

# “Women of Faith”

## Book of Ruth

East Berlin Community Church

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### Introduction

- Women are the backbone of Christian congregations in America
- The backbone is in danger of being broken by damaged faith

## Women of Faith: Naomi and Ruth

### A. Naomi’s Bitter Faith-- Ruth 1

1. The Setting--days of the Judges
  - Ruth 1:1-5 -- *“Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now, they took wives from the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other, Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.”*
2. The Causes of her bitter faith
  - a. Not directly by the loss in her life.
  - b. Directly caused by a distorted view of God and His grace.
    - Ruth 1:20-21-- *“but she said to them, ‘Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me.”*
    - Ruth 1:8-9 -- *“And Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each to her mother’s house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you find rest, each in the house of her husband.”*
3. In spite of her bitter faith, she exercises what little faith she has.
  - Ruth 1:6-7 -- *“Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. Therefore, she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.”*

### B. Ruth’s New-Found Faith

- Ruth 1:8-18-- *“And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each to her mother’s house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.’ So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices, and wept. And they said to her, ‘Surely we will return with you to your people.’ But Naomi said, ‘Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, would you wait for them till they are grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husband? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.’ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, ‘Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.’ But Ruth said, ‘Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go;*

*And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.' When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her."*

1. Naomi in her bitterness tries her best to dissuade Ruth and Orpah.
2. But in spite of Naomi's imperfect faith, Ruth expresses genuine faith in God.
  - Ruth 1:16-17 -- *"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."*
  - Ruth 2:11-12 -- *"And Boaz answered and said to her, 'It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.'"*

### **C. God's Blessings on Naomi and Ruth because of their faith in Him.**

1. By grace, God provides for their physical needs through the gracious, generous provisions of Boaz, a near relative. Ruth 2
  - Ruth 2:1-3-- *"There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please, let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in which sight I may find favor.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.' Then she left and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was the family of Elimelech."*
  - a. The practice of Gleaning under the law
  - b. God's providence in leading Ruth to Boaz's field.
  - c. Boaz's gracious and generous provisions
  - d. The HEALING of Naomi's Bitter Faith
    - Ruth 2:18-20 -- *"Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.' So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, 'The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz.' Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!' And Naomi said to her, 'This man is a relation of ours, one of our closest relatives.'"*
2. By grace, God provides Naomi the family land and Ruth a husband through the gracious, generous redemption of Boaz-- Ruth 3-4
  - a. Kinsman redeemer under the Law—land
    - Leviticus 25:25 -- *"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possessions, and is his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold."*
  - b. Law of levirate marriage—lineage
    - Deuteronomy 25:5-6 -- *"If brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the first-born son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel."*
3. By grace, Naomi and Ruth become the channel of God's blessing through the birth of Obed, the grandfather of David and ultimately through Christ.
  - Ruth 4:17 -- *"also the neighbor women gave him the name, saying ' There is a son born to Naomi.' And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David."*