

Ruth Part 1: “Holdfast to the King” (9-17-2017)

Study of Ruth is about Jews & Gentiles, Loss & Redemption, You and Me and Jesus. The 4 short chapters of Ruth will take us throughout the scripture – it’s 1 complete story all pointing to Jesus and every detail matters and speaks of Him.

Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

1) Holdfast to the King

Ruth 1:1-2 (ESV)

(1) In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. (2) The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

Notes:

The Setting: a small family from a small town “Bethlehem” encounters a famine and leaves for the country of Moab (a sworn enemy of Israel).

The People: Elimelech – “my God is King” & Naomi – “pleasant”

The Story: A trip to Moab - It started out as a visit (“Sojourn” vs. 1), but then they moved in (“Remained” vs. 2)

Ruth 1:3 (ESV)

But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.

Notes: When they went from sojourning to remaining . . . “my God is King died”

Naomi was then left with 2 sons - I guess it’s time to reveal the meaning of their names . . .

Mahlon – sick (sickly) & **Chilion** – wasting away (pining)

Ruth 1:4-6 (ESV)

(4) These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, (5) and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. (6) Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that **the LORD had visited his people and given them food.**

Notes: Naomi has finally had enough and she returns home, but notice the wording . . .

He had visited His people, and given them food – those people got something (not my God, not my people)

2) Holdfast to the name He has given you

Ruth 1:19-22 (ESV)

(19) So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" (20) She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. (21) I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" (22) So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Notes: Naomi takes on a new name – Mara meaning: “bitter”

Notice verse 21 – the remainder of this story will deal with this issue, what do we do when we have suffered great loss? Can we trust the Lord?

- Our tendency is to let go of the King, and when we do that, we lose ourselves as well. Holdfast to the King & Holdfast to the name he has given you!
- Notice that Naomi gives herself a new name “bitter”, however if you read through the Book of Ruth, her friends and the Holy Spirit (the writer) only refer to her as Naomi!
- Chapter 1 ends without “fixing” this problem, but notice the glimpse of hope at the end of the chapter . . .
- “And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest”

Marah . . . a few generations earlier

Exodus 15:22-25, 27 (NKJV)

(22) So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. (23) Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. (24) And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" (25) So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet . . . (27) Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

Notes: They come to bitter water – too bitter to drink, and the Lord showed Moses a tree!

- When the tree is added to the bitter water it becomes sweet (real meaning of that word – “pleasant”)
- Vs. 27 –After the Lord turns the bitter to pleasant, then he leads them to an Oasis!
- The whole story of the Redemption of Creation is here!

3) Exchange bitter for pleasant

John 19:28-30 (ESV)

(28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst." (29) A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. (30) When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Notes: First of all, notice it says to fulfill the scripture. He is speaking of Psalm 69 (a Psalm of David) . . .

First a sense of the context of that particular Psalm . . .

Psalm 69:1-3, 14-18 (ESV)

(1) Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck. (2) I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me. (3) I am weary with my crying out; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God . . . (14) Deliver me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters. (15) Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me. (16) Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me. (17) Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress; make haste to answer me. (18) Draw near to my soul, redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies!

Note: This is a Psalm of God's people, anxious for rescue. But it's also a Psalm Jesus takes on himself, so much so that he fulfills it!!

Now, the specific verse Jesus is fulfilling as he drinks this sour wine . . .

Psalm 69:21 (ESV)

They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

Notes: This sour wine from these 2 passages: vinegar (made from wine) mixed with water, it's a peasant's drink.

- Sour Wine is drunk in only one other place in the OT . . . (Boaz brings bread & wine to Ruth - See Ruth 2:14)
- **Communion** - The only time we drink it is to remember that we don't have to drink it anymore because . . .

Jesus drinks the bitter so we don't have to! And then He says, "It is finished!"

Conclusion: That's our King, let's holdfast to Him, and the name He has given us!