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Rev. Dr. Frances "Toni" Draper, Pastor

"What I Do not Know" Bible Study

October 30, 2018 – 7:30-8:15 p.m.

Rev. Carolyn McGee, Instructor

Lesson Comes from Ruth Chapters 1 and 2

Background

- The Book of Ruth is set during a time when there were judges. It is between the time after Joshua's death and the appointment of Saul as King of Israel.
- Judges were appointed by God to deliver and maintain order among the Israelites. They served in most cases as military leaders until the Israelite's monarch was established. Judges 2: 18-19
- This was an era where God's people did whatever was right for them in their own eyes to include rejecting his statues and ordinances.

3 Main Characters in This Narrative

- Naomi means My Joy/My Bliss
- Ruth means Companion, friend; vision of beauty
- Boaz means Strength is within him

The narrative begins with a famine in Bethlehem in the land of Judah. Famines were one of the methods God used when His chosen people turned away from Him by rejecting His statues and ordinances and pursuing other Gods. Judges 2:11-15

- Naomi and her husband Elimelech (My God is King) were Ephrathites (from the Tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph who was the son of Israel).
- Because of the famine, Elimelech moved his family; his wife and two sons Mahlon and Chilion to Moab where they settled there because the economic prospects appeared to be brighter.
- Elimelech dies. It is ironic that Elimelech fled his home to escape the possibility of death and dies in Moab.
- The two sons, Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women; Ruth and Orpah. These unions were contrary to the law. Deuteronomy 7:3-4
- Naomi's sons die.
- Naomi was now alone with two daughters-in-law who were from a foreign land and served other gods.

Naomi's Cup of Bitterness

After the death of her husband and two sons, Naomi felt that God's hand was against her in judgement. What remained were her two daughters-in-law who were Moabites. In desperation, she left Moab because she heard that God had heard the cries of His people as they repented and provided food.

"Where lives are changed, hurts are healed, hope is restored, and Jesus is Lord!"

- As she traveled the road to the land of Judah, she encouraged her daughters-in-laws to return to their Mothers' homes.
- Naomi was too old to have another husband and have children. (Levirate Marriage DT: 25:5-10)
- Orpah returned home but Ruth remained with Naomi.
- Ruth pledged her love and loyalty to Naomi saying wherever you go I will live; your God will become my God; where you die, I die.
- Naomi desired to be called Mara (the Lord has made her bitter)
- Naomi was empty, she felt that she had no worth, hope or usefulness. She was a desolate woman. She blamed God for her state of affairs.
- She did not understand what God was doing in her life.
- All she could see is the loss and took no responsibility for it. Instead of remaining in Bethlehem and crying out to God, she and her family moved to what appeared in their eye sight as a better life.

God Turns It Around and Around

- Ruth was more like a daughter than a daughter-in-law
- In Bethlehem, Ruth secured work as a gleaner to take care of Naomi and herself
- Ruth worked on a field that belonged to Boaz, a prominent man of noble character who was related to Naomi's late husband Elimelech
- Boaz notice the young woman, Ruth, and told her to only gather grain in his field and ordered the men not to touch her
- Ruth related all of the details to Naomi and Naomi realized that Boaz was a kinsman redeemer
- At this point, Naomi's bitterness subdued and her former pleasant disposition returned.
- She began to mentor Ruth in what she should do in the steps leading up to Boaz and Ruth's marriage.
- For Naomi, the bitterness had passed the time for joy had come.
- She forgot about where she had been and began to focus on the here and now and the prospects of a bright future for her and her daughter, Ruth

God has a way of making the crooked things straight in our lives. Naomi stated she left here country full and returned home empty. As we see, God can use us when we are empty. Little did she know that God was working in the midst of what appeared to be tragedy. There are times on our Christian journey that we will do like Naomi, make decisions that we feel are in the best interest of ourselves and family but it fails to turn out as we expected it too. But just like Naomi, God will still be in the midst when we come to our spiritual senses and repent.

There are circumstances that we must go through that will prepare us for the work that God has purposed us to do. Unlike Naomi, we must stay focused on yielding to the Holy Spirit and allowing Him to guide our steps.

Little did Naomi know that through the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, that their son Obed, would be the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David. This would be line of Judah that Messiah would be born. The child Obed became the apple of her eye. She had something to once again live for. To think a Moabite woman who loved Naomi enough to say, "Your God will be my God, would in the genealogical tables of Mathew 1:5. The Moabite woman who left her people for the love of Naomi is duly named as an ancestress of the Messiah Himself.