

Week 4: The Power of a Promise

Opening.

In this sermon, we go back and dive deep into the words of Ruth. In chapter 1 verse 14, Ruth reveals her desire to care for Naomi, in verses 16 and 17 she reveals her decision. In life we make commitments, as Christians, we are called to make them with no consideration of turning back.

Scripture. Ruth 1:6-18

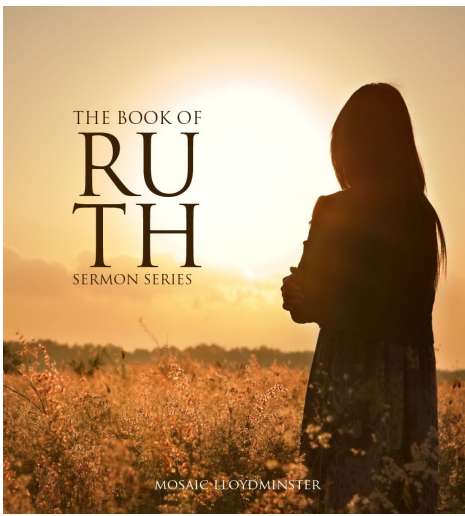
Observation.

- In Judaism, Ruth is considered the first “real convert.” While there were other non-Jews who have decided to follow the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Ruth is the first person to verbalize her desire. Putting our faith in God always involves believing with the heart and confessing with the mouth (Romans 10:9-10).
- Instead of returning to her own people, Ruth makes a covenant out of a loving devotion to her mother in law to embrace everything about Naomi: her destiny, her people, her God. While verse 14 reveals her desire to care for Naomi, verses 16 and 17 reveal her decision. This passage is the most beautiful statement of commitment in printed literature. Its beauty and simplicity remind us of the characteristics of genuine commitment to a relationship.
- The sermon points are as follows:
 - 1) **A covenant is costly—it involves a high price.**
 - 2) **A covenant is long term—it involves a lot of time.**
 - 3) **A covenant is sacred—it involves the holiness of God.**

Application.

- Which part of this message was most impactful for you and why? Is there anything you want to learn more about?
- While this book of Ruth reminds us that some people walk away like Elimelech and Orpah, it also teaches us that we should be like Ruth—the one who stays for the long haul. People like Ruth are the ones we must love, cherish and treasure in life; and she should be the kind of person we aspire to be like. Is there a person like Ruth in your own life?
- Our commitment in the big things should be as strong as the ones we make in the little things. Read Matthew 5:37. How can we keep ourselves accountable to follow through with our commitments?
- Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. Ruth reminds us of how God makes promises—He never breaks them. The world teaches us that “*promises are made to be broken,*” but the Bible teaches us that keeping a promise is costly, long term and sacred. How can we be better at keeping our keeping our covenants and commitments?

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



SCRIPTURE

Ruth 1:11-18

11 But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands?

12 Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— 13 would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord’s hand has turned against me!”

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.