February 19
Ruth 1

Faith through Trials

Ruth Declares Loyalty to Naomi, 1614, by Pieter Lastman (1583-1633)
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*Starred* dates indicate special emphasis weeks.
God keeps both His promises and His warnings

Ruth
1:1-5    Famine Forces Move to Moab
1:6-10   A Desperate Reunion
1:11-14  A Bitter Plea
1:15-18  A Lifelong Promise
1:19-22  Naomi Renamed “Bitter”
Key Verse Ruth 1:16

But Ruth replied: Do not persuade me to leave you or go back and not follow you.

For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

a sublime promise like no other
Say sign somewhere … that I think everyone will agree with

First God created man
then he had a better idea
Alternate Title

Naomi

The Lovable
✓ Ruth 1 says, “in the time of the Judges”
✓ Keil & Delitzsch ponder, guess it *could be* around Gideon
✓ Lineage of David in Ruth … nice connection to 1 Samuel
SAMSON – the Loneliest Judge, so true
But SAMSON was the STRONGEST of ALL
Whatever of SAMSON’s great loneliness
Whatever of SAMSON’s great achievements
However little he may have been loved ...

Book of Ruth tells of a GRIEF ...
Book of Ruth tells of a Pain ...
That would’ve been hard even for Samson

Book of Ruth also tells of LOVE
Book of Ruth also tells of a SISTERHOOD ...

No MAN can truly fathom
1:1-5 Famine – even in Bethlehem

Bethlehem in 1836

Bethlehem, 1836, lithograph by David Roberts
1:1-5  Famine Forces Move to Moab

Famine in the land
Food ... hard to come by

Hunger ... a driving force ...
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Famine in the land

Elimelech means “God is King”

Yet, Elimelech & Naomi are worried

Naomi means “Lovable” also good, pleasant, lovely, winsome

Every reason to believe they enjoyed a good marriage ...

Her latter pain and wisdom give evidence of a DEEP love for Elimelech

Naomi’s selfless nature to her two daughters ... surely reflected Naomi’s LIFE of putting others FIRST
All great men know this.
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Elimelech & Naomi have two sons

1. Son Mahlon = “Sickly”
2. Son Chilion = “Pining One”

We don’t know how the sons die
Yet they did name their children
those depressing names …

Names *might* reflect some ailments
they shared with their father

Anyway,
They pack up and head to Moab
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Moab ... often hostile to Israel

PERHAPS, because of Gideon ... he led to the peaceful relations between Bethlehem and Moab ...

Elimelech would not go to ENEMIES

Much earlier, in Deut. 29-34 – Moses speaks to Israel in the land of Moab

34:5, Moses died & was buried in the Valley of Moab, opposite Beth-Peor

Moab extended north before conquest

Judges 4, we mentioned Judge Ehud the Southpaw who killed King Eglon of Moab

stabbing and sinking sword into him
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Then tragedy happens

we know not what how or why …

But Elimelech **DIES** 🕷️

Naomi is a widow in a strange land

Grief in divorce … is bad
Grief in death … is worse
Death of YOUR child worse
Death of a LIFE-long spouse … worst of all
I suppose few know the true **HEARTACHE**
of being a widow … or widower
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Wish we knew more of Naomi

Naomi’s two sons marry

Mahlon the “Sickly”
marries Ruth, means “A Friend”

Chilion the “Pining One”
marries Orpah, means “Fawn”

They’re in the land 10 years

Then Naomi’s two sons DIE

It is hard TODAY to be a
Widow

All the harder when you … LOSE SONS!
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab
Bethlehem Family Tree

Elimelech & Naomi

have sons

Ruth, Mahlon, Orpah, Chilion

Travel to Moab

Naomi & Ruth head to Bethlehem

Boaz & Ruth gleans fields

Obed

the father of

Jesse

the father of

David

PART of the reason for the Book of Ruth show the lineage of David
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Famine in the land
What would YOU do for your family?
Not much that one will *NOT* do
Go to a foreign country, often enemies

**Refugees in Moab ...**

What would YOU do if forced to move ...

 ✓ To say ... Somalia?
 ✓ To say ... Syria?
 ✓ We don’t *want* to hear more!

**Well ... I suppose you’d be HUMBLE**

Even solicitous as poor one in Somalia

Starting OVER in ...
**Strangerville ... strange land**
If you are NOT wealthy,
Humbling ... Humiliating ...
1:1-5 Famine Forces Move to Moab

Naomi – if she had NOT come back
David would NOT have been born

We can speculate “what if’s” forever

Book of Ruth is **POWERFUL:**

✓ Book of Ruth connects **WOMEN**
✓ Book of Ruth shows **HEART**
✓ Book of Ruth shows **DETERMINATION**
✓ Book of Ruth shows **COMPASSION**
✓ Book of Ruth shows **DEDICATION**
✓ Book of Ruth shows **DESOPARATION**
✓ ... oh ... so very much **HUMANITY**

Ruth and Naomi, c. 1636, Rembrandt
1:1-5  Famine Forces Move to Moab

Famines in the Land of the Old Testament

Gen. 12:10  Abraham to Egypt
Gen. 41:54-57  Joseph, 7 yrs,
  only Egypt had bread
2 Sam. 21:1  David, 3 yrs, relieved by
  appeasing Gibeonites
1 Kings 18:2  Elijah, severe in Samaria
2 Kings 4:38  Elisha, in Gilgal, feeds 100
Neh. 5:3  Nehemiah
Hag. 1:10-11  Haggai, for Temple neglect

Ruth and Naomi, c. 1636, Rembrandt
6 Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to leave the land of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the Lord had paid attention to His people's need by providing them food.

FOOOOD ...

HOME ...
One thing ALL women know …
I am a bit scared to share …
Call me Chicken Liver here …
But this is TRUE as the SUNRISE
CERTAIN as mountains are TALL
and sure as the oceans are deep
Here it is … I TREMBLE to share
A TRUTH many millennia old
That is …

Men will . . .

Sometimes let their women down!
That is just a sad fact … and NOT on purpose
Book of Ruth …
A novella … a story … TRUE
Hearts of TWO Women
Elimelech … he tried, REALLY tried
But he DIED …
You might say, “Hey, Chicken Liver!”
“Elimelech did not PLAN to die!”
See, that is point ONE …
Thank GOD for men who do PLAN …
No, no, no … Naomi does NOT blame Elimelech
But her plight is STILL to a degree HIS FAULT
Elimelech died in Moab … and Naomi GRIEVED

Naomi Entreating Ruth & Orpah, 1795,
William-Blake (1757-1827)
Widow’s Plea, 1837, by Mrs. Hammond

A few verses from Mrs. Hammond, as she said, on a restless night ... 

I awoke, and my curtain withdrew,
   In a conflict of sorrows and fears:
Near my window a sycamore grew,
   And its branches were laden with tears:
For the storm in the night had been rude,
   And Autumn had mellow’d its leaves;
The red pavement with numbers was strew’d—
   For its foliage my sycamore grieves.
A birch standing by, droop’d its head,
   In low moaning it seem’d to complain;
For its beauty had faded and fled,
   Torn away by the wind and the rain.
Widow’s Plea, 1837, by Mrs. Hammond

Mrs. Hammond, as she said, on a restless night

But the tints of the morning were gay,
and illumin’d a neighbouring spire;
So brilliant it glow’d, as I lay,
For an instant I thought it on fire.

Little rest I enjoy’d in the night,
For a fever had throbb’d in my veins;
But I hail’d the new day with delight,
As a friend that would soften my pains.

Then let be from murmurs refrain:
When my God thinks it fit to chastise,
I will fear to offend him again,
And in thankful humility rise.
Widow’s Plea, 1837, by Mrs. Hammond

Do we not ALL OF US KNOW …
The brutal pounding …
That deep grief inflicts?

Just one verse from “Funeral Blues” by W.H. Auden (1907-1973)

The stars are not wanted now; put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

How TRUE … so very true …
We grieve … seems NATURE itself conspires against our soul
Trees and moon and stars … CRY WITH US
Grief … most of all
Deepest of all …
None can compare to the loss of a LIFELONG LOVE of a husband or wife
No grief is more profound than that of a Widow or Widower
Elimelech did leave Naomi in Moab

Simple reading of the short, short,
Book of Ruth, a mere 4 chapters

Reveals Naomi to be Wise ...

Naomi in her own eyes ... “Bitter”

Yet ... LOOK, LOOK SEE ...

Naomi’s name did mean “Lovable”

Even though heartbroken ...

Book of Ruth is Crystal Clear

Naomi, “bitter,” yet Stayed LOVABLE ...

So LOVABLE that Ruth gave up her life to follow Naomi and to care for lovable Naomi

Look at these two Women
Grief ... bereavement ... DEATH
Some of the GREATEST pains ...
GREATEST hurt known to humans ...
17-yr-old girl in Colmesneil just died in Colorado ... the parents ... oohhhhhhhhh
A LIFE-LONG spouse ... dies ...
O h h a h h h h h h h h ... words cannot
Words fail us ... we beg for mercy
Naomi ... lost her husband & sons
We CANNOT imagine all her pain ...
Much, much less capture it in 30 mins
MUST SEE and grapple with
Is that when Elimelech died ...
as tragic as that is
at least two sons remained
But when the two sons died
ALL CHANGES IN MOAB
Naomi sees clearly ...
Naomi sees clear as CRYSTAL ...
There is NO ONE TO HELP HER
Orpah and Ruth WILL be married
and Naomi herself an become an outcast
Naomi \textit{MUST} return to Bethlehem!
Widow’s Plea

Because of the poverty in Bethlehem
We are ALSO given the impression … 
That the journey was …

JUST THE TWO OF THEM

Just Naomi and Ruth … travel rough roads 50-80 miles from Moab to Bethlehem … 
That is a dangerous journey for a MAN
Even dangerous for THREE MEN … 
   if it was just my two sons and me!?!?

But VERY dangerous for women.
Very, very dangerous …

Ruth Embracing Naomi, 1866
by Gustave Doré (1832 – 1883)
1:6-10  A Desperate Reunion

7 She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.
1:6-10  A Desperate Reunion

8 She said to them, "Each of you GO BACK to your mother's home. May the Lord show faithful love to you as you have shown to the dead and to me.

What SWEET ... LOVABLE words

9 May the Lord enable each of you to find security in the house of your new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

LOOK ... see HOW LOVABLE Naomi was
She was utterly selfless ... caring for them

10 "No," they said to her. "We will go with you to YOUR people."
1:6-10  A Desperate Reunion

ME … talking about ME

If I lost all in Moab and was heading back home to Bethlehem

And my two SONS-in-law wanted to go

I KNOW what I would say:

PACK UP boys … GLAADD to have yah!

There are plenty of wives in Bethlehem

You’ll be okay … GLAADD to have yah!

NOT so Naomi … LOOK SEE

Daughters-in-law would MORE likely find men much kinder to them in Moab, their OWN home
1:11-14  A Bitter Plea

11 But Naomi replied, "Return home, my DAUGHTERS. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands?

Well now ... how LOVABLE is Naomi?

12 Return home, my DAUGHTERS. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons ... 

Naomi ... the LOVABLE REALIST ...  

Orpah & Ruth struggle
1:11-14   A Bitter Plea

13 Would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying?

Naomi … LOVABLY selfless …

Naomi … LOVABLY wise …

No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, because the Lord's hand has turned against me."

14 AGAIN they wept LOUDLY, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth CLUNG to Naomi.

Oh, the grief of Naomi … hurt in heart and soul in the depth of her being.
Widow’s Plea

Mark 12:33 & Luke 21:3, Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.”

1 Tim. 5:9, A widow who is put on the list for support must be a woman who is at least sixty years old and was faithful to her husband.

Vrindavan, India, is known as the “city of widows” ... also in India widows wear a white wrap and crop their hair ...

Deut. 26:12-13, make special provision for the orphans and widows ...
Widow’s Plea

Widows have a special place in the heart

Japan put up a special war memorial for widows who had to raise children alone ...

Isaiah 1:17, “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.”

Jeremiah 7:5-6 warns to not oppress the orphan and widow

Job laments in 29:11-13, “Whoever heard me spoke well of me ... because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them. The one who was dying blessed me; I made the widow’s heart sing.”
Widows have a special place in the heart.

In Jewish tradition, the *ketubah* is the wedding contract or prenuptial agreement, that, among other things, stipulates a special place on the estate for the widow until she remarried.

In China, because the old are the closest living contacts with ancestors, they are given esteem from the younger, including widows.
Widow’s Plea

James 1:27, Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,
To visit the fatherless and WIDOWS in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Widows have a special place in God’s heart

St. James the Great, c. 1616
by Jose de Ribera
Widow’s Plea, 1837, by Mrs. Hammond

A couple more verses from Mrs. Hammon:

An Aspiration! hear my humble pray’r,
And condescend to dry a widow’s tear!

In thee I trust—blest with thy mighty aid,
No dark despair my bosom shall invade.

O give me grace to know and do thy will—
A mother’s duties teach me to fulfil:

Let my example to my children prove
How much I feel for them, how much I love.

Permit the fatherless thy love to share—
Shield them from Vice and Folly’s baneful snare;

Inspire their minds with hope of future bliss,
And faith, to seek a better world than this.
Widow’s Plea, 1837

Through deep adversity my portion be,
And sad reverse—I bow to thy decree.

Thou canst sustain me in each trying hour,
And still I live by thine All-gracious pow’r.

Sorrows which seem almost too great to bear,
Have long oppress’d, and may await me here;

But Faith and holy Hope, till life is gone
Will bid me say—Great God! Thy will be done!

Thy will be done . . .

How is that going for you, Naomi?
Tough . . . it is very tough . . .
AGAIN they wept LOUDLY, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth CLUNG to Naomi.

Oh, see Orpah walk away ... Chicken Liver is shaking here

Chicken Liver is afraid to comment

No matter WHAT Chicken Liver says
No MATTER what I say here ... I fall short
EVERY woman here and in the WORLD
EVERY woman in the WORLD knows

NO MAN ALIVE that can fathom the ...
1:11-14 A Bitter Plea

No MAN ALIVE can truly apprehend
NO MAN can truly grapple what these three women are sharing …
HERE is pure, unvarnished SISTERHOOD
ONLY … SOLELY can women understand the depth of love a mother shares WITH her daughter … or WITH her daughter-in-law
Or any … WITH her daughter-like figure

14 AGAIN they wept LOUDLY, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth CLUNG to Naomi.

Oh, see Orpah = “Fawn” is in tears … as she walks a way
A Bitter Plea

Men … I KNOW this is hard to see
But the women … they KNOW …
Naomi, the truly LOVABLE, truly, truly …
Naomi TRULY wished Ruth & Orpah would go back to their home …

Because Naomi truly, truly LOVED them!
As Orpah leaves … there is NO SHAME …
Orpah is NOT thought bad … please go …
Orpah was LOVED by the Lovable Naomi
Moab was, in fact, Orpah’s home … it WAS best for Orpah
So, Orpah, the “Fawn” … headed home … never to see Naomi again
1:15-18 A Lifelong Promise

14 AGAIN they wept LOUDLY, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth CLUNG to Naomi.

15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. Follow your sister-in-law."

Naomi … THE Lovable
To herself, “bitter” and “hurting”
To Ruth … LOVABLE …
You understand that word, YES?
Not all wish or have capacity to help

‘Tis VERY biblical to bear one another’s griefs & sorrows
Yet ... we ALL know ...

SOME men & women’s burdens are heavier to HELP
SOME are SO WEIGHED DOWN HELPING to carry is a feat
That is ... LOOK at Naomi ...

NAOMI ... carries her burden so lovingly ...

RUTH is drawn to NAOMI ...

NAOMI carried HER cross very much like Christ ...

loving all the way
1:15-18   A Lifelong Promise

One of the most remarkable, endearing ... even enchanting

Yes, Naomi’s ENCHANTING feature

Is the manner in which Naomi bears her “bitterness” and “grief”

Ahh, much GREATER than SAMSON

NAOMI was doing what SAMSON the mightiest MAN could NOT

Naomi bore her grief in such way

Naomi CARRIED her grief with such nobility and strength of heart

Naomi’s manner made her much more LOVABLE
Naomi Renamed Mara = Bitter

Before we end with the Promise of Ruth

Please ... SEE how Naomi is received

Naomi comes HOME after 10 years ...

19 The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

Oh, the WOMEN of Bethlehem were glad to see Naomi ... GLAD to see her

Naomi ... the LOVABLE ...

True to her sweet nature ... hear Naomi
1:19-22 Naomi Renamed Mara = Bitter

Naomi pleads with them ...

20 "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara," she answered, "for the Almighty has made me very bitter."

Naomi “Lovable” to “Bitter”

21 I left full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has pronounced judgment on me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi came back from the land of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.
1:15-18  A Lifelong Promise

Now ... let’s look at the DEAREST promise in the Bible
DEAREST promise OTHER than of Christ to us on his Second Coming
DEAREST promise of one person to another in ALL the Bible
And, you guessed it, from a Woman to a Woman in ALL the Bible ... but, alas,
NOT in all of history, for there are many more women who have done similar
Mother Teresa for one
1:15-18 A Lifelong Promise

15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. Follow your sister-in-law."

Naomi ... THE “Lovable” ... talking to Ruth ... means “A Friend”

Now the most famously DEAR words
As sublime and personal a promise
A lifelong commitment of to Naomi
We MUST ... we absolutely MUST ...
See where these words of Ruth originate ...
If we can ... HOW did Ruth come to them?
1:15-18  A Lifelong Promise

Just knowing the times ... plus

Knowing the END of the Book of Ruth

Since Boaz does keep the men from harassing Ruth in the fields

Since Ruth does captivate Boaz ...

There is NO DOUBT that Naomi is RIGHT

Ruth COULD & WOULD have found a 2nd husband in her home of Moab

Ruth ... clings to her mother-in-law ...

Naomi calls Ruth her “daughter”

After ten years in Moab ... Naomi, the Lovable
1:15-18   A Lifelong Promise
There is NO question to Naomi’s spirit
No question to Naomi’s devotion
No question to Naomi’s sincerity
Ruth had SEEN Naomi’s NOBLE Spirit
We know little of Moab, but we CAN see
In Moab ... among Ruth’s kin ...
There was NONE like Naomi ...
None as FAITHFUL as Naomi ...
None as SPIRITUAL as Naomi ...
None as STRONG as Naomi ...

FACT: Women look for mentors & role models (as do men)
1:15-18 A Lifelong Promise

FACT: Ruth saw in Naomi a hero

Ruth KNEW in Naomi’s heart was TRUE

Ruth KNEW in Naomi’s faith a true FAITH

Ruth KNEW in Naomi’s homeward LOOK there were MORE like Naomi

In Moab ... there was no one BETTER

In Moab ... there was no one NOBLER

In Moab ... there was no one ...

No ONE more LOVABLE ...

Certainly, for TEN YEARS, Naomi had proven herself TRUE many times

Ruth cast her life and future with Naomi
1:15-18 A Lifelong Promise

After Naomi pleads to Ruth ...
Ruth ... “A Friend” ... replied

16 But Ruth replied: Do not persuade me to leave you or go back and not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live;
your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

That would have been enough ... poetic ... sublime in itself
Some of the most inspiringly tender and devote words EVER spoken
1:15-18  A Lifelong Promise

17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.

May the Lord do this to me, and even more, if anything but death separates you and me.

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped trying to persuade her.

Ruth—cared for Naomi, the Lovable

Ruth—followed Naomi, the Lovable

very, very, very much like we are to follow Christ
Helping to Carry Another’s Burden is the Great Honor of the LOVABLE

View from Mt. Nebo

FBC Woodville Sunday School Class
Michael G. Maness
see PreciousHeart.net/SS