

Title: The Faith of a Foreign Woman

Date: October 13, 2013

Text: Ruth 1:19-21

Place: Decatur Church of God

Theme: The Story

Randy Frazee's son, Steven, applied to Baylor University. A little later a letter came that had a postcard in it with these words "You're accepted." Those are powerful words. Soon after that two T-shirts arrived in the mail for Steven emblazoned with these words "I know where I'm coming. I know where I'm going." A few days later Randy also got a letter...with the cost of going to the university. Being accepted and knowing where you are going comes at a high price. In The Story today we discover a woman who found that she was accepted, knew where she was going, and it cost a high price. It is the story of Ruth the Moabitess.

### **I. Three Observations about the Story of Ruth. (Ruth 1:1-2)**

#### ***Ruth 1:1-2***

*In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. [2] The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.*

- A. Ruth's story takes place during the time of the Judges.
- B. The story takes place primarily in Bethlehem of Judah.
- C. In the story God again uses a famine to accomplish his purpose.

\* Have you ever gone somewhere and discovered that it just wasn't working out.

My first solo pastorate was a small congregation in central Kansas. They were a good people but very set in their ways. It didn't take me long to discover that this would never be a mega-church. In reality, this was a congregation that was moving toward extinction. They needed a hospice chaplain and that wasn't me.

It was time to move!

## **II. Ruth, from Moab, Returns to Bethlehem with Naomi. (Ruth 1)**

- A. The famine in Judah drives Elimelech and his family to Moab.
- B. Elimelech's sons, Mahlon and Kilion, marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth.
- C. Elimelech and his sons die, leaving the three women as widows.

### ***Ruth 1:6***

*When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there.*

- D. Naomi returns to Bethlehem but urges her daughters-in-law to stay in their own country of Moab.
  - a. Ruth, the foreigner, will not stay in Moab.
  - b. Naomi wants to be called Mara ("bitter") because of life's hardships.

## **III. Ruth Meets Boaz and Boaz Favors Ruth. (Ruth 2-4)**

- A. As a poor widow, Ruth, the pagan foreigner, gleans in the fields of Boaz.

- B. Boaz respects Ruth's character, courage and faith and favors her.

***Ruth 2:10-12***

*At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me--a foreigner?"*

*[11] Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband--how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. [12] May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."*

- a. Ruth risked being rejected as a Moabite (the nation that oppressed God's people for 18 years).
  - b. Ruth hears "You're accepted" from Boaz.
- C. Because of a provision in God's law, Boaz, as a kinsman-redeemer, marries Ruth to carry on the family name of Elimelech. (Deut. 25, Ruth 4)
- a. Boaz risks his own inheritance in marrying Ruth. It cost him.
  - b. Boaz and Ruth have a son and call him Obed ("worker").
  - c. Obed is the father of Jesse who is the father of David, the king.
- D. Ruth's name, along with another foreign woman's name, Rahab, is in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 1:5**

*Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,  
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,  
Obed the father of Jesse,*

**What do I do with this?**

How can we become a modern day Boaz?

What are the “Boaz stories” in our congregation?

[Prepare beforehand to have testimonies of how church members have reached out to the lonely, the outcast, the overlooked and those with no hope.]

Randy Frazee tells of a couple—a 73 year old man with a 29 year old wife—who took into their home, Jamie, a single mother who is an ex-con with 5 children. If Jamie had no place to go, her children would have become wards of the State. The couple, the Hams, took Jamie and her children in and made a redemptive difference in their lives.

Jesus paid a high price for us. We, too, can say “I’m accepted” and “I know where I am going.”

How will we be like Jesus to our friends, schools, businesses and city?