

The Significance of the story of Ruth and Naomi

The story of Ruth and Naomi is a moving illustration of the power of faith. It is demonstrative of the blessings that abound for the poor and meek who diligently and earnestly maintain their integrity even in the most trying circumstances. Those called into the Lord's service must show like measure of faith and obedience to get a full reward in God's Kingdom fully established by God's grace and power.

Naomi: Naomi had strong faith in God by reason of which she still remained steadfast in the work of God despite losing her husband and her two sons who died childless. The Bible says nothing should separate us from the love of God Almighty and Jesus Christ. (Romans 8:35-39; Psalm 71:20-22). Naomi cared for the future well-being of her daughters-in-law. She calls to mind the description of a virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10-31.

From the story we could also see that it is not the beginning that matters but the end. Though Naomi was beset with a series of tribulations including famine and deaths, she had a bright ending by God's grace due to her faith. -Ecclesiastes 7:8; Psalm 112:1-3; Matthew 24:12,13.

Ruth: Though a young woman, she demonstrated great faith in not allowing the loss of her husband to dampen her belief that the God of Israel is the true God. Truly, the series of deaths in the family were enough to give one second thoughts on the benefits of remaining in the family; but her faith in God kept her going. Unless one is prepared to remain in God's service even in the face of death, he can not continue till the end. – Luke 14:26,27; 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Again, Ruth refused to go back to her people and to the false religion they were practising. She told Naomi "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God". (Ruth 1:16; Deuteronomy 6:4,5; Luke 11:27, 28) It should also be pointed out that in her dealings with her mother-in-law, Ruth was respectful, obedient, honest and truthful. (Ruth 2:1,2,18; 3:16,17) Ruth was also a very hard working young woman. She did not want to sit down idly, eating the bread of idleness. (Proverbs 31:27; Proverbs 10:4; Proverbs 22:29)

Because of her faithfulness and obedience, Ruth has the honour of being the great-grandmother of our Lord Jesus Christ. – Ruth 4: 17-22; Matthew 1:5-16.

Boaz: Because he was God-fearing, he was not slack in keeping to the terms of the levirate marriage as stated in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, and the law that farmers should leave part of the harvest for gleaners, the poor and strangers in the land. We should be ready to make sacrifices

for righteousness sake. There is blessing in so doing. (Matthew 16:24, 27) The high discipline of Boaz is a shining example to all.

Boaz was a firm believer in God's providence. He had strong faith in God. He was also very liberal in providing for the indigent family of his late brother. This teaches us by way of example that we should help the widows and the fatherless in our midst and the less privileged generally. – Ruth 2:5-18; Isaiah 1:17.

Orpah: Orpah was the wife of Chilion. She returned after initial reluctance to her people, and to her gods, and to the prospect of a happy married life. By ceasing to be for the Lord, one is then counted as being against Him. (Matthew 12:30) St. Paul declared: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." (Hebrews 10:38,39) It is vital to recall the warning of our Lord Jesus Christ that we should "remember Lot's wife". (Luke 17:32) Again he declared: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." – Luke 9:62.

Further Interpretation

In the story, Boaz stands for God Almighty, the Great Provider, Who is liberal to the faithful poor and needy. (Psalm 40:17) God Almighty is the Father of all. He gives to all meat in due season. (Psalm 104:27; 145:16) Though Boaz was richer than the near kinsman he did not use that to force matters his way. Though God has all power, yet He does not deal with man according to his sins.

In the story, Naomi stands for the anointed Christians. These are the ones God uses to bring forth children in His organisation. St. Paul declared: "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." – 1 Corinthians 4:15. see also 1 Timothy 1:2.

Ruth stands for the "Other Sheep" class. These are the poor and meek in spirit – those who were outside God's favour but who on hearing the truth, hold to Him and His Kingdom without looking back until the end. – Ephesians 2:10-12; Luke 24:45-47; Acts 10:34,35.

Orpah stands for the unfaithful, those who having received the call, are unable to continue or endure, but backslide into satan's organisation along the way. – Matthew 24:12,13; James 1:12; Hebrews 12:3.