

# Entreat me not to leave you

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- [ 0 : 00 ] We are going to hear the word of God now as we find it in the Old Testament Scriptures. The Old Testament Scriptures and the book of Ruth.
- And we are reading from chapter 1. Ruth chapter 1. We can read the whole chapter.
- Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to sojourn in the country of Moab.
- He and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech. And the name of his wife Naomi. And the name of his two sons, Manon and Jireon.
- The name of the man of Bethlehem. And the name of Bethlehem, Judah. And they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died.
- [ 1 : 06 ] And she was left and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab. The name of the one was Orpah. And the name of the other, Ruth.
- And they dwelled there about ten years. And Manon and Jireon died also, both of them. And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.
- Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab. For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.
- Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her. And they went on the way to return into the land of Judah.
- And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me.
- [ 2 : 08 ] The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice and wept.
- And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee and to thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters. Why will you go with me?
- Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters. Go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons, would you tarry for them, till they were grown?
- Would you stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much, for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice and wept again.
- And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law has gone back into her people, and unto her gods.
- [ 3 : 19 ] Return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth 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 for death part thee and me.

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. So they went, they too went, until they came to Bethlehem.

And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

[ 4 : 41 ] So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite as her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem, in the beginning of barley harvest.

Amen. And may the Lord add his blessing, with the reading of his word, and to his name be the praise. We can sing from Psalm 33.

We're singing from verse 13 through to the end of the psalm. Psalm 33, verse 13. The Lord from heaven sees, and beholds all sons of men for well.

He views all from his dwelling place, that in the earth do dwell. He forms their hearts alike, and all their doings he observes. Great hosts save not a king, much strength no mighty man preserves.

Unharsh for preservation is a deceitful thing, and by the greatness of his strength can no deliverance bring. Behold, on those that do him fear, the Lord hath set his eye, even those who on his mercy do, with confidence rely.

[ 6 : 04 ] From death to free their soul, in dearth life unto them to yield. Our soul doth wait upon the Lord, he is of help and shield.

So in his holy name we trust, our heart shall joyful be. Lord, let thy mercy be on us, as we do hope in thee. Consentious verses from verse 13, Psalm 33, the Lord from heaven sees, and beholds all sons of men for well.

The Lord from heaven sees, and beholds all sons of men for well.

He views all from his welling place, that in the earth to dwell.

He forms that hearts the light on all, their doings he observes, they trust it not the king must end.

[ 7 : 41 ] Your mighty man preserves, and hearts for persecution.

It's not deceitful thing, and by the greatness of his men, that I know what he love is, God cannot give up.

The Lord, He offers all foam, He■■■■■■■■ up his next time, The Lord does it yet, In those who on his mercy do With convivial life From death to death Their soul in death Life unto them to yield Our soul that wick upon the Lord

He is the heaven's shield Set in this holy witness Our heart shall joyful be Nor let thy mercy be For us as we do for pity

And I remember that last evening We were looking at the book of Job And the account that we have there of Job's rest of faith in the face of great adversity It was somebody who had an unimaginable providence And yet as we heard quoted tonight in prayer These words appear within the account that we have in the book of Job For I know my Redeemer liveth And that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth Although after my skin warms destroy this body Yet in my flesh shall I see God Whom I shall see for myself And mine eyes shall behold And not another Incredible words of someone who possesses the grace of faith

[ 12 : 13 ] And who exercises it according to God's provision Here in the book of Ruth While the suffering of God's people is not the main theme of the book But still features And the principal character One of the principal characters is Ruth Is the main character But one of the other main characters is her mother-in-law And her mother-in-law is somebody who has experienced great sadness in her life The story begins And it's described as a story that is readable to even the modern mind

It's something that has a beginning, a middle and an end And you can follow it through quite easily But we find that Naomi, who is one of the principal characters Her leaves Bethlehem with her husband as a result of a famine Accompanied by their two sons Malon and Chilion They go to reside in Moab And Moab becomes a place of bitterness and sorrow to her And yet, notwithstanding the bitterness that she has to endure at the loss of her husband and her two sons We see that God features in her thinking

It is not in any way a providence that causes her to dismiss God from her thinking In the verses 19 to 21 We read there that They went out until they came to Bethlehem It came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem That all the city was moved about them And they said, Is this Naomi?

And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi Call me Mara For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty Her appreciation of her providence Is that it is of God's doing It is not something that invites her to To bring blame to bear upon the name of God Even though she attributes her grief to the hand of God And this is something that we need to bear in mind Because the back of what we have here Is the emerging faith of someone Who is an idolater Somebody who is a heathen Somebody who doesn't know God

And whose only knowledge of God Can only be found in the life of those Who bear testimony to that God And it is as a result of her knowledge of God Through her That her own faith emerges And we can't dismiss that thought We know that the book of Ruth Is incredibly important in the genealogy of Israel Because it describes to us Christ to us Who is going to appear in the lineage of David The king of Israel And then in the name of Christ Appears as the king of kings In the Gospel of Matthew You'll find the genealogy of our Lord and Saviour Coming right back to the names that we find mentioned here Boaz

[ 16 : 56 ] Who becomes Ruth's husband But while that is important What we're looking at this evening There is something that stands out against that Most difficult backdrop What somebody has put Preacher Alistair Berg He says What we have a backdrop What we have is a backdrop Of poor choices Sad experiences And deep disappointments And yet As we said What we see Is someone who comes to know the Lord As their Lord As a result of these experiences There are two things that I really want us to take with us this evening The first of these I suppose Is harder to pin down

Because all we can do is read what is before us What is before us And what we see before us is a difference Between two people Both of them Are the daughters-in-law Of Naomi And both of them Share that experience And all that was involved in it And yet They are quite different In the way That their lives Follow They follow a particular trajectory One Into the presence of God And the blessings of God The other Away from God And the blessings of God And the difference is Is striking I suppose The second thing Is the way that Ruth in particular

Is Someone who declares her Interest in God And does so vehemently And clearly And unambiguously So that Everyone Would know Where Her heart was Her Interest in God Is Clearly declared So that's the second thing And probably the main thing That we want To think about As I said When it comes to Examining What the cause Of a person's Conversion is What it is That is The root cause Of a person Following a path That would result

In the salvation of their soul And What it takes For a person to neglect The pursuit of such a path The pursuit of such a path May appear to us To be Mysterious Because there's only What we can see Is always Limited You know There's a similarity Between these two women In many Many In the simplest possible way We can see that Both women Are the Moabites Moabites We'll just put it like that Both of them Are Moabites And Because Of The fact that they belong To that nation And up to all intents And purposes Even from the statement That Naomi makes concerning them It appears that they are They belong to a culture That is

As someone said Godless Because Because they have many gods He When she When she Tells them To go back to Their own gods The very fact That he uses Such a Such a description Tells you The kind of culture To which they belonged Both of them Not one Over against the other But both of them They belong to that Both of them Both of them Were married Both of them Were widowed Both of them Were influenced To a degree By their mother-in-law Their That Influence Lasted for At least Ten years And Both of them Are faced With the reality Of what it means To be a widow Now In verse 8

[ 22 : 12 ] We know that Naomi comments Not one But both again We read there That Naomi said Unto her two daughters-in-law Go, return each To her mother's house The Lord deal kindly with you As you have dealt with the dead And with me She has nothing But good things To say About both of them Both of them But good wives And good daughters-in-law And yet When you see The difference That takes place In The path That they follow It is apparent That something Has taken place That something Is not explained to you That something Is not The obvious Result of anything That takes place Externally We are not meant to Understand it I suppose As far as

Being able to say Well this is what happened That changed That changed truth And this is what happened That ensured That ARPA was not changed Because there is no such evidence There is no such indication Within the telling Of this account Because to all intents and purposes Both experienced The same kind of influences Excerpted on their life Providentially But we see That there is a difference Because when Naomi Encourages them To return To their own country To their own mothers To their own gods Ruth takes a different She makes a different choice And We are not Told

Why that choice Is the choice That she made Other than her own declaration Of an interest In Naomi And her God On the face of it It would seem That everything is the same For both But at a deeper level Than that something Takes place What takes place May not be visible To the natural eye And can only be determined By what takes place Externally What we do What we say Where we go These are the things That help us understand That something has happened in the life of that person That has moved them in a direction different to the direction they were going in before Now we could spend time trying to understand the way to understand the way to the person that has moved them in a direction different to the direction they were going in before We could spend time trying to analyze the history of this story

Find fault with the actual reason for Naomi and Elimelech to move to Moab in the first place There could be a lot we could see about that We could try and unravel the wrongs that were wrought by them in forsaking the hand of God When God is He was the sovereign Lord of all the providences He is the one who brought famine to bear upon Israel Was it right for them to flee from the oppressive hand of God Because he was inflicting justice meant upon Israel because of their sin When you go to read the beginning of this chapter again You are told there that it happened in the days that the judges ruled

If you go to the book of Judges you find what is true about that day and that period And that people was they did what was right in their own eyes And God was frequently displeased with what they were doing And is it right for us when we are under God's just displeasure to seek relief from it And flee from it and hide from it While all of these questions are relevant and they could be asked But what we have here is a description of a choice made by two women Who were faced with the same choices And the same choices could have been made by both Both Ruth and Orpah could have listened to Naomi and returned back to Moab To their mothers, to their gods And together return to a life where they would remarry

[ 27 : 41 ] And live out their life in that kind of environment Or they could both have done what Ruth did Or they could both have done what Ruth did Ignored what Naomi was asking them to do And do what Ruth said she was going to do But they both didn't Only one took one choice And the other took the other choice Why was that?

There is no evidence to tell us why It is something that whenever God deals with us Sometimes What he is doing is not revealed to the naked eye It is not something that is open for discussion It is something that is private, that is intimate, that is personal And all that you can actually discuss about it Revolves around the aftermath What we do as a result of what God has done Hugh Cartwright, the late Professor Hugh Cartwright Who was a minister in the Free Church And went latterly to be a minister in the Free Presbyterian Church But he preached a sermon on the Book of Ruth and Dinah He said the following No doubt he said natural attachment to Naomi

Was a link in the chain which drew Ruth from her idols to God I think that is important That there is a natural attachment on the part of Ruth to Naomi Ruth to Naomi And on the part of her sister-in-law Both are of the same mind Both are drawn to their mother-in-law Because of the kind of person she was But he said it was not a breakdown of that affection Which took Orpah back to Moab It was something more It was something more Earthly attachment to the people of God However intense and resolutions are counted for only by human nature And inclination Cannot break the power of the world, the flesh and the devil And I think that has to be something that we need to understand

That we witness here in this account Clear evidence of very strong natural ties Which draw these women in a certain direction But however strong the natural ties are They are not sufficient to ensure that the result of these ties Is a spiritual well-being There is a transformation of life That will result Now we must see any difference in the response that they make As being a response that is made as a consequence of something That lies deeper than what nature can explain

Remember this passage goes on to tell us that The difference between the two was seen first of all In the way that Naomi was cleaved to by Ruth Ruth cleaved to Naomi Whereas her sister-in-law did not Now Now That is an evidence if you like Of something that has gone on At a deeper level I think it's Murchane who says That it is prudent for every one of us To cleave to our converted friends To cleave to our converted friends To cleave to our converted friends I think he says that as advice to To those who are unconverted That they should Make a point of binding themselves

[ 32 : 23 ] To those that they know are the Lord's people Because there's obvious advantage to it But the simple Adhering to them Or being Simply on On the level of A light or a Less meaningful friendship Is insufficient Because there's more Needed than that When we think of When we think of Of our Bound and duty as Christians To remember the Lord in his death As we are going to do that Tomorrow if we are spared At the Lord's table We do so in company with those Who are the Lord's people Those that we share the same spirit of grace and love with And we

We are in many respects Whatever affinity Whatever bonds Whatever ties we have with those Who will not be at the table with us There is something that is central to a relationship with these people That is God given That cannot be described or understood Or even in the simplest possible terms Using equations that we can Write down as it were And say this is true, that is true, this is what must be there As if we are going to be able to explain away Everything that is true about the church The membership of the church Those who are part of our congregation Of our Christian fellowship The ties that bind us together

Are more deep Than that they can be simply Explained away By our name appearing on a paper Somewhere We are bound With God's people As those who have Who have cleaved to the Lord Jesus Christ Who have by faith United with him And those who share that union with Christ Cannot but Be those that we share the same Desires with the same Interests with the same Longings with the same Love with and all that comes along with that It doesn't say that That we can't have an affection for people Who are not of the Lord's people We can't say about these

People who will not be at the table That they do not share Affection with God's people That they are not Loving towards the Lord's people But not in the same way Not to the same degree If at all there are elements that belong To the relationship that exists That exists between God And his people And his people And those who share that love That is quite different And divinely Originated That cannot come from anywhere else But from God What binds the Lord's people to each other Is stronger than anything That nature can provide Or supply And that is what influenced Ruth to stay

There is nothing at all That could tell you That You know There is no indication in this account That Ruth felt inclined To accompany Orpah Some maintain That the instant The very moment that Faith was generated in her soul That she demonstrated That she demonstrated in her soul That she demonstrated in her In the love that she declared for her mother-in-law But the instant that that love That interest was generated It had to be tested And the test was put upon her Unbeknown to her mother-in-law By her mother-in-law By her mother-in-law By saying to her

[ 37 : 34 ] Go back to your own people And sometimes God arranges the testing of our faith In ways that we are unprepared for But they are tests nevertheless They are tests Would it not be a test Do not think if you were there I don't know how close the family was It seems to me From reading the words of Acknowledgement that comes from the mouth of Naomi That she appreciated the company of her daughters-in-law That she appreciated the love that they demonstrated towards her sons That she appreciated what they meant to one another and to herself So it was, as far as you can read, a harmonious arrangement And you can imagine that

Ruth and Orpah would have an affinity because of that arrangement And it wouldn't be at all difficult for her to To listen to Naomi and to go back with her With her sister-in-law back to Moab Certainly that choice was presented to her Certainly that opportunity was given to her We are not told If the struggle was a struggle If there was a struggle If there was even a minute's thought given to it We are not told But she says In treat me not to leave you Nor return from following after you For where you go, I go Where thou lodgest I lodge Thy people shall be my people And thy God, my God These words I'm sure are familiar to you Her impassioned plea

Demonstrates to us Her desire to continue with her mother-in-law And if we read what she said Up until the point where she says Your God And my God It may be open to interpretation that it was just It was just You know A war and A filial relationship A war and tie within the confines of the family That was being expressed But it goes deeper Her God Was Her mother-in-law's God And it was enough And it was enough That allows us to think That we can confidently assert That this is the doing of the Lord

Now this is important because When the testing comes to any one of us As it may already have done There always will come a point When we recognise that because of Our relationship with God Our friendship with those who are God's Become all important There are ties that are strong There are bonds that are firm But firmer still should be I am saying should be The ties that God himself Has introduced into our lives With the people that bear his name As it was well put by someone who was describing The faith of the believer It must persevere through the faith

The faith saviour's grace That's the only way it can do That's the only way any Saving faith can persevere With the help of God In Christ Jesus Any, as somebody has said Any resolution Anything that we are resolved to do By our own strength Will always prove Prove itself to be inadequate Just you think about the Apostle Peter Think about yourself The things that you decided to do And emphatically stated That you would succeed in doing And you made promises Faithful promises And you decided to do it In your own strength How successful Were you at securing the end

[ 42 : 56 ] That you set yourself The Apostle Peter We know that he promised To be faithful to death To the Lord And yet when his faith was tested He failed miserably Why?

Because he was not resorting To the grace of God In order to secure the end That he promised to fulfil He was depending on his own resources And when we do that This is what will happen I love you Naomi Because of what your God Has made you to be To me I will follow you I will follow you Because of what your God Has made you to be To me And I believe this was important For this woman This was her Bible This was the word That was made alive to her The testimony of a woman Who believed in God Even though this God Who had sovereignly Chastised her Because of Their waywardness

Perhaps I have told you before The story of Philip Henry Matthew Henry's father When he was courting And his future wife Was being dissuaded Being dissuaded Or tried to be dissuaded From embracing marriage With this man Because her family Were of the opinion That he was nobody They didn't know who he was He wasn't anybody He wasn't somebody He wasn't somebody they knew And this was a challenge to them So they tried to dissuade her From embracing him in marriage But she said to them Well I don't know where he came from But I know where he is going And I want to go with him And there may be an element of that In the reasoning of Ruth

We can't say that she had a fully Orbed knowledge of everything she articulated here She was saying To him Where you lodge I will lodge Thy people shall be my people Thy God my God Where you die I will die There will I be buried It was a declaration of A knowledge of this woman That because of her trust In the faith that was implicit in her life This was the faith that she wanted to possess And demonstrate as she lived her life in the world Now for every one of us Does this make sense to us?

Is this something that we can identify with? Is this something that we share in? When you think about The people you spend time with in the world Who are the people that you must That you feel most liberated by being in their company Because whatever else we spend time talking about With those who are Who are in our circle of friends Most of the time If they are not Christians Our discussions will not be on Christian issues Or Christian things Very rarely Will we spend time in their company With that as the main thread of conversation If you think of the two men who were on the road to Emmaus What were they talking about?

[ 47 : 03 ] Well they were talking about the things that happened in Jerusalem We are told about their conversation We are told about their conversation We are told about their willingness to converse on that topic And their ability to share their thoughts and their fears And their concerns And when you are in company with God's people The same is true You are not embarrassed You are not hindered from speaking about the things that That worry you, that concern you About your soul Can you speak to anybody who is not Knowledgeable about Christ In the same way, surely not What do you miss most about a communion weekend?

It is quite different So different In many ways Not just that you have to listen to my preaching Rather than a visiting preacher I think there is one essential ingredient Missing from the communion And that is What is at the heart of our communion That is the ability to To spend time in company with the Lord's people Outside these four walls In company with the Lord's people In company with those that we may not have met before And the ability to share with them And to hear what they have to say About their own lives About their own faith About their own experience of Christ We miss that Do you miss it?

I don't think that is a minor mark I think that is all important However this communion Will appear in In our diaries In our biographies There are great differences To what we have enjoyed before Maybe What we will enjoy in the future Hopefully There will be some kind of Return to normality But at the heart of what we have enjoyed before Was the ability to say When we are engaged in conversation That passion That passion That is my kind of passion That is more or less what Ruth was saying Your people Are the kind of people I want to Feature in my life

Your people are the kind of people I want to To speak to To share my faith with To find my faith encouraged by To be able to To discover Things about My Lord Through their experience That may not have been my experience And I think that is at the heart of what Ruth is saying Where you die Will I die There will I be buried Some people think Ruth is anticipating here The death of the believer The resurrection of the believer Maybe she was not in a position to do that But through dialogue Through conversation Through communication Through conference Through fellowship

All of these things would be possible Have you got the faith that Ruth has? If you have The communion table is for you Very different it is You remember That what you are doing there Is by reason of what Christ has done in your life And that he commands you To remember him in his death till he come He commands the Faith that is required To do that Purposely With the assurance that by so doing The faith that you have exercised will be strengthened And your sense of belonging Not just to this congregation But to the body of Christ as it exists in the world Is something that you are reminded of

[ 51 : 57 ] You have an affinity with Naomi As you have an affinity with her daughter-in-law And all who Who share in their example May God bless to us these few thoughts Let us pray O Lord, O God We give thanks for these wonderful words That remind us of A faith that Has been brought to light We give thanks for what Was responsible for it And for The way that it is A harbinger of the gospel Even in Old Testament days We bless you for The way that Those featured in the Lineage of Christ A Moabites A person who Had no God Because those who have many gods

Are of that ilk We pray that you would Encourage us through your word Continue to watch over us Cleanse from sin In Jesus name we ask it Amen Our concluding psalm Is Psalm 105 At the beginning of this psalm Psalm 105 The first four stanzas Give thanks to God Call on his name To men his deeds make known Sing ye to him Sing psalms Proclaim his wondrous works each one See that ye in his holy name To glory do accord And let the heart of everyone Rejoice that seeks the Lord The Lord Almighty and his strength With steadfast heart seek ye His blessed and his gracious face Seek ye continually Think on the works that ye hath done Which admiration breed his wonders

His wonders and the judgments all Which from this month proceed These verses give thanks to God Call on his name Give thanks to God God Call on his name To men his deeds make known He is the Lord He is the Lord He is the Lord He is the Lord He is the Lord To me to him To him sing To him sing Some songs of glory His one Prince Word Each one See that ye in his holy name See that ye in his holy name See that ye in his holy name See that ye in his holy name To glory do accord

And let the heart of everyone The heart of heaven be born Rejoice that seeks the Lord The Lord Almighty and his strength Will set us heart-seeking His blessed yon His gracious spirit Seek ye upon his name God Take ye in his holy name Take ye on the world



Slot ye upon them With an appreciation of thee His wonders and the joy The Lord of  
heaven With an appreciation of thee With an appreciation of thee With an appreciation of  
thee The Lord of heaven Will you praise thee With an appreciation of thee With an  
appreciation of thee May grace, mercy, and peace From God the Father, the Son, and the  
Holy Spirit Rest in our pride with you all now and always Amen The Father, the Son, and  
the Holy Spirit Rest in our pride with you all now and always Amen