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.

i) 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 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.
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