

The Old Paths

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“Ruth, A Godly Woman”

Jarrod Jacobs

Ruth is an outstanding woman of faith in the Old Testament. Though she and her family lived during the days when the nation of Israel did evil, the story of Ruth makes it evident that individuals can please God in spite of the wickedness around them. Ruth takes her place with such godly people as Noah and his family, who were godly when so many others were wicked in their thoughts and deeds (Gen. 6).

A point I find interesting is that this lady would have received the majority of her knowledge of Jehovah, of godly worship, and what it means to be of the seed of Abraham from her husband Mahlon and her in-laws, who were Jews (1:1, 4:18-22). Remember, Ruth was from Moab (1:4). Therefore, she did not grow up obeying the Ten Commandments, nor being involved in the Jewish Feast days, etc. She was not brought up as a Jewish girl nor would she have observed the Sabbath day like her husband and his family. Only through her marriage and relationship with her in-laws would she have learned about God and followed Him.

The influence of this family obviously made a difference in her life, for after she and Orpah were widowed and allowed to return to Moab to be remarried (1:8-9), Ruth begged to stay with her mother-in-law and return to Bethlehem. She said, “Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return

from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (1:16-17). This speaks volumes about the love Ruth had for Naomi. Think about it, Ruth chose to go to Bethlehem (a foreign land to her, 2:11), as a widow. She accompanied a widow to this land, having no prospects for marriage, money, or property. She begged to go with Naomi in poverty and be by her side rather than returning to her homeland and possibly marry into possessions and wealth!

Ruth had an industrious side to her as well. This was seen when she was in Bethlehem, willing to work in the field (2:2-3, 6-7, 14-15, 17). Though in poverty, she did not expect others to supply her needs, but was going to work and do what she could (II Thess. 3:10). She also continued to consult her mother-in-law in decisions, including how to act when Boaz pursued the opportunity to marry her (2:2, 22-23, 3:1-18).

Ruth was a godly woman, one who had a “meek and quiet spirit” (I Pet. 3:4), and was a hard worker. Through God’s providence, Ruth became the great-grandmother of David (Ruth 4:21-22), thus making her a part of the lineage of Christ (Matt. 1:5-6; Lk. 3:32).

Therefore, within this love story of Boaz and Ruth, we see an even greater message — the story of salvation!

Applications

What can we learn from the account of Ruth and her life? We can learn plenty (Rom. 15:4)! One thing we can learn is how important our life and teaching are within the family. Remember, Ruth would have learned about Jehovah and the practices of the Jews from Mahlon her husband, and his family during those ten years (1:4). Have we considered the fact that the passages of the New Testament which emphasize teaching (II Tim. 2:2; Mk. 16:15; I Tim. 4:16; etc.) have applications in the home? Surely, this is where our teaching needs to start (Eph. 6:4; Titus 2:3-5)!

Let us not take for granted the example of a godly older woman like Naomi (Titus 2:3-5). Naomi obviously inspired love and caring in the heart of Ruth. Do you know many daughters-in-law who would want to take care of their mother-in-law when the reason for caring (husband) is gone? Yet, this was the case! She was ready to go back to her mother-in-law’s homeland instead of her own. This speaks volumes for the care and righteous example Naomi showed Ruth. What kind of example are we showing to our family, to strangers, to those at work, and our friends (Matt. 5:16)? Can people see Christ in us (Gal. 2:20)?

All these and more lessons can be learned when we study the short book of Ruth. Let us ask ourselves how well we listen to those older and wiser than us. Are we workers, especially workers in God’s kingdom (Matt. 6:33)? Let us not be lazy people, but learn from such godly people as Ruth. Let us make sure we can also say we are in the lineage of Christ by becoming a child of God today (Gal. 3:26-29), and then let our actions and attitudes reflect Christ daily.

“Where Does Your Interest Lie?”

Jarrold Jacobs

Webster's Dictionary defines the word interest in the following ways: "1. the feeling of one whose attention, concern, or curiosity is particularly engaged by something ... 2. that which concerns, involves, draws the attention of, or arouses the curiosity of a person ... 3. power of exciting such involvement, concern, etc., quality of being interesting."

When asked what thing, or things arouse curiosity, excite, and engage one's mind, some might mention baseball, football, NASCAR, knitting, TV shows, woodworking, and a number of other things which interest them.

None of these things are necessarily wrong in themselves. In fact, we could add a multitude of other things into the category of what "interests" folks, and none of those things would necessarily lead to sin. Yet, I am afraid that in pursuit of our interests, many folks have ignored and otherwise cast aside the thing that should excite them the most — God's word!

God's word ought to engage our mind. It should arouse our curiosity to learn more and more. God's word should be of primary interest to men and women.

Why do I make that statement? Why should the Bible hold such interest over us? It is because of what we find contained within the pages of the

Bible. The Bible contains answers to questions which no other work has. If we wish to know our beginning (Gen. 1-2), why we are here (Ecc. 12:13-14), and where we are going when this life is over (Matt. 25:46), we need to spend time in the Bible!

Furthermore, if we are interested in learning how to worship the God of Heaven acceptably, (Jn. 4:24; Acts 2:42, 20:7; Eph. 5:19; etc.) we need to spend time in the Bible. From Genesis 4 to the book of Revelation, we see that God is concerned with folks worshipping Him in an acceptable way. He has never been happy with folks who thought they could just "throw up" anything to God, call it worship, and think God would accept it (ex: Mal. 1:6-14). If we are engaged and curious as to how we can worship God acceptably, then, let us spend time in God's word and learn what He wants!

Does self-improvement interest you? Rather than relying upon the advice of fallible men for improvement, why not turn to our infallible God for the answers on how to make proper decisions, have a good family life, as well as the "how-to" for making the most of every day? (ex: Proverbs; Eph. 5:22-33; Ps. 119:97-100; Jas. 4:7-8, 15) Let us allow God's word to "improve" us!

If we are curious as to how we can be saved from sin, then let us not turn to a creed book, religious manual, or some other work of man. Instead, let us go to God's word and learn that in order to be saved from sin we need to hear God's word, and nothing else (Acts 2:22). Hearing God's word produces faith (Rom. 10:17). This is necessary, for without faith we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). In light of our faith in God's word, and faith in Christ (Jn. 8:24), we must then repent of our sins (Lk. 13:3, 5; II Pet. 3:9), confess our faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:36-37), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21). This is what all those converted to the Lord did in New Testament days, and this is what we must do!

If you have read about the Lord's plan of salvation before, good! I am glad you have had another chance to read the Lord's plan and consider these passages before it is too late (II Cor. 6:2). Our salvation ought to interest us in a deep and profound way. Therefore, if you're not a Christian, please respond to the Lord's invitation before it is too late! Then, live for Him (Matt. 6:33; Col. 3:17), worship Him acceptably (Jn. 4:24), and follow the Lord daily (Lk. 9:23).

WHERE DOES YOUR INTEREST LIE? DOES IT NEED TO CHANGE?

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Preacher/Editor: Jarrold Jacobs
Elders: Paul Dubois & Jeff Lankford
Phone: (270) 683-5386

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