



Too Soon to Quit by Warren W. Wiersbe Chapter 6 – Ruth, the Resolver

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I. Great Faith

A. There were three spiritual experiences in Ruth's life that helped her endure trials and accomplish God's will. GREAT FAITH / GREAT HOPE / GREAT LOVE

B. What Jesus said about the Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman in Matt. 15: 22 can be said about Ruth in the OT : " Woman, great is the faith".

C. When famine came to Judah, Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons abandoned Bethlehem ("the house of bread") and went to Moab.

D. Ruth was born into a Moabite family, and Moses had commanded, "No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation" (Deut. 23: 3).

E. Although they ignored God's law, He overruled their decisions and brought blessing in spite of their disobedience.

F. We don't know how long the family lived in Moab before Elimelech died, but we get the impression it was after his death that the two sons got married to Moabite women contrary to the law of God (Neh. 13: 1-3)

G. The Moabites worshipped Chemosh/Molech, one of the worst of the pagan gods where priests sacrificed little children on the altar (Lev. 20: 1-3).

H. Ten years later, the two brothers died, and Naomi was left with her daughter-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

I. Later, news came to Moab that the famine in Judah had ended. Naomi started off for Bethlehem with her two daughters-in-law. Early in the journey she decided to go alone and urged Orpah and Ruth to return home.

J. She argued that she was too old to have any more sons for them to wed.

K. At first, both of them insisted on continuing with Naomi, but then Orpah yielded, kissed her mother-in-law goodbye and turned back to Moab.

L. But there was no turning back for Ruth! Her testimony is one of the greatest confessions of faith recorded in Scripture. “Don’t urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, even if death separates you and me” Ruth 1: 16-17).

M. There had to be some kind of witness given that God could use to open her eyes and touch her heart.

N. There in Moab, Naomi may not have been in the center of God’s will, but still she gave enough of a loving witness that Ruth saw the reality of her mother-in-law’s faith and “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (I Thess. 1: 9).

O. Ruth’s glorious experience of saving faith was later described by Boaz in these words : “May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge” (Ruth 2: 12).

P. Instead of going back to the old life (like Orpah did) Ruth had gone into the (spiritual) Holy of Holies to “rest in the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1).

II. Great Hope

A. But Ruth’s faith was just the beginning of her wonderful new life, because that great experience of faith brought with it a greater experience of hope!

B. Ruth’s situation in Moab was hopeless; Paul described it in Eph. 2: 12 : “separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of promise, without hope and without God in the world”.

C. Hope is what keeps people going. Not “hope so”. Real hope is based on the character and on the promises of God.

D. Christians can endure times of trouble and even profit from them because we are “inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. 1: 3).

E. Peter calls it “a living hope” because it’s centered in the living Christ (I Peter 1: 3).

F. The Christian’s hope is rooted in the living Christ and His living Word.

G. Ruth was now a part of a new fellowship – “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession” (I Peter 2: 9).

H. Little did she realize that God would use her as one of the “living links” to bring the Savior into the world.

I. As the children of God, we should live “in the future tense” just like the Apostle Paul. “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”(Phil. 3: 13-14).

J. Too often we rob ourselves of joy by brooding over past mistakes and sins, when we should be focusing on what God has done for us and what He has promised for our future.

K. “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more” is God’s guarantee (Heb. 10: 17); so why should I remember what God has for gotten?

III. Great Love

A. When Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, she discovered the greatest experience –love!!!

B. Ruth is a beautiful illustration of what Paul wrote in Rom. 5: 1-5 about every true Christian believer- “Therefore, since we have been justified (declared righteous) through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope; And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.

C. The story of Ruth is fundamentally a love story. In love He gave her the companionship of Naomi; and through Naomi she had the promise of a husband because of the Levitical law of the kinsman redeemer (Lev. 25: 23-24, 39-55). This law permitted a near relative to purchase back the property of a bankrupt Hebrew so that the land would not be lost from the family. In this situation the purchase would also include Ruth, the widow of Naomi’s son Mahlon who had been the husband of Ruth (Ruth 4: 10).

D. Chapter 3 informs us that Ruth had put herself at the feet of Boaz and declared her willingness to become his wife. In order to secure Ruth and the property, Boaz had to call a council meeting in the city gate and give a nearer kinsman first opportunity to make the purchase. But the man wouldn’t make an offer because if he had Ruth as his wife, it would jeopardize his inheritance; so the way was opened for Boaz to act. (Jesus purchased us and made us His inheritance).

E. Boaz paid the price and took Ruth out of the fields and into his heart and his home.

F. It was a miracle of the grace of God, and it all began when she clung to her mother-in-law and declared her faith in the true and living God.

IV. Submission to God

A. When Ruth and Naomi left Moab, everything seemed against them. They were heading for a nation that had a very masculine society. Ruth belonged to a pagan nation that was excluded from Israel by the very law of God. Ruth was a poor widow traveling with another poor widow, and widows didn’t rank high in Israel. But her faith in the God of Israel had put hope in her heart.

B. Ruth permitted the Lord to have His way in her life, and she manifested that submissive spirit by caring for Naomi, working in the field, obeying the commands of Naomi and Boaz, and trusting the Lord to work out His will.

C. God's will for us comes from God's heart, and our obedience must come from our hearts (Eph. 6: 6)

D. The proof of God's love for us isn't found in the feelings within us or the circumstances around us. No matter how discouraging and difficult our circumstances may be, or how "low" we may feel, God still loves us and is working on our behalf (Rom. 8: 28).

E. We know that God loves us because Jesus died for our sins (Rom. 5: 8).

F. The Lord used ordinary experiences like hunger and thirst, working and waiting, to accomplish His loving purposes. Day after day she did in the strength of the lord the ordinary things that other women were doing in Bethlehem , and she did them with gratitude to God. In the plan of God there is no such thing as "secular" and "sacred" for "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (I Cor. 10: 31).

G. "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13: 13). "His love endures forever" is found twenty-six times in Psalm 136. How many times must God say it before we will believe it and act accordingly???

H. Ruth endured more pain in a few short years than many people do in a lifetime; including death of her husband and relocation to a strange land whose citizens would likely treat her as an enemy. She faced one difficulty after another, but Ruth didn't quit.