

SERMON OUTLINE

SERMON TITLE: It is Decision that Determines Destiny

SERMON REFERENCE: Ruth 1:1-18

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2086

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) The story of Ruth is a true story.
 - i) The book of Ruth is the only book in the Bible devoted completely to the life of one woman.
 - ii) It is the story of redemption.
 - (1) Ruth is a picture in the Old Testament of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Boaz, the man she marries, is a picture of Christ, our kinsman redeemer.
- b) We are the sum total of our decisions.
- c) The book of Ruth was written during difficult, dark days.
 - i) It was a dark day spiritually and nationally.
 - ii) There was apostasy, anarchy and famine in the land.
 - iii) Judges 21:25
- d) The book of Ruth is a bright hope for dark days.
- e) If we find ourselves in a time of darkness, trouble or despair, then Jesus Christ will be to us what Boaz was to Ruth.
- f) The first chapter of Ruth tells of choices made and their consequences.

2) THE PRINCIPLE OF A WILLING CHOICE (Ruth 1:1-2)

- a) Bethlehem, the place where Elimelech lived and where Jesus would be born, means "house of bread."
 - i) The Moabites were the archenemies of Israel.
 - (1) The Moabites were a pagan race who lived in an obscene, pagan place.
 - ii) Elimelech, because there was a famine in the land, decided to take his family to Moab.
 - (1) Elimelech made a bad decision, and this decision marked his life with tragedy.
- b) We are free to choose.
 - i) Deuteronomy 30:19
 - ii) God sets before us today the same choice that was before Elimelech: the choice between life and death, blessing and cursing.
 - iii) God desires us to choose life.
 - iv) We are not victims of fate: we are free to choose.
- c) We are not free not to choose.
 - i) We always make a choice.
 - (1) There is no way we can say, "I will not choose."
 - (a) To refuse life is to choose death.
 - (b) To refuse Christ is to choose not to have Christ.
 - (c) We cannot escape making a choice.
 - ii) Some say that they will not say yes or no to Jesus; that they simply will not make a decision about Jesus. But that in itself is a decision: to choose not to say yes to Jesus is to say no to Christ.
 - (1) Matthew 12:30
 - (2) Luke 11:23
- d) We are not free to choose the consequences of our choice.
 - i) First we make our choice, and then our choice chooses for us.

- (1) When we make a few big choices, that takes care of a lot of little choices.
- (2) The biggest decision we can ever make is to receive Jesus Christ as Lord.
- ii) Our choices inevitably bring consequences into our lives and into the lives of those close to us.

3) THE PROBLEMS OF A WRONG CHOICE

- a) Elimelech made a wrong choice when he decided to go into the land of Moab.
 - i) He knew the truth.
 - ii) His name meant "My God is King."
- b) Elimelech made a wrong choice due to three basic reasons:
 - i) He had a wrong motive.
 - (1) Ruth 1:1
 - (2) There was a famine in the land, and he was motivated by physical reasons, not spiritual reasons.
 - (a) Elimelech knew that God had promised to bless him, but he decided he had to take care of himself.
 - (3) He placed the physical above the spiritual.
 - (a) Psalm 37:25
 - (b) Matthew 6:33
 - (4) We often have our priorities are out of order.
 - (a) We love things and try to use God rather than loving God and using things.
 - (5) God will not work in second place.
 - ii) He had a wrong method.
 - (1) Elimelech walked by sight, not by faith.
 - (a) He looked at appearances.
 - (2) Faith is believing God in spite of appearances and obeying God in spite of consequences.
 - (a) The appearance was famine in the "house of bread," Bethlehem.
 - (b) Elimelech, walking by sight and not faith, tried to run away.
 - (3) Psalm 55:6
 - (a) The Psalmist describes a desire to run away from problematic circumstances; but God desires to give us the wings of an eagle to mount up over our problems.
 - (i) Isaiah 40:31
 - iii) He had the wrong master.
 - (1) When Elimelech went over into Moab, he went into enemy territory.
 - (a) The Moabites had been enemies of God.
 - (b) The Moabites had invaded Israel and ruled over Israel for 18 years.
 - (c) God had placed a curse upon the Moabites.
 - (2) When we live in disbelief and disobedience, we dishonor God and we move into the enemy's territory.
 - (a) When Elimelech moved his family to Moab, his two sons married daughters of Moab.

- (b) Elimelech's entire life and his family suffered because he could not believe God.
 - c) Elimelech's choice brought consequences.
 - i) It brought death.
 - (1) Ruth 1:3-5
 - (a) Elimelech and his two sons died in Moab.
 - (b) We cannot run away; we must get right with God.
 - ii) It brought deprivation.
 - (1) Elimelech wanted to be blessed.
 - (a) We will find a blessing in the place of blessing.
 - (b) When we get out of the place of blessing, we should not expect to be blessed.
 - (i) Naomi changes her name to Mara, which means "bitterness."
 - (ii) She begins to blame God for her situation, but God wasn't to blame for Elimelech's choice.
- 4) THE POWER OF A WISE CHOICE (Ruth 1:7-18)
 - a) Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left in Moab with no sustenance and no way of taking care of themselves.
 - b) Naomi hears of the blessings back in Bethlehem.
 - i) God has visited His people in Bethlehem.
 - ii) Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem.
 - c) Ruth 1:7-14
 - i) Orpah kissed her mother-in-law
 - ii) But Ruth clave unto Naomi.
 - d) Ruth 1:15-18
 - i) Ruth decided to go with her mother-in-law to Bethlehem.
 - ii) Ruth's decision was a decision for destiny.
 - (1) It not only changed the course of Ruth's life, but it changed our lives, too.
 - (2) Ruth became an ancestor to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - iii) Ruth had previously lived a cursed life.
 - (1) Deuteronomy 23:3
 - (2) Ephesians 2:12
 - (a) Grace did for Ruth what the law could not do.
 - iv) Ruth had a crushed life.
 - (1) She had known poverty and deprivation.
 - (2) She had lost her husband and father-in-law.
 - (3) She was without a home and without help.
 - v) Ruth had a condemned life.
 - (1) Because her husband had died, she had a sentence of death upon her.
 - (2) Like Ruth, we have a sentence of death upon us because Adam, the head of the human race, died; and in Adam, we all die.
 - (a) We lost our inheritance, just as Ruth had lost her inheritance.
 - e) When Ruth decided to stay with Naomi and serve the living God, all things became new.

- i) 2 Corinthians 5:17
- ii) Revelation 21:5
- f) There are seven elements of Ruth's decision:
 - i) There was a new determination.
 - (1) Ruth 1:16-18
 - ii) There was a new direction.
 - (1) Ruth 1:16
 - iii) There was a new dependence.
 - (1) Ruth 1:16
 - iv) There was a new desire.
 - (1) Ruth 1:16
 - v) There was a new devotion.
 - (1) Ruth 1:16
 - vi) There was a new dedication.
 - (1) Ruth 1:17
 - vii) There was a new destiny.
 - (1) Ruth 1:17
 - (2) When we choose Christ, we too have a new destiny.
 - (a) Romans 8:38-39

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Ruth's decision to go to Bethlehem with Naomi changed the course of her life.
- b) Ruth chose life.
- c) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- d) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16