thirty miles long, you could go to the high plateau on the other side that you can see.
 - iii. For instance, if you have been there and you have gone to Masada, if you look due east from Masada to the plateau on the other side of the Dead Sea, there's Moab, the ancient land of Moab.
 - iv. So it was a fifty-mile journey. It only took a few days to get there.
- g. There's always a Moab waiting when you run out of bread in the house of bread.

i. The point is, in the place of Bethlehem, the place of their covenant, the place of their origin, the place of their blessing; they made a mistake that is so easy for you and I to make and that is: "I'm doing well. I'm doing okay. I have a nice house. We have some nice threads. I've got a nice car to drive. I live in the United States. How bad can life be?"

ii. You forget all about the fact that you're not doing well because you live in the United States. You are doing well because you made God King in your life and when you made God King in your life the favor of God came on you.

h. They could have realized this and said "This God that we've made King is the God that sustained our people for forty years without a grocery store or a mall, or an economy system or a government. He took care of us by manna falling out of the sky. So what we've run out of bread in Bethlehem. We'll make it. We're going to stay with the house of bread."

i. Instead they ran to Moab.

ii. You can follow the path of their compromise, they moved into a place of marrying women who didn't know the God they served.

iii. Elimelech died first, which is My God is King.

iv. When God as your King dies as your faith statement of life and your value system, then what happens? Then your Joy and your Song goes. Then your Righteousness goes.

- v. Notice the Favor of God didn't lift, but later she moved out.
- j. The Favor of God will stay on your life as long as it can but when we make a decision God is not King in our lives anymore...
 - i. When they moved to Moab they made that decision.
 - ii. They didn't understand the cost even though they thought they were moving to a place where provision was since where they were was in a state of famine.
 - iii. There was a huge spiritual cost and family cost.
 - iv. This is not unlike many of our lives when we are offered positions, raises etc and it is then that we need to count the costs associated with it that are not economical ones.
 - v. You make sure that God is in any kind of move that you make. Life moves people on and that things will happen.
 - vi. Sometimes you have got to hang in here and say, "I would rather sit right here and starve in Bethlehem than to move to a foreign place where there is no God that I serve and no covenant and no promise because this looks like a perfect environment for me, for *"my God who will supply all my needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:19) Not according to how the economy is doing locally.
 - vii. Sometimes God needs to be put in remembrance of His word to you. You do not doubt His word; you believe His word. Quote His own Bible back to Him.

1. Remind him like Moses did who said, "Lord, I will do it if You go with me. If You do not go with me I am not going."

2. I do not think that is disobedience because you do not have any business out there if God is not with you.

- k. So, when they got out there where God was not King, then they started suffering losses and reversals.
 - i. There are things you will go through in your life that are losses that are not directly attributable to disobedience, so do not take this wrong.
 - ii. In the greater picture losses and reversals are always because of the disobedience of man. It may not be you directly but we are in a fallen state.

- iii. Reversals and losses and grievous things are not the will of God for us. God is trying to work us through this place where those things are over. Right now we suffer losses.
 - iv. Sometimes we lose a battle but we will not lose the war. In every loss you can learn something valuable and precious that you will never ever forget. It becomes a part of your life.
- I. So, when they left the faith that God was King, then they lost their Joy and their Joyful Song and they lost their Righteousness.
- i. Naomi finds herself with no men left in her family and makes the decision to go back to the land of bread

Ruth's Test

- a. Naomi, upon leaving Moab, says, "Don't follow me any further."
 - i. She is telling them that she has nothing left for them, her sons were gone and she had no other sons to marry them and she was telling them to go back to the Moabites and find themselves men to marry and carry on their lives.
- b. What happened:
 - i. Ruth 1:14: *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.*
 - ii. Ruth is a type of the church.
 - iii. There has to be something under your beauty because something about the bride of Christ is beautiful to Jesus.
 - iv. There has got to be a bulldog tenacity inside of you that goes deeper than beauty.
 - v. Ruth was not just tall and beautiful. Ruth had something in her that I love.
 - 1. She had loyalty.
 - 2. She had faithfulness
 - vi. Ruth said, "I know we have been through some things but I am going to stick with you."
 - vii. Ruth said, "Naomi, I know both of us will have to make a decision. You are doing what you can to force us away."
 - viii. Ruth desired the better thing that could not be seen on the surface

and God was testing her by trying to divert her attention.

1. Example: Moses, said to God, "God, show me Your glory."
(Exodus 33:18)

2. God said, "Meet Me tomorrow morning on the mountain."

Moses was up there bright and early. Scripture says that God came and blew with an unbelievable hurricane-type wind. The wind stopped and Moses said, "That ain't nothing. You're not in that. You did that but that is not what I am asking for." Then God sent an earthquake and shook the mountain, the boulders fell and there were landslides. Moses was hanging on and then every thing was quiet. Then God sent a fire and sat down on the mountain and burned everything and then the fire was sucked back up into the heavens. God said, "What do you think of that?" Moses said, "Not much. That was just something You can do, that is not Your glory." Scripture says that Joshua fell down in the doorway of the tent. He was out. He was slain in the Spirit. Because that is what he settled for, that is all he got. But God said, "Moses, you really want to see it, don't you?" He said, "I do, God, more than life." And God said, "Then early in the morning, you can come and meet me." The Bible says God set him in the cleft of a rock and God marched by in all of His glory, His history, His times, His beginning. Maybe that is a hint we can get as to how Moses found the inspiration and anointing to write the first five books of the Bible that we call the Pentateuch. God showed Moses his glory, his history and his plans and ways. But if Moses would have settled for a little windstorm that is all he would have gotten.

c. This story is just like favor.

i. Notice the nature of favor.

1. Remember now, Naomi represents the favor of God. The Favor of God was saying to these girls, "Go on back where you came from. I am going to a place you cannot go. You do not want to go. I do not have any more sons. If all you

want out of me is another son, I do not have any more sons.”

2. See this is a test of favor.

a. God is going to test you to see, “Do you want My favor or do you want what My favor gives? Do you want My favor on your life or do you want another husband out of Me? I don’t have any more sons.”

3. Orpah kissed the favor of God and moved away, maybe tearfully, but you never hear from her again.

4. But Ruth fell at her feet and clung to her. This is when Ruth uttered that famous appeal.

a. *Entreat me not to leave you Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go (Favor of God), I will go; And wherever you lodge (Favor of God), I will lodge; Your people (Favor of God) shall be my people, Ruth 1:16*

Closing:

“People that know to stay under the favor of God, that’s the people I want to hang with. I don’t want to go back where I came from. Everything where I came from was lost. I don’t have anything to go back to.”

...and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there I will be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me. When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking (about that) to her.

Ruth 1:16-18

The favor of God, you want it in your life. Make God King and Favor comes. Then everything borne of that relationship will be Joy and a Joy filled Song and Righteousness and Perfection. It will be Comely bride, a beautiful bride that Jesus is preparing.