

## GOD'S REMNANT

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Ruth 1:1-5

1. Last week we saw that the period of the Judges was characterized by Israel doing evil in God's sight.
2. They did evil in God's sight because there was no consistent moral authority and everyone did what was right in his own eyes.
3. Yet, in spite of the darkness of the times, there were those who were exceptions to the norms of that day.
4. That has always been the case.

- a. It was true in the days of Noah. Gen 6:5-12

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 **But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord. 9 These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.** 10 Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

- b. It was true in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. 2 Peter 2:4-10

For if **God** did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but **preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;** 6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 7 and if He **rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds),** 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.

- c. It was true during the godless reign of Ahab and Jezebel when the prophet Elijah complained to God that he was the only true prophet left. Note his complaint and God's response.

### **1 Kings 19:9-10:**

Then he came there to a cave and lodged there; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" 10 He said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of

Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away."

### **1 Kings 19:15-18**

The Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 17 "It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. 18 **"Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him."**

d. It was true when Jesus Christ was born as demonstrated by people like Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon, and Anna.

e. It is true now wherever you find a genuine follower of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the current corruption.

f. Although the true church will be a distinct minority at the time, it will be true when Jesus comes again to claim His Bride. Rev 3:14-21

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this: **15 'I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 'So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 'Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 'Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. 21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down"**

5. The three main characters in the book of Ruth were exceptions to what was generally true related to the culture in which they lived.

6. Each modeled a characteristic that should characterize our lives.

### **I. In Naomi we see an example of perseverance.**

A. Naomi persevered in spite of overwhelming obstacles.

1. Famine forced her and her husband to sell their ancestral property near Bethlehem and move, with their two sons, to Moab on a temporary basis.

2. Shortly after the move Naomi's husband died.

3. Her sons married Moabite women, and after ten years they both died.

B. Following the death of her sons Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem, and initially both of her daughters-in-law intended to go with her.

C. Note the beautiful prayer she prayed when she urged both women to return to their mothers. Ruth 1:8-9

And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 "May the Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her (new) husband."

D. When Naomi, accompanied by Ruth, returned to Bethlehem we read, "So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' 20 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, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has witnessed against me and **the Almighty has afflicted me?'"** Ruth 1:19-21

NOTE: As difficult as things were Naomi saw God at work in her life.

E. One of the qualities that will characterize the life of a true follower of Jesus Christ is perseverance. Hebrews 3:14

"For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end."

## II. In Ruth we see an example of love and loyalty.

A. At Naomi's urging Orpah chose to return to her people, but Ruth clung to her mother-in-law.

B. Nothing could convince Ruth to abandon Naomi. Ruth 1:15-18

Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where 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 I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me." 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

C. Ruth loved Naomi, and she had put her faith in Naomi's God.

D. Our love for Jesus should exceed all other loves; even our love for those nearest and dearest to us. Luke 14:25-26

Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

## III. In Boaz we see an example of integrity.

A. Naomi stated that she had returned to Bethlehem empty, but that was not the case because she returned with a daughter-in-law that loved her more than life itself.

B. Because they had returned at the beginning of the barley harvest Ruth asked permission to glean in the field of one in whose sight she might find favor.

NOTE: One of the ways God provided for the poor was to mandate that they be allowed to glean after the harvesters.

C. So Ruth happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi's husband, Elimelech.

NOTE: Here we see the hand of God at work in the affairs of everyday life.

D. Upon learning who Ruth was Boaz became Ruth's protector, provider, and eventual partner in marriage.

1. Her protector. 2:8-13

2. Her provider. 2:14-16

Ruth remained in Boaz's fields throughout the barley and wheat harvest.

3. Her partner.

a. Following Naomi's instructions Ruth offered herself to Boaz in marriage. 3:1-13. NOTE: Boaz referred to Ruth as a woman of excellence.

b. Boaz accepted his role as kinsman-redeemer and went through the process of establishing his right to acquire all that had previously belonged to Elimelech, including marrying the widow of Elimelech's son, Mahlon, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance. 4:1-12

b. After their marriage Ruth was enabled by God to conceive and give birth to a son who was then named Obed; the grandfather of David.

E. Boaz was a man who honored God by fulfilling his God-given responsibilities embodied in the Law. He was a notable exception in his day.

#### **APPLICATION**

1. Note the final verses of this great book. 4:13-22

2. We live in an evil day, and if we are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ we should be examples of perseverance, loyalty, and integrity.

3. May God help us to be exceptions rather than normal expressions of our culture.

4. Life is often challenging, but God is faithful to those who love Him and live accordingly.