

## Week 2: Some Stay, Some Walk Away

### Opening.

We live in a throw-away world. Unfortunately, relationships are no exception. The text tells the story of the three women that illustrate the ways we tend to respond when crises arise. Our lives are determined by decisions and commitments. Orpah, Naomi and Ruth make decisions that ultimately determine their destiny. In this sermon, we will learn why some stay and why some go away (whether that's in relationships, marriage, church, children, etc.), and find out for ourselves what it means to make decisions that honor God.

**Scripture.** Ruth 1:6-18

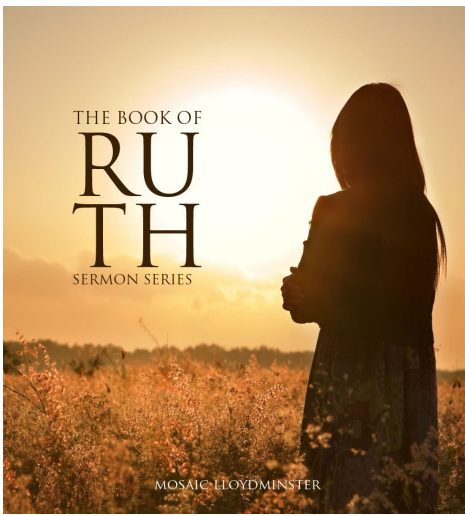
### Observation.

- Being a widow in the ancient times was tough. For many, it meant becoming dependent on their adult children, but for some who have young kids or no children, they rely on pittance. The text tells us that when Naomi found out that Israel the famine had ended and Israel was fruitful again, she realized that it was time to return home. She told her daughters in law to go and marry other men (verses 6-10).
- At first, Orpah and Ruth did not want to leave Naomi alone even after telling them that their obligations to her have ended. There's also an indication that Naomi was not very old, as she said she may still have sons (verses 10-13). Many Bible scholars agree that Naomi may have been in her late-40s, and the daughters in law were in their mid-20s.
- After seeing her husband and sons die, Naomi became embittered and did not want her daughters in law to live under the shadow of her bitterness (verse 13). Orpah was convinced that she could still have a better future and left, but Ruth decided to stay (verses 14-18). The sermon points from Sunday:
  - 1) **Tough seasons are meant to make us better not bitter** (v. 13)
  - 2) **Walking away isn't always the best option** (v. 10-13).
  - 3) **Staying can be challenging, but that's where growth happens** (v. 14-18).

### Application.

- Like Naomi, sometimes, difficult seasons make us bitter, and we find it hard to find healing from the trauma. Share an experience where this may have been true to you.
- Tough seasons can sometimes make us bitter if we don't know how to handle them, especially when we don't see any purpose in the pain. Naomi's bitterness started the moment her husband pulled his family out of God's will. Sometimes we see walking away as the most attractive option, and fail to see God's plan. Has there ever been a time you walked away from a situation because it was too hard? What lessons have you learned?
- Naomi discovered that the only way to heal from her bitterness is by returning to God's will. How does returning to God help in the healing process?
- Ruth made a commitment to stay (verses 16-17) despite knowing that there may be more challenges along the way. We all need to be like Ruth. What area of your life are you tempted to walk away from but God is urging you to stay?
- In our own life, some people stay, some walk away. The text teaches us to *cherish and treasure those who stay, bless those who walk away*. Never let bitterness get in the way.

**Prayer.** Is there an area of your life that you need to surrender to God?



### SCRIPTURE

#### Ruth 1:6-18

6 When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. 7 With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. 8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. 9 May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ... 14 At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. 15 "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." 16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." 18 When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.