

THE CONTEXT OF MERCY: LIFE IN A FALLEN WORLD

Ruth 1:1-14

The moment you have a self at all, there is a possibility of putting yourself first—wanting to be the center—wanting to be God, in fact. That was the sin of Satan: and that was the sin he taught the human race.... What Satan put into the heads of our remote ancestors was the idea that they could “be like gods”—could set up on their own as if they had created themselves—be their own masters—invent some sort of happiness for themselves outside of God, apart from God. And out of that hopeless attempt has come nearly all that we call human history—money, poverty, ambition, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery—the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, 53-54.

- I. **THE HUMAN CONDITION (1-5):** Ruth presents the human condition as badly broken.

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
Judges 21:25

- II. **THE HELPLESS CONDITION (1-13):** We are helpless to change the brokenness of our condition on our own.

But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you. And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again...

Leviticus 26:14-20

- III. **THE HOPEFUL CONDITION (6-14):** The helpless human condition that plagues us is the very context in which God chooses to display His glorious mercy.