

The Attraction of Naomi

What did Ruth see in her mother-in-law that she followed her to Israel?

The Book of Ruth

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Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – No suggestions, except for songs on love

Prelude:

I. I already gave this poem to you (5 years ago).

Where's Mother? By Hugo McCord

Our little one lay mid snow white sheets
And smiled in peaceful slumber sweet,
Soon he opened his blue eyes wide,
And saw me standing by his side.
His baby lips quivered, loud he cried,
"Where's Murver?"

Small Anne was playing in the yard.
She ran too fast and fell so hard.
Up the steps she ran past me
With bleeding hands and aching knee.
Tears in her eyes, she could not see;
She cried, "Where's Mother?"

When Jack comes in each day from school
Throws his coat and cap upon a stool,
Into the kitchen he quickly flies,
Thinking of cookies and apple pies.
If she's not there, he always cries,
"Where's Mother?"

I was their Dad and could not see
Why they asked for Mother instead of me
But the next day when I came from town,
Before I laid my burden down,
I asked the children standing round,
"Where's Mother?"

II. Something about Naomi attracted her two daughters-in-law

A. that they wanted to go with her as she returned to the Land of Israel,

- B. although their husbands, her sons had died.
 - 1. Her godly motherhood made her irresistible, and
 - 2. Orpah and Ruth could not imagine life without her.

Persuasion:

I. Ruth 1 | The Godly Example of Naomi

- A. The setting for the story (1.1-5).
 - 1. During the time of the judges, Israel sinned frequently.
 - a) However, one family remained loyal to Jehovah God, and
 - b) the family that Ruth married into twice.
 - 2. Naomi's family moved to Moab because of a severe famine in Israel.
 - a) The two boys married women of Moab.
 - b) Eventually the father and both sons die.
 - (1) The mother, Naomi, had no reason to stay in Moab and
 - (2) made plans to return to her own land.
- B. Naomi heard that the Lord visited His people by giving them bread.
- C. Her daughters-in-law had been good to her, and
 - 1. she naturally sought good things for them,
 - 2. encouraging them to return to their families.
 - a) She blessed them by wishing the Lord's kindness toward them, and
 - b) she wanted them to find rest back with their families.
- D. They wanted to go to Israel with her, but she attempted to turn them away.
- E. In 1.11-13, See her attitude toward motherhood,

11 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? 12 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, 13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much

for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!” (Ruth 1.11–13).

1. Her heart went out to them,
 2. wanting the best for them.
- F. However, what Ruth said to Naomi shows the affect that Naomi had on Ruth,

**16 “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.
17 Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If anything but death parts you and me.”
(Ruth 1.16–17)**

1. Ruth loved her husband, but
 - a) she had also developed a very strong relationship with Naomi.
 - b) It seems that Naomi had become Ruth’s mother also.
 2. Ruth wanted to adopt Naomi’s people.
 3. Ruth wanted to adopt Naomi’s God.
- G. Ruth 1.19–22 shows the grief of a mother,

19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” 20 But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 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?” 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest (Ruth 1.19–22).

II. Ruth 2 | Naomi as a Mother

A. Death of a mother's children does not abolish the motherly instinct (2.2).

1. After the two women arrived in Bethlehem we have this account,

2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter" (Ruth 2.2).

2. Legally speaking, Naomi was no longer a mother to Ruth, but

a) Naomi had been such a wonderful woman to Ruth,

b) that Naomi still considered Ruth a daughter and

(1) it is doubtless true that Ruth considered Naomi as a mother, for

(2) Ruth asked Naomi permission to glean in the fields.

B. Something about Naomi attracted Ruth (2.11).

11 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 your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before" (Ruth 2.11).

1. What kind of woman was Naomi

2. that Ruth would do such things?

C. Ruth 2.18–22 | The Motherly Concern of Naomi

18 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. 19 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." 20 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 close relatives." 21 Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay

close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" 22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field" (Ruth 2.18–22).

III. Ruth 3 | The Kindness of Naomi

A. Ruth 3.1–4 | The Planning of Mothers

1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do" (Ruth 3.1–4).

1. Did Naomi know that she was providing for herself a grandson?
2. Or was she a mother who did not look out for herself, but
 - a) she looked out for the well-being of her child,
 - b) whether it brings her benefit or not?
3. Mothers find their reward when they see their children do well.

B. Ruth 3.16–18 | The Patience of Motherhood

1. Ruth explained to Naomi how Boaz had treated her so well.
2. Then Naomi said to Ruth,

16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" 18 Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day" (Ruth 3.16–18).

- a) Mothers have experienced many things

b) that have taught them patience for receiving good things.

IV. **Ruth 4 | Naomi Enjoyed Motherhood**

A. **Ruth 4.14–15 | Motherhood Restored Naomi's Life**

**14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!
15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him” (Ruth 4.14–15).**

1. Naomi had so adopted Ruth as her own daughter
2. that when Ruth had a son everyone considered Naomi the grandmother.
 - a) In chapter one, Naomi lamented her terrible losses, but
 - b) she found a daughter in Ruth and
 - (1) continued her motherly ways, and
 - (2) her great-great grandson would be David.
3. The son, Obed, would bring a blessing to Naomi in her old age by:
 - a) Restoring her life and
 - b) nourishing her in old age.
 - (1) Obed accepted Naomi as his grandmother and
 - (2) devoted himself to her care.

B. **Ruth 4.16 | Honored as a Mother Again**

1. The Bible shows why Obed nourished his grandmother,

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him (Ruth 4.16).

2. He nourished her, because
 - a) she cherished him,
 - b) taking care of him as an infant as though he were her own son.

C. Ruth 4.17 | The Great Come from Godly Mothers

17 Also the neighbor women gave him a 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 (Ruth 4.17).

Exhortation:

I. She who trusts in the Lord

- A. will find motherhood a blessing and
- B. others will find her a blessing.

II. Naomi reaped what she had sown.

- A. Naomi had lost hope, but Ruth revived her.
- B. Ruth sought to revive her mother-in-law because of the kind of mother that Naomi had been to Ruth.
- C. Naomi gave Ruth
 - 1. the true God and
 - 2. loving care,
 - a) then Ruth revived her mother-in-law
 - b) by giving her a son.

III. The Key – Pro 19.22

IV. God has blessed every mother here,

- A. giving every mother life and
- B. He has continued to sustain you.
 - 1. God wants all mothers
 - a) to turn to Him and
 - b) to seek His guidance for mothering.
 - 2. Are you ready to search for Him?