

# Faith that Speaks to Others

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 March 2021

Preacher: BK Smith

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, I pray that whenever any circumstance that we find ourselves in, that we would keep that understanding of God at the forefront of our minds.
- Perfect and holy, perfect in majesty. So today, as I said earlier, we're going to be in Ruth. We're going to be in Ruth chapter 1. And I know I'm kind of backtracking, doing something a little bit different today.
- But I wanted to answer kind of these questions that come from the text. And one of the questions, and the first questions I want to ask is, what is there about Naomi that Ruth wants to follow?
- You ever asked that question? Why does Ruth go with Naomi and Orpah doesn't? What is there about Naomi, her life, or whoever she is?
- And although the text doesn't explicitly say, I believe there's some definite clues, teachings, that teach us why she did indeed go.
- [ 1 : 1 6 ]     And secondly, I want to take a deeper look into Ruth's response and how she responds with such dedication that I believe there is some immediate similarities to how Christ draws us in the decisions we make to follow Jesus Christ.
- We see emulated in Ruth, turning her back from false gods to the one true God. But I want to go back to the first question.
- And have you ever thought about it when you look back? And, you know, when we look at our desire to reach others for Jesus Christ, what is about us that would make us attractive to them?
- What is it about our faith when we think about it, right? We think about we want to put on a show of a strong faith, a sure faith. We want to put on a Christian lifestyle.
- Here is me, the perfect Christian husband, married to the perfect Christian wife. And here are my three, four, five, six, seven, eight perfect Christian children, right?
- [ 2 : 3 6 ]     We kind of think we've got this image in our mind. And I know we don't experience this in Squamish so much, but if you ever lived in a suburb of a big city, you inevitably get a postcard at the beginning of September and one after January from a local church in the area.
- And they've got this postcard. And it's an advertisement to invite you to come to their church. And inevitably on this postcard is this perfect husband, perfect wife, perfect kids come here.
- And they're selling this idea. And the idea is our church reflects these values that help you get this whole family together that looks nice and perfect.
- Or if you come to our church, you can have that family too. And what's always interesting on those postcards, they never show single person.
- Hi, I go to this church. It's usually a family. Very rarely is it seniors. Sometimes they might put the community idea where there's a group of kind of good looking college kids kind of hanging out, doing college kind of things.

[ 3 : 42 ] But have you ever thought about what would it be like to put Naomi on this postcard and send it out to your neighbors that this is the kind of faith that you will encounter at our church?

Just taking a quick look at what we've been through, sermon one, we looked at how Naomi and her husband Elimelech made some tragic decisions, some tragic choices that led to certain consequences in their family life, right?

They chose not to believe God at his word. They chose to compromise. They chose to act foolishly. And they chose to act pridefully by not admitting that they were beat, but continue to stay for the pummeling, which is the consequences of sin.

And that got to the point that Naomi was in a foreign land with nobody there, no purpose, no meaning for her life.

She's got no children. The daughters-in-law she's now stuck with have no husbands. So we're looking at this tragic life of no hope.

[ 5 : 04 ] Last week, we looked at how even in the midst of the consequences of some of our most tragic decisions, God still hears us.

God is still watching us. And God still calls us to his goodness and loving kindness. And we see in the text that God brought food back to Israel.

So she's making the decision to go back. And as we know, Ruth goes with her. And when she arrives home, we see God's goodness, that people are actually excited to see her.

Even though she's been away, she's been in sin, she's suffered through these horrible consequences. Yet God just brings his people around her and they're so excited to see her. And she responds in this way.

She says, do not call me Naomi, but call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty.

[ 6 : 01 ] And what she means by that is full. I had hope, right? I had my sons, my husband. We're going to make this life. Remember, we were only going for a short time. But we decided to stay there.

My sons found wives. I'd maybe have a grandchild future. She lost all those things. She goes, why call me Naomi when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?

This is the proverbial bottom of the barrel. There is no pride left in Naomi. Let me just tell you something about pride.

People often associate pride with people who are strong or successful. My experience is that I've seen more pride in the unsuccessful, in the messes of life.

That people remain obstinate in their choices. To the point that they would have never left Moab because that would have meant admitting defeat.

[ 7 : 15 ] Naomi showed wisdom by allowing her pride to be shattered. Listen, I can tell you stories of friends and family members that are stuck in pride.

And there's like absolutely nothing in their lives to be prideful about. But yet they resist out of pride. But here she is broken.

Naomi is living the consequence of poor, rational, desperate choices. And if you remember last week, the original translation translates, empty, the Lord brought me back.

If you and I are having a testimony night, or as I said, who are we going to put on this postcard that exemplifies godly faith?

Is it going to be Naomi? Fact of the matter is, this most powerful book is about God. It is about his loving kindness. It is about his provision.

- [ 8 : 21 ] Yet the testimony is about Naomi's life. And if Ruth, this book of Ruth had a postcard of God's loving kindness on it, it would be a picture of Naomi on the front.
- So, I want to answer this question. I don't want to take too much time, because Dave and I have spent a lot of time on just the topic of suffering.
- But why does Ruth even go with Naomi, right? If you're sitting back, and which person am I going to put my life with, right? Someone who's made some really good, wise life choices, right?
- We don't go to financial advisors who are still driving a 1977 Datsun car that's all rusted out and falling apart, right? We don't do that. We want to go with the guy who's driving the slick BMW, or who's got a nice house.
- He's actually done something with his finances, right? So, when it comes to the subject of faith, who do we look to? J.C. Ryle, a pastor from England back in the 1800s, writes on the subject.
- [ 9 : 46 ] And I think there's a lot of poignant truth to this. It simply says, sitting comfortable on a beach is a sweet time after a stormy voyage.
- But I fancy you will find it more difficult to walk closely with Jesus in a calm than in a storm. In easy circumstances than in difficult ones.
- A Christ never falls asleep in the fire or in the water, but grows drowsy in the sunshine.
- Get that? A Christ never falls asleep in the fire or the water, but grows drowsy in the sunshine. When life is good, our faith becomes drowsy.
- As he sums up, the reality is how we handle our lives in the tough times tells us more about our faith to others than in the good times.
- [ 10 : 59 ] The reality is, as Christians, we do not always suffer well. We don't. We often feel like we have to hide it.
- We don't want people around us. And I get it. When we're hurting, we want to feel like Job scraping the boils off our arms. We want to cry and we want to weep.
- But often I meet a lot of Christians who want to put on that proverbial stiff upper lip. I'm going to be okay. God's got this, right? I'm excited to go through this suffering now because God is going to bring a lovely bouquet of flowers at the end of all this.
- I do hear that. That in the midst of the most poignant times, through loss of family, could be a wife, a child, a parent, we want to suffer well.
- And we think it means, well, others will benefit from my suffering or God is glorified in my suffering. But the truth be told, those are afterthoughts.
- [ 12 : 14 ] When we're suffering, we suffer. We hurt. We grieve. We cry. We weep. We cry some more.
- Paul reminds us we are afflicted in every way. But we're not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed.
- I want us to see something in Naomi today. That in the midst of this incredible suffering, she does suffer well.
- She doesn't rely on quaint Christian platitudes or some false hope that things might even get better in the coming days.
- She just acts with this incredible faith that I want you to see here. You see, Naomi here does not embrace her trial by shouting wonderful proclamations.
- [ 13 : 25 ] But she shares that she is indeed hurting. She does not deny that God was unjust with her.

She doesn't deny that she never deserved it. She simply says, empty. The Lord brought me back.

So what is there in her life that would make Ruth cling to her in such a way? Well, I want to give you four different reasons that Ruth is drawn to Naomi in her suffering.

The first thing, and I want you to take a look at verses 8 and 9, is that even in the midst of a tragic life, Naomi shows herself as a woman of prayer.

She shows herself as a woman of prayer. Take a look at verse 8 and 9. She says, go, return each of you to her mother's house. And notice she says, may the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

[ 14 : 41 ] The Lord grant you that you find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them and they lifted up their voices and wept. So despite her situation, despite her difficulties, this is Naomi petitioning the Lord on behalf of her daughters-in-law.

She is still communing with the Lord God, asking them to be kind with them, even though they have in fact the memory of such tragedy.

She doesn't blame them, but she wants to go back home. Going back home means leaving them behind. And what's interesting is that Naomi recognizes that God is still sovereign and she understands that God is still the source of every good and wondrous blessing upon his children.

And she still wants these things. She still believes that even though the Lord has dealt in her testimony bitterly with her, she still knows the Lord.

Now I want you to pay attention. The word Lord is Yahweh that she's using here. That is the covenant relational God of Israel. That is the one who is faithful to his covenant.

[ 16 : 08 ] So she still is not sour towards God, but she still remains lowly before him and knowing that everything is before them, before him.

So the first reason that I believe that Ruth is drawn to her is that Naomi shows herself to be a woman of prayer. The second thing, which I've already kind of alluded to, is she believes that all blessings are from God.

She's not hoping that the blessings on the false God will be given to Orpah and Ruth. No, she knows that this is the Lord, Yahweh, God of all. And we see that they use the word, not in this text, but we see later on God Almighty.

Her God is God over all things, that they be kind to her. She understands that if Orpah and Ruth find new husbands, it will be because of God's goodness and that it will be a gift from God.

The third reason that I believe that Ruth is drawn to Naomi is that Naomi is incredibly unselfish towards them. You see, we see Naomi acting out in the best welfare for her daughter-in-law, despite the reminder of her own sin that she might see in them.

[ 17 : 32 ] We see this genuine love and concern for these two girls. Turn back, my daughters, in verse 11. Why will you go with me? Have I sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?

And the understanding is if they really loved her, they would wait for her to remarry, have children, and then they could marry them being consistent with the little or bitter at law.

But she doesn't say that. She says in verse 12, Turn back, my daughters. Go your own way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons.

So we see that she understands. We see in Naomi a woman of prayer, a woman who understands that all blessings are from God.

We see her acting in this unselfish way. And the fourth thing I want us to see from Naomi's faith is that she's balanced in her faith. She's balanced in her faith.

[ 18 : 42 ] Take a look at verse 13. Would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you there refrain from marrying? No, my daughters.

For it is exceedingly bitter for me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me. You see, there is no blame given to God.

In fact, even in this declaration, she names, she raises his name. She understands that she is living with the consequences of her sin.

She's not blaming God. And yet, she's still holding to the covenant God. She's still understanding that he is faithful.

That God is in the good as well as God is in the bad. That just because we are surrounded with painful heart-breaking issues of life, God still remains the same.

[ 19 : 52 ] This is an attractive faith. This is a faith that is demonstrating a level of depth even in the midst of a life of foolishness.

That she's able to call upon her understanding of God. And the ultimate result that we leave learning from this text is Ruth clung to her and she desires that Yahweh be her God as well.

So there's two decisions that need to happen, right? Either go with Naomi or turn back.

Let's take a look at verse 14. We see this example of two different choices that the author of this book gives before us. Verse 14. Then they lifted their voices and wept again.

Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. Now if you go back to verse 9, you're going to notice that there's a different word order where they kissed and wept.

[ 21 : 07 ] Here they wept and kissed. This kiss is a goodbye kiss. Orpah's kiss is a formal ending to the relationship.

But we see Ruth clinging to her. This word cling, Ruth clung to her.

It's almost a marital type of clinging. It's tight. It's holding. You can almost picture her holding her mother-in-law at the waist as she'd be on her knees.

Just broken hearted for this mother-in-law of hers. And she's not letting go. But she's clinging to her in such a way it means that she's leaving something.

She's leaving one membership in her old land for a new membership with a new land. Now let us consider Orpah for a moment.

[ 22 : 16 ] Was what Orpah did wrong? In fact, the author of the book does not comment her in a negative way whatsoever.

The reality is Orpah, by choosing to go home, is actually choosing the best chances of success for her life.

Right? A chance to achieve some significance. To have her cup full again. Perhaps she will be able to marry. Perhaps there's family for her.

To be a wife. Possibly a mother. She's selected to go home to the people she knew, the gods she knows, and certainly at the time a country that was more greener than Israel.

One author writes, how do we judge Orpah? One writer shrewdly responds, we have a book named Ruth, not Orpah. You see, a life that led to a real and living God is always greater than a life that is a life full of choosing dead gods.

[ 23 : 31 ] So with Orpah, we see a woman who chooses to follow, not Naomi, but her own path. But this morning, I want us to take a look at the significance of the words that Ruth says and the consequences of those words.

I want you to see almost through this picture, and we are going to see this, Ruth's decision to leave the old and to follow after God, I believe is the exact same decisions that we have to make in order to follow Jesus Christ.

I believe the similarities are uncanny, remarkable. In fact, I'm going to show you them all today. I believe if you're looking for the perfect disciple of Jesus Christ, of one who follows the decisions a believer in Jesus Christ makes to follow their Lord and Savior, I believe they're echoed here in a one, a Moabite, who leaves her land and follows God.

Notice verse 16. It says, But Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you or to return 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. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also, if anything but death parts me from you.

[ 25 : 19 ] Let's be honest. These are no lighthearted statements. These are strong, definitive statements. Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge.

Where your people shall be my people, your God my God. Where you will die, I will die, and there I will be buried. So in Ruth's response, I want to look at three characteristics of conversion.

I believe these are the same characteristics that I've said for what it means to follow Jesus Christ as she is making to follow the real God. And the first characteristic that we see in Ruth's response is that it involves making a decisive separation.

It means separating from the old. All right? It's a clear-cut separation. There is something decisive in once for all in Ruth's words, right?

There I will be buried. Her decisions to go with Naomi are a radical break from everything that she's ever known. And don't forget, she hasn't lived with Naomi and God's people and his land.

[ 26 : 31 ] She's only lived with the compromise, Naomi, in her own land, her own people, her own customs, her own way of life.

For Ruth, to make this decision is to understand that life will never be the same. What we see in this first characteristic of conversion, of decisive separation, if you're taking notes, this would be point A under point one, it's she's separating from one kingdom for another, to another, right?

In going with Naomi, Ruth is renouncing her citizenship to Moab. She's essentially saying the people of Moab are no longer my people.

I am separating from them. My people are now God's people. The kingdom I now belong to is God's kingdom. Even though I haven't lived there yet, that is what I choose.

You see, one of the purposes of Jesus' death on the cross was to separate for himself a people who are his own. Right?

[ 27 : 47 ] Jesus Christ died to rescue men and women from the domain of darkness to the domain of light. From falsehood to truth.

From imprisonment to freedom. that cross is the separating place. And you can almost see this land as Naomi is about to cross into the promised land.

There's that line that is drawn there. To cross over on the other side means saying goodbye to everything else. You see, when someone is born again, they are separated from the kingdom of sin into which they were born into.

And they are transferred, like I said, into the kingdom of light. So there's that separation from one kingdom to the other. Now what's interesting with Ruth, she's separating from many gods to one God.

Right? Many gods, one God. In Moab, Ruth would have been a worshiper of many gods of Moab. Going with Naomi, she was separating herself from those gods.

[ 29 : 05 ] She's saying goodbye to those gods. And she's saying hello to the one true God. Yahweh, the covenantal God that Naomi has been praying to and speaking in the name of.

God's. The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ does the exact same thing. It calls us to serve the one true God, to turn our backs on the idols of our lives.

It calls us to separate ourselves from all those things that are filling up the number one spot in our life. Right? That place is rightfully God's.

It is rightfully Jesus Christ. So not only are we leaving this land, this separation, but we are saying that there is one that has, there's only one who has the right to sit on the throne of my life.

And it is Jesus Christ. And Ruth is doing the exact same thing here. Those old gods are gone. And now I go to Yahweh, the personal God.

[ 30 : 18 ] And the third thing that we see in the characteristic of conversion involving divine decisive separation, we see separation from one kingdom to another, we see separations from many gods to one God, and we see separations from those who remain as they are.

What that means is Ruth needed to separate from Orpah. Right? Christian conversion will often call us to separate from certain people in our lives.

A dividing line is crossed. We need to leave this world. The reality is we do not stop belonging to our human families, but we're no longer the same.

We're changed. We have a specific different priorities. In fact, the New Testament tells us we're we've gone from those who resided in the land to sojourners.

We're just wandering here. We're ambassadors from another land. And our priorities, our relationships, they're changed because of this.

[ 31 : 41 ] Now, for some of you, you might know that that separation is costly. You might not be able to talk with family in the same way as you would talk with brothers and sisters of the faith.

But this is what following after Jesus Christ is all about. this is what Ruth understands to go to Yahweh means to turn her back on the customs, the people, and the places of Moab.

And she's now going to embrace the people, the customs, and the way of life of God. So that's what we see in the first characteristic of conversion which we see in Ruth's life is there's this decisive separation.

And it's seen as she clings to Naomi. Now, the second characteristic I want you to see, it involves total identification.

For her, it's total identification with Yahweh. For us, it's total identification identification with Jesus Christ. As I stated before, as Ruth clung to Naomi, the word translated clung to is the word actually used in Genesis 2.24 to describe what happens when a man and woman are united in marriage.

[ 33 : 15 ] They cleave to one another. There is this total identification with each other. And this is what Ruth's words in verses 16 and 17 reveal.

From that moment, I'm going to reread this statement for you, but I want you to understand when we're reading the Hebrew language, when we read our English language, say if there's five words, five descriptor words, we usually begin with the first word being the most descriptive.

My wife is the most loving, kind, generous, thoughtful, caring woman in the world, right? All these things are true, but that first one is kind of the first word that you identify with and you kind of go down the line.

In the way that this is set up in the Hebrew word, you know, in the Hebrew verse, it says, don't urge me to leave you or turn you back for where you go, I will go, where you stay, I will stay.

And it forms what's called a chiasm. And it's actually the middle words. It's almost like this sideways triangle bringing to the point the emphasis of the statement.

[ 34 : 36 ] So in our English language, it would be the middle. If we had five words describing someone, we would put the third word to be the most emphasis. That's how the Jewish mind is thinking here.

And the way it's written out, the middle construct of this verse is, your people will be my people and your God my God. That's the first declaration.

That's the strongest thing she's stating. So you almost read it in reverse. Your God is my God. God. And because of that, where you die, I will die. Where you stay, I will stay.

A little bit of poetry there. Where you go, I will go. For there I will be buried. So it goes out from there. So the primary point that Ruth is saying here, the main area where she is identifying with Naomi is her God.

She's not saying because you were a sweet mother-in-law, you were always kind to me. No, no, no. There was something in your faith about this real personal covenant God that even in the midst of tragedy, destruction, pain, and suffering you clung to.

[ 35 : 51 ] And that's the God I want. What a lesson that is for us. That when we suffer biblically, it's okay to let people in.

Instead of hibernating and staying away, we have an opportunity to let people bless us, care with us. It's good and great to let us know that you're hurting.

But even within that, there is this testimony that Naomi has that draws Ruth that she wants Naomi's God, Yahweh, to be her God.

Right? So this begins with identification with God and God's people. As I said, the structure reveals that the central pair of the clauses is what conveys the main point here.

At the heart of Ruth's identification with Naomi was her total identification with God and God's people. You see, Ruth did not simply separate herself from the gods that she previously worshipped.

[ 37 : 06 ] She wasn't just turning back on that and going to nothing. No, no, no. There's this repent action. She's turning away, but she's going to something. She's going to the Yahweh God.

And it's the same at our biblical conversion, right? We are going to Jesus Christ. By faith, we cling to him. It means that whoever leads us to Christ, we see that their God is the God that we want.

That Jesus Christ who saved my friends from sin is the same Jesus Christ I want to save me from my sin. And it's not Jesus Christ in Buddha, Jesus Christ with some other God.

And I've got an old pastor who tells a story. The first time he was speaking overseas, he said he found that he was leading a lot of people to the Lord. But then he found out that it was in India, and they were kind of just adding Jesus the statue to all their other statues.

And the first time he had these people, hey, how do I have Jesus become my God? So he would pray with them, and he thought these legitimate conversions, but they weren't.

[ 38 : 21 ] They were just kind of adding Jesus to when what Jesus was calling these people do, was to throw away all their old gods, dead gods, and follow after the only one true God.

Now the biggest challenge for us today is, yeah, we're not pretty vocal about worshipping false gods in our day. Like we know there's false religions out there.

The issue that I find most people, and perhaps even people in this church, is that the gods that they got are unnamed, but are real just the same.



How do we know we have a false God? It's who is sitting in the throne of your life. Is it you?

Let me tell you, if it is, you are a false god. God, is it your health? Are you excited about recycling and taking care of Mother Earth?

[ 39 : 37 ] Perhaps it is your family that sits, and all decisions are based around what's best for your family, rather than truly what is best, what God's glory calls you to.

Money, financial stability, you see, that's the trickier part in our day-to-day. All those things are good to some extent, but they can rise in importance.

And some of those gods exist because of suffering, backgrounds, hurt, pain in our former lives.

people. We like the idea of Jesus. We like the association of being around God's people. Perhaps we are so scared of suffering that we put some other God on the throne of our lives because we won't get hurt.

God's God's God's God's life. So, to be a Christian means you have to totally identify with Jesus Christ and his people.

[ 40 : 54 ] The second thing you need to do is that you need to identify with God wherever and whenever. When Ruth says, where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay.

It means God needs to enter into every single one of your life activities. It needs to cover every room of your house.

There's no exclusion zones. Jesus Christ died for all. Sometimes it's so easy to have that toe in the other world.

And the other thing about what it means to identify with Jesus Christ, it means now and forever. There's no such thing as try Jesus.

When you make that decision to Christ, you're all in regardless. Look at what Ruth says, where you die, I will die. Where you bury, I will be buried. See, Ruth's identification with Naomi was to be in life and in death.

[ 41 : 59 ] This identification is seen in Christian baptism, right? When a Christian is baptized, it symbolizes total identification with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death and in his resurrection.

It means an inseparable union between Christian and the Lord Jesus Christ. So the first area that we see, the first characteristic of conversion that we see in Ruth, it involves decisive separation.

The second characteristic is that we see total identification. And the third characteristic of conversion, it means single-minded determination.

It's a determination that is not open to discussion. Ruth, verse 16, don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.

It's the exact same thing. Jesus says, no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

[ 43 : 11 ] She says in verse 17, may the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything, but death separates me from you. Do we ever pray that prayer?

Are we willing to pray that prayer? Father, may you deal with me if I allow anything to separate me from you.

This was a determination that we see in Ruth that she knew and understood that she was accountable to God for. It was a commitment that she knew she had to see through.

You see, Jesus Christ calls for a similar single-minded determination. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. you see, conversion following Jesus Christ is a one-way trick ticket, one-way journey.

[ 44 : 33 ] It is an irrevocable commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ that has no escape clause. And Ruth knew it.

She understood in their primitive culture and how they lived their lives. She knew that to follow the covenant Yahweh, the redeeming Yahweh, was everything.

Everything. There was no turning back. there was no, I'm going back to visit whatever's in Moab just to get a taste of my own culture.

And listen, it's interesting, in the age of internet, we have people marrying people from other cultures. I've got several friends that have married some women in South America, Europe, Russia, China, if I could go through it.

And it's interesting. there's always a schism in the relationships. And my one friend for two months of the year, his wife goes back home.

[ 45 : 51 ] It's a hard two months for him. He can't afford to take that time off. But like there's this foot in the other land. When we decide to follow Jesus Christ, there is no foot in that other land.

It's all Jesus, all the time, every time, all the time, everywhere. See, what is interesting about Ruth is that she is a total outsider.

There's nothing that she has, there's nothing that she is born with that she could ever present to God to be accepted. And the fact of the matter is, we share that exact same thing.

the only thing that you and I have to offer is emptiness. One author states that he believes that the only reason that, or the one area where he identified, where Ruth identifies with Naomi is emptiness.

Ruth lost her husband as Naomi lost her husband and her sons. they both have no future. They both have no purpose.

[ 47 : 10 ] They just have emptiness. And we see this picture on the road to Yahweh, this woman clinging in her emptiness to an empty woman who's on her way to a covenantal God.

God. She trusted Naomi's God would be her God. This is what the cross of Jesus Christ represents to us as Christians.

We are to die to self and die to our own self-interest and admit as outsiders we are empty and have nothing to bring.

Martin Lloyd Jones once said anyone who thinks they deserve heaven is not a Christian but for anyone who knows they deserve hell there's hope.

See when we consider Naomi and the precious gift she's been given by God the conversion of her daughter-in-law we learn as a writer so aptly puts it fortunately God's mission to rescue sinners is not limited by our own flaws failings and foibles.

[ 48 : 38 ] My friends I've got a question to ask you is this your conversion story? Have you made a decisive separation from this world and separated yourself to Jesus Christ?

do you totally identify 100% with Jesus Christ? And thirdly do you have a single minded determination to follow Jesus Christ?

My fear for you if you say no you may not be a follower of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ wants every single part of you.

Why? Because he paid it all. Maybe you like the ethics that Jesus Christ represents perhaps his kindness his loveliness maybe it's the people but he will never be truly yours until you are willing to give up everything for him.

My prayer for you is that you would be like Ruth who clung to Naomi on her way to Yahweh that you would cling to the cross that you would separate yourself from this world you would identify only with Jesus Christ and you would be determined to follow him no matter what.

[ 50 : 32 ] My prayer is that you be a Ruth and not an Orpah. Let us pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, what an incredible message you give us inside of this very simple book.

It is a book that is filled with so much hope. Father, I know at some level we identify with Naomi, whether it be bad decisions, bad consequences, sinful, foolish, stupid lives, actions, whatever it is, oh Father.

But it's you who keeps calling. Father, I pray that we would put our pride down that we would be broken to admit that we're destitute and we have nothing to offer you.

We thank you for Naomi being courageous enough to go home to admit defeat and there is only hope in you, Yahweh, our personal God, God, who is faithful to his promises.

He's faithful in his loving kindness towards us. He is faithful in his mercy towards us. Father, we know and understand that you will not suffer any other gods, that you will break us, tear us down, rip us apart even, flay us from those false idols.

[ 52 : 17 ] Father, as we suffer, may we suffer authentically, admit what is true and is right about us, but praise what is true and right about you.

this whole book is about a redeemer. And Father, we desperately need to be redeemed.

Redeem us, oh Father, in most heavenly, holy, gracious name. Amen.