

Ruth 1

Introduction:

1. Occasionally, we need to be reminded of the assurance expressed in Romans 8:28.
2. One way to accomplish this is by seeing God's care demonstrated in the lives of Bible characters [examples: Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph].
3. God's providential care is illustrated in a powerful way in the book of Ruth.
4. We are studying 4 lessons from Ruth to help us gain greater confidence in God's care.

Discussion:

I. (1:1-5) INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

- A. (vs.1) The time for this book was *"when the judges ruled."*
 1. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land.
 2. The Israelites conquered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua.
 3. After Joshua died, Israel was ruled by a series of "judges" [deliverers].
 4. This period lasted until Saul was appointed king [300 years: 1350-1050 BC].
 5. The condition of Israel during this time was not good (Judges 2:16-19; 21:25).
 6. We learn from Ruth that God still cared for His people, even during this turbulent period.
- B. The book of Ruth tells about a family that lived during this time.
 1. The head of the family was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi.
 2. They had 2 sons: Mahlon and Chilion.
 3. This family was from Bethlehem.
 4. Elimelech took his family to Moab because of a famine that occurred in Palestine.
- C. The situation in Palestine was bad; however, things got worse in Moab.
 1. (vs.3) Elimelech died, leaving Naomi a widow.
 2. (vs.5) Mahlon and Chilion died, leaving Naomi childless.
 3. Naomi lost her entire family -- only her daughters-in-law, women from Moab, remained.
 4. Naomi was an Israelite, a member of God's chosen race.
 5. Even though she was one of God's chosen people, she suffered greatly.
 6. However, things began to improve.

II. (1:6-18) NAOMI HAD A CONVERSATION WITH ORPAH AND RUTH

- A. (vs.6) Naomi decided to return to her home because the Lord had given His people bread.
- B. Orpah and Ruth both wanted to go with her, but she tried to persuade them to stay in Moab.
- C. Orpah finally decided to stay, but Ruth was determined to go with her.

III. (1:19-22) NAOMI RETURNED TO BETHLEHEM WITH RUTH

- A. (vs.20) After returning to her home, Naomi wanted to be called "Mara" [Bitter].
 1. She had left with a husband and 2 sons.
 2. However, she returned "empty."
- B. It seems that she was blaming God for her losses.

IV. APPLICATION

- A. God has never promised that we will not suffer in this life as Naomi did, but He has promised to help us (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- B. The trials that we face will either make us "bitter" or "better."
 1. Naomi became "bitter."
 2. With God's help we can become "better" (James 1:2-5).
- C. We must not allow trials to cause us to lose sight of God's blessings.
 1. Naomi was concerned with her losses.
 2. However, God had blessed her by:
 - a. giving her people bread
 - b. giving her a devoted daughter-in-law
 - c. giving her a safe journey home
 - d. allowing her to return home *"in the beginning of barley harvest"* (vs.22).
- D. When we face trials, someone else will be watching us, and the way we face our trials will influence them.