

Title: Don't Live Your Life Without God

Passage: Ruth 1:1-5

Introduction

- Review: Latest sermon series on the Fruit of the Spirit. Primary question: What does it mean to walk in the Spirit (vs. according to the flesh)?
- Book of Ruth: see contrast of one who lives according to the Spirit (vs. according to the flesh)

Why study Book of Ruth?

A. Part of Scripture

- 4 key purposes: for teaching, for reproof, for correction (in a positive way), for equipping

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

B. Redemptive History

- Book of Ruth is part of God's redemptive history, which consists of 4 main parts: 1) creation, 2) fall, 3) God's plan of redemption, 4) glorification

C. Wisdom of God's sovereign purposes

- Book of Ruth contains unexplainable circumstances but, in the end, concludes with Ruth being the great grandparent of King David
- Matthew 1: genealogy included Ruth

Passage: Ruth 1:1-5

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. 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. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

I. Who wrote the book and when?

- Who: text itself doesn't mention the author

"In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land..."

- When: About 1100 BC. After Joshua took people of Israel into the promised land. But subsequent repetitive historical cycle occurred of Israel's sin/disobedience, then crying out in repentance, and God sending a deliverer.

- over time, the quality of repentance fades away.

Judges 21:25 (last verse of Book of Judges, just preceding Ruth)

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

- over time, the Promised Land deteriorated as Israel sinned in disobedience.

"...and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 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.

- As a Hebrew, it was a sinful choice to leave Bethel and go to Moab.
- Bethlehem = the Promised Land, means "House of Bread" (the appropriate choice was to stay in Bethel and trust in God's provision)

- Moab = enemies of Israel and anti-God.
- Elimech (meaning "God is King") = he made a morally bad choice that seemed reasonable to him.

- **Application Point:** Which road do you choose when you are at a cross-roads?
- Temptation: make choice without reference or relation to God or consider the long-term spiritual ramifications (driven by fear or anxiety)
- Answer: consider what is God's will for me from God's Word for my family (and evaluate the spiritual impact). Be prayerful and mindful/thoughtful (what are the implications of your choices?)
- Clarification: the results of your choices doesn't necessarily mean it is God's will. Simply because the results are bad doesn't mean it wasn't in God's will (God is sovereign). Key is to be prayerful and be thoughtful.

Things began well initially as they remained there.

- Compare: Parable of Prodigal Son (Luke 15:13)

Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.

Road to Nowhere

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

Key Point: In God's mercy, God allowed Elimelech to die to grab the attention of the family's remnant.

- Death is a reminder that life is not just here on earth.
- Death for a Christian is a "comma", not a "period".
- Death is not the end - either in God's presence (for the Christian) or awaiting God's judgment (for the non-believer).

"These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth."

- What happened after death? They still stayed there.
- They felt more comfortable in the "Land of Compromise" instead of the "Land of Promise"
- What happened next?

"They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband."

- They continued to live there for 10 years and must have felt comfortable to remain (vs. return to Bethel)
- What happened next? God allowed both Naomi's sons to die.
- Result: Naomi is alone in a foreign land (without any family, no one would care for her).
- Only option that remained: Naomi, the Prodigal daughter, to return home.

Application: Have you journeyed to the perceived greener fields of Moab instead of walking according to God's will?

- the grace of God is always greater than any sin. Repent and turn back to God. You will not face condemnation but compassion/grace in forgiveness.
- You may not be able to change the past but you can change the course/perspective of your future

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Luke 15:20

And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.