



## Man's Choice... God's Intervention

### Chapter 1: Part 1

**"Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." *Ruth 1:16b***

### A. Introduction to the story...

*"In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him." *Ruth 1:1**

1. This was a 400-year time period after Israel entered the promised land under Joshua and before there were any kings in Israel. This was a time of "apostasy, warfare, decline, violence, moral decay, and anarchy."

*\*Talk Thru the Bible*

*"In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." *Judges 21:25**

2. This was a time when the repeating process of Israel's sin would continue. The people would sin, God would send judgment, the people would cry for help, and God would raise up a judge to deliver them. This would happen again and again.
3. This was a time of political upheaval all over the world in multiple empires. It seems that there were "environmental stresses, a flurry of earthquakes, and a deterioration of the major superpowers." \*
4. This was a time of a severe famine that overtook Israel. Famines were not uncommon and this one appeared to be widespread. Famines could be lack of water, a pestilence, a plant disease, or a result of warfare.

*"...a severe famine came upon the land." *Vs 1:1b**

### B. The characters in the story...

*"The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion." *Vs 1:2a**

1. Elimelech meaning "God is my King."
2. Naomi meaning "pleasant one or sweet one."
3. Mahlon meaning "sickly."
4. Kilion meaning "wasting away."
5. Ruth meaning "friend."
6. Orpah meaning "neck."

### C. Elimelech left Bethlehem...

*"So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there." *Vs 1:1b-2**

1. From Bethlehem to Moab: Bethlehem meant "house of bread." The name was most likely given as the area was generally productive with wheat and barley.
2. From Bethlehem to Moab: Moab was generally an enemy to Israel. Moab definitely followed false gods. Chemosh was the detestable god of the Moabites and worshipped by orgies, sexual ceremonies, and even child sacrifice.

*"On the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, he (Solomon) even built a pagan shrine for Chemosh, the detestable god of Moab..." *1 Kings 11:7**

3. Elimelech and Naomi left with their two sons. Elimelech died and their two sons married Moabite women.

*"Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth." *Vs 1:3-4a**

4. After ten years of marriage, both sons died.

*"But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband." *Vs 1:4b-5**

5. Naomi was alone...unprotected, with no ability to provide for the daughters-in-law or herself...and bitter against God. Naomi had lost her husband, her children, her security, her possessions, her status, her reputation, and her closeness to God.

*"Don't call me Naomi," she responded. "Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me." *Vs 1:20**

### D. Bitterness destroys our ability to have clear vision...the price we pay...

*"for I can see that you are full of bitter jealousy and are held captive by sin." *Acts 8:23**

1. Bitterness had affected Naomi's ability to offer good advice.

*"Go back to your mothers' homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me." *Vs 1:8b**

*"Look," Naomi said to her, "your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same." *Vs 1:15**

2. Naomi was insensitive to Ruth and Orpah's grief.

*"Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD Himself has raised His fist against me." *Vs 1:13b**

3. Naomi lost perspective and could only see her own grief.

*"Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD Himself has raised His fist against me." *Vs 1:13b**

4. Naomi could not see what she had, but only what she didn't have.

*"With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah." *Vs 1:7**

## E. Let go of bitterness...

*“And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, He has identified you as His own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:30-32*  
*“Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.” Hebrews 12:14-15*

1. Bitterness will destroy you physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Realizing the dangers, begin by identifying the unforgiveness.

*“Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet gives to the heel that has crushed it.”*  
Mark Twain

*“You are never more like Jesus than when you forgive. And you will never be set free until you forgive.” Unknown*

2. Begin the process of forgiveness.

*“Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.”*  
C.S Lewis

*“Forgiveness in its essence is a decision made on the inside to refuse to live in the past. It’s a conscious choice to release others from their sins against you so that you can be set free.” Unknown*

- a. Rediscover the humanity of the person who hurt you.
- b. Surrender your right to get even.
- c. Revise your feelings toward that person. You will know you have attained the miracle of forgiveness when you are able to ask God to bless them. \*

*\*Lewis Smedes “The Art of Forgiving”*

3. Make the conscious decision to let go of the pain. Forgiveness is not optional. We forgive to the extent we appreciate how much we have been forgiven.

*“I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown Me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.” Luke 7:47*

4. Recognize who is ultimately in control...and trust Him with your life, your hurts, your pain, and walk in forgiveness! “Leave it there...”

*“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” Colossians 3:13*

*To begin a relationship with Jesus...*

*Text: I Choose Jesus to 88202*