

RUTH 1:1-5
DON'T RUN FROM YOUR TROUBLES!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Ruth chapter 1 as we begin a new book this morning.

I know, we were in Judges a long time and it was a dark book, but there were many, many lessons that God was showing us as we went through the book of Judges.

I was going to tell you, after Judges we are going into the book of Leviticus, but I thought that would be mean after Judges. And the Lord, when we started the book of Judges, was leading me to the book of Ruth to do an in-depth study in.

Let me start out by saying this. The book of Ruth is one the greatest love stories ever told. It is more than just a love story between Boaz and Ruth. It is a story of God's great love towards man. It is a story of redemption.

Thus, you will see that this earthly story has a heavenly meaning. And in just four short chapters we will see God's great love for us, as He is our kinsman redeemer, purchasing us back to Himself through His sacrifice.

Now I do realize that people don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God, they think that it is just the words of man.

And because they don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God, they will mock and put God and the God of the Bible down today as they did back then, but again, let God's Word speak for itself.

Interestingly enough, “When Benjamin Franklin was the Ambassador to France, he spoke to a group of intellectuals who continually scoffed at his belief in the Bible. Unconvinced that these men were familiar with the Book they mocked, Franklin said, ‘By the way, gentlemen - I have come across a most intriguing love story that I would like to read for you tonight. I think you’ll find it interesting.’

He then proceeded to read a hand-written copy of the book of Ruth. After he finished the four short chapters, his audience was ecstatic. ‘That is the greatest love story we have ever heard.’ they exclaimed. ‘You must publish it at once.’

Franklin answered, ‘It has been published. It is the Bible.’”

To say the least, His scoffers were silenced. And what they said is true.

I think that is what we will find here in the book of Ruth. And yes, like I have said, it is only four chapters long but as you will see, they are packed with spiritual truths for us to apply to our lives.

Now we have just finished the book of Judges and what a sad, dark history regarding the children of Israel, as I have said.

We are told that, “**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” Judges 21:25.

Thus, we not only saw spiritual adultery but immorality that filled the land.

Now, in saying that, keep in mind that the book of Ruth takes place during the timeframe of the book of Judges. And there are many who see these events here in Ruth playing out during the time of the Judge, Gideon.

Which makes sense as we will see a famine in the land that drives Elimelech and his family to Moab to live because there was food down there. Keep in mind that Moab is modern day Jordan!

And it was a dark period of time for Israel and the book of Judges gives us insight to that period of time. The nation was dark, it was evil, the people of God had turned to idols and immorality.

Not a great picture to say the least.

And for some 300 years this went on in Israel, but in the midst of all that darkness the light of God was shining from the lives of some of the people.

In fact, the book of Ruth is like an island of peace in the midst of a fierce storm. This book is like a diamond shining, glistening against a very black backdrop. And it may not start out that way, but it surely ends that way!

Folk's, it is easy to lose hope, to see what is going on in our nation and just throw up our hands, but never forget this. God has His faithful remnant that He is working in and through to accomplish His work on this earth, even when things look dark and hopeless.

In fact, I should say in spite of what is happening around us, God is still working!

Now, according to Jewish tradition, the authorship of the book of Ruth is ascribed to Samuel, as was the book of Judges.

Regarding this book of Ruth, J. Vernon McGee wrote,

The Book of Ruth is very important in connection with the coming of Jesus Christ into this world. Without this little book, we could not connect the house of David with the tribe of Judah.

It is an important link in the chain of Scripture that begins with Genesis and goes right down to that stable in Bethlehem and to the cross, to the crown, and to the throne of David on which our Lord will someday be seated.

This is a very definite reason Ruth is included in the canon of Scripture.

However, the primary purpose of the book of Ruth is the presentation of an important phase in the doctrine of redemption. Redemption is possible only through a Kinsman-Redeemer.

God could not redeem apart from a Mediator. Since only God could redeem, it was necessary for Him to become that person.

Boaz furnishes the only figure for the Kinsman-Redeemer aspect of redemption which is so essential for any proper theory of the Atonement. This little Book of Ruth comes down to our level and tells the commonplace story of a couple who love each other. They were ordinary folk, average folk, and their love story is a mirror in which we can see the divine love of a Savior for you and me.

As we proceed into the Book of Ruth, we see this wonderful love story unfold before us.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. II, p.88

As I have said, there are only four chapters to this book and there are only 85 verses in this book. And yet the titles for God that are used are amazing.

We see that the name **YAHWEH** is used some 17 times.

We see **ELOHIM** is used 3 times.

And we see the word **EL SHADDAI (THE ALL-SUFFICIENT ONE)** is used some 2 times.

Not only that but the words, *redemption, redeem, kinsman redeemer* are used over 20 times!

Look at this; we can clearly see that the theme of this book is the redemption of sinful man by God.

And this is the eighth book of the Bible and eight is the number of new beginnings.

That is no coincidence because we see this in our Kinsman Redeemer; Jesus Christ as He gives to each of us a new beginning!

And Warren Wiersbe gives us this insight into this book of Ruth. He wrote,

“The efforts which we make to escape from our destiny only serve to lead us into it.” The American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that in his book *The Conduct of Life*, and it’s just as true today as when the book was published back in 1860.

Because God gave us freedom of choice, we can ignore the will of God, argue with it, disobey it, even fight against it.

But in the end, the will of God shall prevail; because “the counsel of the Lord stands forever” (Ps 33:11) and “He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dan 4:35, NKJV).

The patriarch Job asked, “Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?” (Job 9:4, NKJV)

Job knew the answer and so do we: nobody. If we obey God’s will, everything in life holds together; but if we disobey, everything starts to fall apart.

Nowhere in the Bible is this truth better illustrated than in the experiences of Elimelech and his wife Naomi.

Now our first study in the book of Ruth I have called – ***DON'T RUN FROM YOUR TROUBLES!***

And it does fit in with what is going on in our country and the idea of people trying to run and hide themselves away, where I have no idea.

I remember when we were coming to the year 2,000 and Christians were freaking out that things were going to go crazy, nuclear missiles would be launched because computers couldn't handle the year change.

Not only that, but you would not be able to buy gas and there would be food shortages and all the craziness that people thought would happen.

And I knew a family who moved out of the Chicago area to the mountains, somewhere I think in Tennessee. It was pretty crazy and yet, that is what we are going to see here in our study this morning with this family, they will be on the run and it will not turn out well.

I have broken these verses we will be looking at this morning down into four main points and they are,

RUNNING AWAY – RUTH 1:1-2

DEATH IN THE WORLD – RUTH 1:3

THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN THE WORLD – RUTH 1:4

MORE DEATH IN THE WORLD – JUDGES 1:5

With that said, let's begin our study through the book of Ruth starting in Ruth chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we read of this love story that truly pictures the love of our Savior for all of us as He comes and redeems His bride, the church!

And again, our focus this morning will be - ***DON'T RUN FROM YOUR TROUBLES!***

RUTH 1**VERSES 1-2**

Again, the events spoken of here in the book of Ruth took place during the time of the Judges, that is what the opening verse here in Ruth says.

And it was during this period of time that God brought this famine upon the land.

Now let me be clear on this. This famine was not brought about by global warming. It was not what some call “*Mother Nature*” acting upon the land. Not at all!

We are told that it was God who brought this famine upon the land and it was not done for no reason.

God does not bring judgment upon anyone for no reason. In fact, the children of Israel should not have been surprised by this famine because God had already warned them that this would take place if they turned from Him.

Remember what we are told in Deuteronomy 11:13-17, and keep in mind that this was spoken before they even entered the land of Canaan, the Promise Land. We are told, “**And it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the Lord your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, then I will give you the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may eat and be filled.’ Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, lest the Lord’s anger be aroused against you, and He shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and you perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.**”

So the reason for this famine upon the land of Israel was to awaken the children of Israel out of their spiritual sleep and have them turn from the false gods they were worshiping and come back to the true and living God who loves them and cares for them!

So as this famine comes upon the land of Israel, there is a man, named Elimelech, who packs up his family and they depart from the land of Bethlehem, the House of Bread and heads to Moab!

And we are told specifically that this is the Bethlehem in Judah, in fact, it is Bethlehem Ephrathah, an ancient name for the city of Bethlehem in Judah and specifically the place where our Savior would be born! (Micah 5:2).

Yes, there was a famine in the land of Israel and the House of Bread was barren at this time. But keep in mind this was because they had turned from the Lord and God was trying to draw them back.

And this was not an easy journey, not at all. Look at what this man and his family had to do to get from Bethlehem, the House of Bread to the land of Moab.

He had to travel through the Jericho pass, through the awful Judean wilderness by the Dead Sea, go across the Jordan River into the land of Moab! It was some 2,000 miles away!

So he had to work hard to move away from what God desired. Yes, there was a famine in the land but God brought about the famine so this man and his family and the rest of the people could see their sin and repent and return to the Lord, but instead they ran away!

And this brings us to our first point – ***RUNNING AWAY!***

What I would like to do is focus on three points in regard to the situations that God brings upon our lives and how we deal with them.

We can **ENDURE** them!

We can **ESCAPE** them!

We can **ENLIST** them!

First of all, let's deal with this idea of enduring the test or the difficult situation in our life.

I think many of us would think, ***“What is wrong with that? I mean, I am going to go through this difficult situation, I will endure it, so what is wrong with that?”***

Here is the problem, and it is a big one!

When we are just enduring a trial or difficulty in our life, it ends up becoming our master. It is what we focus on day in and day out. It controls our lives.

When we just endure a trial, we can allow it to overwhelm us, even though we are pressing on, and in the end, we become angry, bitter, hard towards others and-so-on.

Think about a situation at work. Some of your co-workers are slackers, they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing and you end up finishing their work.

But you are a Christian and thus, you will endure this trial in your life, but as this goes on day in and day out, you start getting angry at them. You start to resent them, you become bitter, towards them.

Yes, you are enduring, but you have allowed it to control your life and your actions instead of the Lord. And we will deal with what we need to do as we get to our last point and you will see that just enduring is not going to help you in the long run.

The next thing that people will do is that they will escape a difficult situation that they are in. They will run away from it.

We see that here with Elimelech and his family, they move from the House of Bread to Moab.

And we may be thinking, ***“How could this man do that?”***

It is pretty simple, the same way we do!

You see, when God turns up the heat upon us, brings some kind of famine into our lives to draw us back to him, we too tend to run away.

Sometimes we run to another church because we don't like what we are hearing, it is uncomfortable for us. Or sometimes we are upset with some of the people in church or even the pastor, which is hard to believe. Not really, it happens.

Sometimes we change jobs, we change spouses, we do this, and we do that, and the reality is, God did not want you to run away but to repent and return to Him, or learn the lesson He is showing you!

Again, think about what Elimelech did. He ran away from the House of Bread or Bethlehem, and he ran to a garbage pot or wash pot, as we are told that Moab is in Psalm 108:9!

And let me say this. When you run away from a situation the Lord has you in, is it going to be better for you? Absolutely not!

Is it going to be easier for you? Absolutely not!

This is not going to be beneficial for Elimelech or his family as we will see as we read on here in Ruth in a few minutes.

So don't run away trying to escape from the trials that God has you in, because they will follow you where you are going and it will not be good. Yes, there was food in Moab but spiritually speaking, there was a famine for this family!

And the last point, the one we need to take heart and obey, is that we are to enlist the trial we are going through, resting in the Lord, then the trial will not control you but you will use it in your life to grow in the Lord!

Remember what Paul said in Romans 8:28, "**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.**"

Now let me be honest with you here with this verse. I have been through some difficult times over the years, and I am sure you have as well.

And I don't always see the good that will come out of a situation that I am in. I just don't see it. And I may not see it on this side of eternity!

Not only don't I see it, but I also don't feel it. Think about it, something bad happens, and how do you feel? You don't feel that any good will come out of the situation you are in; it is just too bad or too difficult!

And here is the point.

Paul didn't say that we would see the good that would come out of these difficult things that happen in our lives. He didn't say that we feel that good is going to come out of these difficult things that happen in our lives.

But he did say we can **KNOW** that all things are going to work together for good!

How can we know that all things are going to work together for good?

Because this knowledge is rooted in our understanding of God Himself and it is based upon His Word.

Too often we let our circumstances influence what we believe about God instead of allowing what we believe about God to influence the way we look at our circumstances!

So what do we know about God?

First of all, our **GOD IS SOVEREIGN!** He is in control and He has a plan and what He does is perfect for our lives. If we can believe that it truly leads to the next point about our God!

The second thing we know about God is that **GOD LOVES ME!** That is important to understand. God is not out to hurt us but to help us to grow. And His love for us is unconditional, it is **AGAPE** love! And we should be so thankful for that!

And lastly, and we could go on, but these should help get our focus corrected about God and the situations we face if it is off.

The last one is that **GOD HAS INFINITE WISDOM!** He knows all things and I don't, you don't! That is important because if God knows all things, and He does, then what He does will be perfect for our lives!

And it truly is because, "... we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28.

Donald Grey Barnhouse puts this in perspective for us as he wrote,

In his Bible an elderly minister carried a bookmark that was made of silk threads woven into a motto. The back of it was a tangled web of crossed threads that seemed to be without reason or purpose. When he called in some home where there was great trouble, sorrow or death, he would frequently show this bookmark, presenting the reverse side with all its unintelligible tangle.

When the bereaved one had examined it intently, without finding any explanation for the seeming disorder, the minister would ask him to turn the marker over.

Immediately, against the white silk background there was the phrase, in colored threads, "*God is love.*" That side made sense.

It is thus with all of the tangled patterns of life for the one who has been called according to the divine plan. When we know this fact, we can be at peace with the world around us because we are at peace within our own souls because we are at peace with our Heavenly Father.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse

So, when you come up against those things that you don't know, then just fall back on what you do know. God is working. He is going to work out His plan. And it will be perfect even if we don't fully understand it.

Don't just endure it!

Don't run away from it!

But enlist into it and see what God is going to do in you and through you as you do!

Let me add this and then we will move to our next point.

Make no mistake about it, Elimelech is an interesting man. Think about this. His name means, ***“God is King”*** and yet, he did not live that way, God was not King in his life!

And the idea here is that he went to Moab for a short time, just until the famine was over in Bethlehem. The problem was not with Bethlehem but with Elimelech and that sojourn down in Moab would last ten years and he would never return to Bethlehem and neither will his sons, as we will see!

And this is what I want to bring out. Elimelech walked by sight, there was food down in Moab, and not by faith, staying in Bethlehem where there was no food!

What an important lesson for us. We think difficulty is God closing a door. It may not be and a lot of times it is not. The enemy may be causing you to think the door is closing but God will use those difficult times to help us to grow, don't run away from it!

One more point and that is what the names of this family mean.

We said that Elimelech means, ***“God is my King.”***

Naomi, his wife, means, ***“pleasant.”***

They had two sons, we don't know if they were twins or not, but one was named, Mahlon, which means, ***“sickly.”***

And the other son was named Chilion, which means, ***“pinning.”***

Now we don't know if these boys were unhealthy and that is why they named them like this or that Elimelech and Naomi were ***“sick”*** and ***“tired”*** of the situations they were facing in Bethlehem and they named their kids accordingly. And thus, they just ran away thinking it would be better for them, and as we will see, it is not better, it never is better to run away from God!

Our next point is this – ***DEATH IN THE WORLD!***

VERSE 3

Elimelech thought by moving from Bethlehem to Moab things would be easier for him, they were not!

And we are told that Elimelech died down in Moab. It was not a short visit for him or his family. He would never make it back to Bethlehem.

Now, we need to keep in mind that Elimelech's name means, "**God is King**" and if you are living in garbage, in the world, that relationship will always die!

God will never be King of your life if you live your life in worldly things. You can't serve two masters and the world will win out if you let it as it did here for Elimelech!

Now his wife, Naomi was left to care for their two boys, Mahlon and Chilion.

He tried to run away from his problems and it only brought death and destruction to him and his family!

And if you think about it, and it just makes sense, you can't swim in the toilet bowl of the world and say, "**God is King**" in your life! It just can't happen!

And let's think about this. Is the world going to have the answers to your questions or problems in life?

No, they won't!

Now I am not saying that they will not have answers, they will. The problem is that the answers to your life's problems will be worldly and not of God and thus, you will be going in the wrong direction.

And if you think that this world is going to give to you life, you are sadly mistaken!

Peter, when asked by Jesus if he too was going to leave Him, said to Jesus, “... ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” John 6:68-69.

We need to keep that in our hearts and in our minds so that we allow God to be King in our lives and truly, we walk in the Spirit!

Now, what does that mean? What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?

It means to obey what the Lord has said in His Word, to obey the Spirit’s leading for our life and not take the easy way out because that is not what God always wants for our life. We need to listen to Him and then walk accordingly!

Jesus said in Matthew 6:31-34, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”

In other words, keep your eyes focused on Jesus, don’t fear but rest in Him because He knows exactly what you need. You seek Him and He will take care of you.

And the wonderful thing is that as we focus on Him, we don’t have to worry.

Yes, things will get tough if they aren’t already in your life. But you can’t run away from them, but you can surrender to God and see what He is going to show you through these times.

Remember what Paul said as he was warned about going to Jerusalem and what awaited him there, **“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”**

That has to be our focus, the Lord’s will and not to be moved from what God wants us to do. But it does happen in our lives where we are moved from the course that God has for us, but it is not good, it never is really good to be out of the will of God!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this as he wrote,

We can’t run away from our problems. We can’t avoid taking with us the basic cause of most of our problems, which is an unbelieving and disobedient heart. ‘The majority of us begin with the bigger problems outside and forget the one inside,’ wrote Oswald Chambers. A man has to learn ‘the plague of his own heart’ before his own problems can be solved . . .” (The Shadow of an Agony, p. 76).

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT, p.479

And look at what we see as Elimelech and his family are in Moab, the world. He found out that there is – ***DEATH IN THE WORLD!***

Remember, ***“Once I leave Bethlehem – Judah – the House of Bread and the Place of Praise – the rule and reign of God in my life will dissipate and die.”***

And we see that here with Elimelech!

Which leads us to our next point. Yes, Elimelech has died but his family is left in Moab and we are going to look at next – ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN THE WORLD!***

VERSE 4

With the death of Elimelech, Naomi was now left to raise these two boys in the world and as they grew, they married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth, something that they should not have done.

The Moabites were descendants of Lot, as you may remember, after his daughter got him drunk and she had sex with him and had a child named Moab, after the destruction of Sodom!

And make no mistake about it, they were the enemies of the Jews, they treated the children of Israel poorly when they were moving from Egypt to Canaan. And even during the time of Judges we see the Moabites invade Israel and rule over the people of Israel for eighteen years and it was the Judge Ehud that delivered them from the hands of the Moabites.

The names of the Moabite women that they married were Orpah and Ruth. Again, this was not in obedience to God; God commanded the Israelites to not marry among the pagan nations surrounding them.

So how can they do such a thing as marry these Moabite women? Why did they do this? What was the problem?

The big problem was that they were following in their parent's footsteps and thus, suffered because of it. They were not walking by faith but by sight!

Did you notice how long they were in Moab?

It tells us ten years they were there, and this was only to be a place to go to and gain some food while there was a famine in Israel. It was supposed to be a short stay and it wasn't! And that is the reality. Once we go back to the world, it is hard to get out of the world!

And maybe they felt they had no other options, but again, no praying, no seeking God for direction, they did what was right in their own eyes and it was not a good thing!

We are to be separate from the world. Not that we take a spaceship to another planet, but that we are in the world, but the world is not in us! And that is the key!

Let me give you this perspective. We are told,

At a meeting of church leaders in Seattle, Washington, one member of the group reportedly said that if the church is to make its greatest impact on our generation, it must become more worldly minded.

While in one sense that may bear some truth, in the Biblical sense it is false.

As we read the New Testament, it is clear that we are not to become entangled with the world. . . .

The warnings are clear. The Bible says in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world.” The Bible teaches in Galatians 1:4 that, “[Christ] gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age [cosmos].”

In other words, the world was such a great danger to our souls that this danger caused Christ, the Son of God, to go to the cross to deliver us from it.

Throughout the Bible, the lines are definitely drawn between the world of unbelievers and the world of the children of God. “Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Jesus Himself said, “The world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world” (John 17:14-16).

Again Jesus said, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

The Bible also teaches that the Christian will face opposition in the world. “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution,” said the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:12.

Just as Christ’s life with all its love, concern and selflessness was a rebuke to the cosmos of His time, so our lives with Christ abiding in us today bring about criticism, opposition and persecution from those who cannot comprehend the mystery of God’s redemptive grace.

The Bible teaches that we are not to be discouraged by this belligerence. We are to consider it evidence that we are identified with Christ.

Jesus said, “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:11-12).

In this complex generation in which we live, it is not easy for the Christian to distinguish between that which is spiritual and that which is worldly.

In the Bible, Satan is called an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). He is a great imitator, and it is not always easy to distinguish between Satan’s world and the realm where God reigns.

Jesus said that if it were possible, Satan would deceive even the elect (see Matthew 24:24).

This cosmos has its own entertainment and diversions that so permeate the atmosphere that it makes the way of the cross seem antiquated and irrelevant.

In much of the entertainment media fostered by the cosmos, the name of God is profaned, sex is glamorized, and high, ethical living and Christian moral standards are laughed at.

Even many Christians are tricked into believing that they cannot enjoy life except as a member of the cosmos crowd.

However, the happiest people I know are separated followers of Jesus Christ. They are not dependent upon artificial stimulants. They do not have to abuse their bodies to relax their minds.

The Bible says, “In Your presence is fullness of joy” (Psalm 16:11).

Christianity is not a long list of restrictions. It flings open the windows to the real joy of living.

The cosmos would have us believe that following Christ is nothing but “thou shalt nots.” The cosmos would have us believe that Christianity is a killjoy, a stolid [emotionless] kind of life, unnatural and abnormal.

But the evidence in the Bible is to the contrary.

Christ said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

And those who have been truly converted to Jesus Christ know the meaning of abundant living.

The Bible teaches that worldliness is a force, a spirit, an atmosphere of the cosmos that is in opposition to all that is godly and Christian. Its goal is selfish pleasure, material success and the pride of life. It is ambitious, self-centered. God is not necessarily denied; He is just ignored and forgotten. . . .

So we as Christians are in the world. We come in contact with the world, and yet we retain our distinctive kingdom character and refuse to let the world press us into its mold.

The world is keenly aware of its emptiness, of its unfulfilled dreams, of its failure to cope with life. The world system is inadequate to meet the deeper needs of the human heart.

This is ideal soil for implanting the Gospel. God has seen fit to entrust the work of His kingdom to us. If the world system is changed, it will be through our witness.

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How we respond in situations, where we go, if it is back into the world, remember we not only take our friends down that same path, but we take our children as well and we see that here – ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN THE WORLD!***

Let me show you how this works. We are told,

If a cube of lead is placed on a cube of gold, the two metals slowly but inevitably begin to penetrate each other. In the same manner we tend to imbibe the spirit, to share the opinions, to partake of the qualities of our intimate associates. Though we may believe that our gold will enrich their lead, the opposite is far more likely to prove true - their lead will debase our gold. That is why the Psalmist said, “Depart from me, ye evil doers, that I may keep the commandments of my God” (Ps 119:115).

- Illustrations of Bible Truths

That is a pretty powerful point, and it is the point that Paul makes in Romans 12:2 where he tells us that the world wants to conform us into its image, place us in its mold so we look and act just like them.

But God wants to transform our lives by the renewing of our minds, by filling our minds with the things of God so that the Spirit of God can show us how we are to walk, and then we must obey.

The world has nothing for us, nothing at all except death and destruction.

And that brings us to our last point – ***MORE DEATH IN THE WORLD!***

VERSE 5

Now we don't know if the death of Elimelech and now Mahlon and Chilion is the result of the judgment of God or it was just their time. But the spiritual principle is there; death spiritually speaking is the result of walking away from God, being where you should not be!

And from the text it would seem that within those ten years living in Moab that Mahlon and Chilion married Orpah and Ruth and sometime after this, both of these men died.

And look what we have here. There are three widows and no children. They had no means of survival, and widows were among the lowest and most disadvantaged classes in the ancient world!

And for Naomi, she had no family in Moab, there was no one to support them and they were in a desperate situation.

And this last point I want to bring up is this – ***MORE DEATH IN THE WORLD!***

Remember that Elimelech left Bethlehem, left the House of Bread to go to Moab, the washpot you might say.

And the reason he left was because he wanted a better life for him and his family. There was a famine in Israel, in Bethlehem and thus, Moab had food and thus, this had to be better for his family, or so he thought!

Not only do we see Elimelech die in the world, but we also see his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion die as well.

Naomi is now left with nothing except her two daughters-in-law that were left with her in Moab!

And make no mistake about it, the Devil wants to steal away all that you have and thus, he entices you to follow down his path, away from the House of Bread and go to the washpot or the toilet bowl of this world!

Listen carefully.

Are you ever overwhelmed by how difficult it is to live a life that is pleasing to God? If the temptations of the world and the sin within our own hearts isn't enough, Satan is also working overtime to see to our destruction, downfall, or weakening. He has no compassion, he doesn't care how hard life is for you or all the things you have gone through. He rejoices in our difficulties and only wants to add to them.

Satan is cunning and crafty. He is also more powerful than we give him credit for and therefore a being to be guarded against and fought against. He has the experience of all kinds of evil on his side as well as the fact that he never grows tired and never gives up spewing his hatred for Christ and his bride.

He hates them because . . .

they have escaped out of his hand,

they oppose his kingdom and government;

they hate sin, and pant, and pray, and strive for holiness. . . .

We are a people who are easily distracted especially by all the new, shiny and exciting things that world has to offer. Therefore Satan will use the beautiful things, even good things, to draw your attention and devotion from Jesus.

Satan can never take away our salvation. God is greater and will lose none who belong to him. But he can do a lot of damage and cripple us in our quest for intimacy with God and personal holiness.

Therefore we must be alert because Satan will attack when we are not ready (1 Peter 5:8-9), we must know the devils antics (2 Cor. 2:11), and we must stand firm against the attacks and deceits of the devil. (Eph. 6:11). God has not left us defenseless. He has given us an armor that we must know and wear at all times.

Someday we will be able trade in our armor for a royal robe and crown. Battles will be a part of the past and our future will hold nothing but peace and joy. But until then we must encourage each other to not give up in the fight, or to run away in fear. We have a most powerful God on our side!

“Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. **Do not be fainthearted or afraid**; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory.” Deuteronomy 20:3, 4.

- <https://bit.ly/3eN38LI>

We are in a battle for our witness and the enemy will try to destroy it by bringing difficult times in our lives and we are not to run away but run into the arms of our Savior, Jesus Christ. We must walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. We must walk by faith and not by sight!

Look at what we have seen this morning.

We saw Elimelech and his family – ***RUNNING AWAY!*** They ran away from the House of Bread looking for help in this world and it did not bring them the satisfaction that they sought!

Now, what they did find was that there was – ***DEATH IN THE WORLD!*** And we saw that with the death of Elimelech!

Not only that, but because they had brought their two sons into the world, to Moab we saw – ***THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIVING IN THE WORLD!*** We saw these two sons marry Moabite women.

And it didn't end there, we concluded by looking at – ***MORE DEATH IN THE WORLD!*** And we saw the death of Mahlon and Chilion, the sons of Elimelech and Naomi.

That is just the reality of what the world has for us, but God has for us life and not just life, but abundant life!

May we follow Him all the days of our life and we will see that Naomi is going to find that out, but to do that, she will have to go back to Bethlehem, the House of Bread and so must we!

DON'T RUN FROM YOUR TROUBLES – RUN INTO THE ARMS OF YOUR LOVING SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST!