

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

Introduction

The book of Ruth **opens with a tragedy** and **ends with a victory**. It is the story of how God 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 have all lost their husbands. From all appearances, they are 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 she had no business being 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"* was a term of utter contempt! By calling Moab this, God says that they were lower than the lowest slave, in fact they were like the nasty pot the slaves used to wash the feet of superiors.

Now, after the death of her husband, **verses 6-7** tell us that Naomi was determined to **return to the place where the Lord was blessing His people**. This is a picture of **repentance and revival** in the life of one of God's own!

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Let me ask as we begin today. **Where are you spiritually speaking?**

Are you in the place of God's blessing?

Are you in the center of His will?

Or have you wandered off into your own Moab far from God's place for you?

The Bible presents these three women for us in this passage. These three women are in a terrible situation and are widows, as we saw last week, all because of sin.

All Naomi has to show for her time in Moab are three tombstones in this washpot called Moab!

I want you to see today how these three women respond 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.

Let's take some time today to observe these three women as we consider the thought: **Three Widows In God's Washpot.**

I. ONE WIDOW IS IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT. (Vs. 8-13)

Naomi is a picture of a child of God who has grown cold and has backslidden on the Lord!

A. 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!

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.”

No good will ever result from a child of God returning back to the world that God saved them out of!

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The Cause Of Her Defeat...

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

As you listen to Naomi's words, you can easily see that she is completely defeated and stripped of hope.

1. She Has No Hope For Her Present. (Vs. 8-9)

From Naomi's perspective, she has nothing with which to take care of herself or her daughters-in-law.

She has no income, no place to live, nothing to offer.

Yet she has overlooked her finest asset!

She still has the Lord!

She didn't realize it yet, but she will find out soon that the LORD is always more than enough! **Do you believe that the LORD is always more than enough?**

2. She Has No Hope For Her Future. (Vs. 11-13a)

Again, from Naomi's perspective, she has no husband, her sons are gone and she will have no more sons. She believes that she has nothing to look forward to in her life but grief and pain over the price being paid for sin!

When she speaks of her future, she is speaking of the law of marriage found in *Deuteronomy 25:5* that says, "*If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.*"

We see here how that Naomi was **more concerned with the material than she is with the spiritual.**

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!

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In fact, it **causes our perspective to become more like the lost world** as we view life from our **fleshly perspective** rather than the **spiritual perspective!**

The Cause Of Her Defeat...The Completeness Of Her Defeat...

C. The Consequences Of Her Defeat. (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 and 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."

We see that in her backslidden condition, Naomi has lost her ability to be a powerful witness for the glory of God. Naomi is proof of the truth that a backslidden believer is a poor advertisement for the Gospel.

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

Matthew 5:13-16.

No child of God should ever be guilty of hindering others from coming to the LORD! We are to be trying to bring them in, not turn them away!

ONE WIDOW IS IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT.

II. ONE WIDOW IS IN THE PLACE OF DEPARTURE. (Vs. 14-15)

Orpah is a picture of a lost person who looks into the things of God and turns back to a life of sin without believing or embracing them.

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- A. She Returned To Her Relatives.**
Often family ties and affections can be a hindrance that keeps some people from receiving the Lord into their life.
- B. She Returned To Her Religion.**
Evidently, even after all she had heard and seen of the God of Israel, her gods were still the object of her love and devotion.
- C. She Returned To Her Reality.**
Orpah would have never been happy in Israel because she was still tied completely to Moab in her heart!

The same is true of a lost Church member! A lost person can never be happy in the Church because they are still tied completely to the world, the flesh, and the devil in their heart!

Orpah is a picture of that person who is a "mere professor" of faith in the Lord.

She walked away from the light she had been given and is never heard from again! Her eternal destiny is not hard to figure.

Psalm 9:17—“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”

Friend, don't turn your back on Jesus, He is the only hope you have! (John 14:6)

*ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DEFEAT.
ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DEPARTURE.*

- III. ONE WIDOW IN THE PLACE OF DECISION. (Vs. 15-18)**
Ruth is a picture of that lost sinner who looks into the things of God and believes them by faith. She is the picture of a real possessor.

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She entered the family of God and made a total commitment to follow the Lord forever!

- A. Ruth Decided To Follow. (V. 16a)**
Even though Naomi had nothing to offer her, come what may, 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!

Thank God for those who come to love the LORD even when He doesn't give them things!

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.

Because of this decision we will see 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!

Let me ask, what have YOU decided concerning Jesus? Have you made the life-changing decision to come out of the darkness and into the light? I trust that you have! If not, we can help you with that today!

Ruth Decided To Follow.

- B. Ruth Decided By Faith. (Vs. 16b)**
She got a new family and a new Lord by faith! She received a new life and a new Lord because she exercised faith!

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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.*”

Listen to what 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 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)

She made a total commitment that extended all the way to death! For her, there would be no looking back or turning back!

What was there for her back there in Moab anyway?
Nothing but Death, Defeat, Darkness and eventually Doom!

Genuine Christianity 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?

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Conclusion

Let me ask this in closing, do any of these poor widows represent your life?

Are you like Naomi, a person who knows the Lord but has wandered away and needs to return to the place of blessing?

Or are you like Orpah? You have looked into the things of the Lord and have decided not to follow Him, but have chosen your life and your sin over the will of God? Could I tell you that is a dangerous place to be and it will not end well for you if you stay in that condition!

Why not be like Ruth and make a decision to follow the Lord, come what may, until He takes you home?

Which of these women best represents the life you are living right now?

If you are saved and away from the Lord, I invite you to come home to Him.

If you are lost and are thinking about a life of faith, I invite you to receive Jesus today.

If you are saved, secure and settled I invite you to worship, praise and thank Him for the grace He has manifested in your life!