

**BOOK OF RUTH**  
**THREE WIDOWS IN GOD'S WASHPOT**  
**RUTH 1:6-18**

**Introduction**

We have seen how the book of **RUTH** opens with a **TRAGEDY**. But we can take heart because it is going to **end with a VICTORY!** It is the story of how the **LORD** took a **MOABITE** girl by the name of **RUTH**...

- > brought her out of **DEATH, DARKNESS, and HOPELESSNESS**
- > brought her to **HIMSELF** and **TRANSFORMED** her
- > made her a part of the **COVENANT PEOPLE OF ISRAEL**
- > and then used her in the **LINEAGE** of our **SAVIOUR**.

So, it is the story of how this woman was **TRANSFORMED** from a **LOST SINNER** to an **ANCESTOR** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**. It is the story of a **SINNER** being **PURSUED** by the **GRACE OF GOD!**

**Our text today opens with three WIDOWS—**

**NAOMI** and her two daughters-in-law, **ORPAH** and **RUTH**.

These three **WIDOWS** had all lost their husbands. From all appearances, they were left **DESTITUTE** in the country of **MOAB** with little or no **HOPE** for the future!

Isn't that the way it is with **SINNERS**. When **GOD** found us we were **SPIRITUALLY DESTITUTE** in this world of **SIN**. As *Ephesians 2:12* puts it "*That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*"

Now understand that **RUTH** and **ORPAH** were natives of **MOAB**, but **NAOMI** was a native of **JUDAH**. She was a **JEW!** She knew the **LORD!** Understand that her husband should not have brought her and their two sons to live in the land of **MOAB** in the first place! **MOAB** as we have seen is a place **GOD** called his "*WASHPOT*." in *Psalms 60:8*.

Remember we said that the term "*WASHPOT*" is a term of utter contempt!

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By calling **MOAB** this, **GOD** was saying that they were lower than the lowest slave, in fact they were like the nasty pot the slaves used to wash the feet of their superiors with.

We saw last week in *Vs 6-7* that after the death of her husband, **NAOMI** was determined to **return to the place where the LORD was BLESSING HIS PEOPLE**. This is a great picture what **REPENTANCE** looks like in the life of one of **GOD'S OWN!**

This begs for each of us ask ourselves, **SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING:** Are we in the place of **GOD'S BLESSING** in our life?  
Are we in the **CENTER OF GOD'S WILL?**

Or have we wandered off into our own **MOAB** far from **GOD'S PLACE OF BLESSING** for us?

The **BIBLE** presents these three women for us in this passage. All three women were in a terrible situation at this point being **WIDOWED** without living children! And as we saw last week, that was all because of **SIN!**

All **NAOMI** had to show for her time in **MOAB** was the three tombstones of her husband and two sons in the **WASHPOT** called **MOAB!**

Let's see how these three women each responded to their situation. It can teach us much about how we should react when we find ourselves **away from the LORD and in trouble because of SIN**.

- I. **WE NOTICE THAT ONE WIDOW WAS IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT. (*Vs 8-13*)**  
**NAOMI** was a **CHILD OF GOD** who had gotten out of **THE WILL OF THE LORD!** It may not seem fair to us that it appears that she was in this predicament from following her husband.
  - A. **We See The Cause Of Her Defeat (*Vs 13b*)**  
Of course the cause of her defeat can be traced to *verses 1-5*. There is always a high price tag on **SIN!**

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*Galatians 6:7*–“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

*Proverbs 13:15*–“...the way of transgressors is hard.”

When a **CHILD OF GOD** leaves **GOD'S PLACE OF BLESSING**, it doesn't bode well for them!

*We See The Cause Of Her Defeat...*

**B. We See The Completeness Of Her Defeat. (Vs. 8-13a)**

As we read **NAOMI'S** words, we can easily see that in her mind she was **DEFEATED** and stripped of any **HOPE!**

**1. She Had No HOPE For Her PRESENT! (Vs 8-9)**

From **NAOMI'S** perspective, she had nothing with which to take care of herself or her daughters-in-law.

She had no income and nothing else to offer. **Yet she had overlooked her finest asset! She still had the LORD!**

She didn't realize it yet, but she would come to find out soon that the **LORD is always more than enough!**  
**We need to KNOW and BELIEVE that the LORD is always more than enough for us as well!**

**2. She Had No HOPE For Her FUTURE!(Vs 11-13a)**

Again, from **NAOMI'S** perspective, she had no husband, her sons were gone, she had no prospects of remarrying and she's beyond child bearing age anyway! (*husbandless and childless*)

She appears to believe that she has nothing to look forward to in her life but grief and pain over the price being paid for **SIN!**

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We see here how that **NAOMI** appeared to be **more concerned with the MATERIAL THINGS** than she was with the **SPIRITUAL THINGS.**

Sin always **warps our system of PRIORITIES** and our **CONCEPTS OF RIGHT AND WRONG.**

We don't think very clearly or very **SPIRITUALLY** when we are away from **GOD!** In fact, it **causes our perspective to become more like the lost world** as we view life from our **FLESHLY PERSPECTIVE** rather than a **SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE!**

*We See The Cause and the Completeness Of Her Defeat...* **C.**

**We See The Consequences Of Her Defeat. (Vs 8-9, 15)**

Note how **NAOMI** actually encouraged **RUTH** and **ORPAH** to return back to their mother's houses which meant turning back to their **pagan gods/wicked lifestyles!**

She told them that they would be better off in **MOAB.**  
Talk about a **WARPED PERSPECTIVE!**

I'm sure that she thought they might not be accepted in **ISRAEL.** So she encouraged them to find husbands of "*their own kind.*"

So in her **BACKSLIDDEN** condition, **NAOMI** had lost her ability to be a powerful witness for the **GLORY OF GOD!**  
Sadly, a **BACKSLIDDEN BELIEVER** can be a poor advertisement for the **GOSPEL!**

*Philippians 1:27*– *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:*”

**In Matthew 5:13-16, JESUS** said we're to be **SALT** and **LIGHT!** No **CHILD OF GOD** should ever be guilty of **HINDERING OTHERS** from **COMING TO THE LORD!**

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We are to be trying to bring them in, not turn them away!

*WE NOTICE ONE WIDOW WAS IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT.*

**II. WE NOTICE ONE WIDOW WAS IN THE PLACE OF DEPARTURE. (Vs14-15)**

She didn’t know that if she went with **NAOMI** to **ISRAEL** that it would have been what was good for her as well! That’s because **NAOMI** had not been a very good witness to her at all.

**A. ORPAH Returned To Her Relatives.**

**B. ORPAH Returned To Her Religion.**

**C. ORPAH Returned To Her Reality.**

Whatever **LIGHT** she may have received, she walked away from and is never heard from again! Her eternal destiny is not hard to figure! The **LORD** is the **ONLY HOPE** for anyone!

*WE NOTICE ONE WIDOW WAS IN THE PLACE OF...  
DEFEAT...DEPARTURE*

**III. WE NOTICE ONE WIDOW WAS IN THE PLACE OF DECISION. (Vs. 15-18)**

Whatever **LIGHT RUTH** had received, she embraced!

**A. RUTH Decided TO FOLLOW! (Vs 16a)**

Even though **NAOMI** seemingly had nothing to offer her, **RUTH** decided that she would follow **NAOMI**.

Evidently, something (or we should say “**SOMEONE**”) had worked in her **HEART!** She is proof positive that **GOD** can speak to the **HEARTS** of **SINNERS** regardless of what **HIS PEOPLE** do! *(That doesn’t let us off the hook!)*

How important was this **DECISION** for **RUTH?** It was the most important **DECISION** in all her life!

It brought her out of the **DARKNESS** and into the **LIGHT**.

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Because of this decision we will see later that she eventually meets **BOAZ** and bears **OBED** who had a son named **JESSE** who had a son named **DAVID**. (i.e. **RUTH** was **DAVID’S GREAT-GRANDMOTHER!**)

Her **DECISION** took her out from among a cursed people and placed her into the **PLACE OF BLESSING** and even into the earthly **LINEAGE OF JESUS CHRIST!**  
*(Matthew 1:5 and Luke 3:32)*

Needless to say, this **DECISION** was a **LIFE-CHANGING DECISION** on her part!

*RUTH Decided To Follow.*

**B. RUTH Decided BY FAITH. (Vs. 16b)**

She got a **NEW FAMILY** and a **NEW LORD BY FAITH!** She left her past behind, including her gods! She traded it all for a **NEW LIFE** and a **NEW LORD** because she **EXERCISED FAITH!**

**This reminds us of how EVERYTHING changes at Calvary! 2 Corinthians 5:17–“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”**

**JESUS** said in **Luke 4:18**–“*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to **the poor**; he hath sent me to heal **the brokenhearted**, to preach deliverance to **the captives**, and recovering of sight to **the blind**, to set at liberty them that are **bruised**.*”

What **JESUS** did for us is laid out in **Romans 6:6**– *Knowing*

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*this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”*

In **JESUS** we are **MADE NEW** and we are **SET FREE!**

*RUTH Decided TO FOLLOW...RUTH Decided BY FAITH...*

**C. RUTH Decided FINALLY! (V. 17-18)**

She made a **TOTAL COMMITMENT** that extended all the way to death! For her, there would be **NO LOOKING BACK** or **TURNING BACK!**

After all what was there for her back there in **MOAB** anyway? Nothing but **DEATH, DEFEAT, DARKNESS** and eventually **DOOM!**

Our **FAITH IN THE LORD** is about a **TOTAL COMMITMENT!**

*Matthew 16:24—“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”*

*Luke 14:26-27, 33.*

Is your all **HIS**? Are you all **HIS**?

**NEXT WEEK, LORD WILLING** we'll see **NAOMI'S RETURN TO ISRAEL— HER HOMECOMING!**