

## 1. Love Clings

### a. Orpah

#### i. Tears

1. Sorrow of the world
2. Genuine sorrow, but not to the depth of repentance

#### ii. Kissed Naomi goodbye

1. Left her mother-in-law
2. Sought her comfort in this world more than the LORD

#### iii. Returned to her people and her gods

1. Just as the prodigal son always returns home, so the prodigal pig always returns to the pigsty
2. She was not willing to give everything up, so she missed out on the promises and the blessing

### b. Ruth

#### i. Tears

1. Psalm 56:8-13
2. Psalm 126

#### ii. Clung to Naomi

##### 1. Cling: to draw near and hold very fast

- a. Gen 2:24 “hold fast” of a husband to a wife
- b. Deut 4:4 “hold fast” to the LORD and live
- c. Deut 10:20 “hold fast to the LORD”

i. When you’re clinging to the LORD, where are your hands? What can they hold?

ii. To cling to the LORD means that we let go of other things as our life-saviors

##### 2. Did NOT kiss Naomi goodbye

##### 3. Did NOT return to her people and her gods

- a. This is Ruth’s repentance: to cling to Naomi means to let go of her people and her gods as her sources of life and joy

## 2. Love Repents

### a. Ruth vows with deep love to pursue Naomi and never leave her

### b. Note that each of these beautiful promises has a “repentance” attached to it

i. Repentance is not separate from love, it is in fact interwoven in love: to love is to repent of something

#### ii. Repentance is not sorrow!

1. Sorrow can lead to repentance, but they are not the same thing (2 Cor 7:10)
2. Orpah had sorrow (tears) but no repentance

a. She did not turn from her people or her gods

b. She did not vow her love to Naomi

#### 3. Ruth had sorrow (tears) but repentance

a. She left her people and her gods

b. She vowed her love to Naomi

iii. Repentance is the turning away from one thing in order to love the other

1. When I married, I repented of depending on my parents and Katie and I became a single entity
  - a. Genesis 2:24 “leave father and mother”
2. I repented of other women as my joy
  - a. I turned away from seeking joy in another woman
  - b. “forsaking all others”
3. I repented of selfish greed, autonomous life, health, and comfort
  - a. For richer or for poorer
  - b. In sickness and in health
  - c. For better or for worse
- iv. Love leaves behind its former pursuits in order to pursue its object...that is repentance!!
- v. In the same way, godly repentance leaves behind, turning its back on, its former idols/sins in order to pursue its object: Jesus Christ our Savior!

### 3. Love Persistently Pursues

- a. “Don’t make me leave you”
- b. Where you go, I will go
  - i. “into whatever you walk, I will walk”
  - ii. Vow of love that takes on the sufferings of Naomi!
    1. Repentance of comfort of “home” for the future unknown dangers of Naomi
    2. This is deep love, accepting the danger for the glory of her mother-in-law
  - iii. The Believer and Christ: Col 2:6-7 and Matt 28:20
- c. Where you lodge, I will lodge
  - i. This word, “lodge”, is a different word than either “sojourn” or “settle” used earlier
  - ii. It means to spend the night somewhere
    1. Note that Ruth acknowledges that Naomi has no right to land or to a home
      - a. In the ancient near east a woman could not own land
      - b. It was up the family of a sonless widow to purchase the land and allow her to live on it
      - c. Note that the LORD gives special provision and care for those who had no power in the land, particularly in their inability to have a home
        - i. Deut 24:17-19 Justice (with a curse!) for the:
          1. Widows
          2. Orphans
          3. Foreigners
      2. These women were homeless, in a sense, because they had no power or right to the land of Elimelech, but would be squatter until the “kinsman-redeemer” came to redeem them
    - iii. Ruth took on this impoverished homeless insecurity out of love for Naomi, forsaking (repenting) of the comforts of her homeland and family
    - iv. The Believer and Christ: 1 Pet 1:17-19 and Eph 2:19-22 and John 14:1-3
  - d. Your people are my people
    - i. Repented of her own native people and clung to Israel as her own people
      1. I leave my people, idolaters, and identify with your people
    - ii. You cannot come to Christ without coming to Christ’s people, as messed up as the Church may be
      1. You’re an outcast among your people, I will be an outcast, but they are my people too now
    - iii. The Church and Christ: 1 Pet 2:4-10 and Ephesians 2:14-16
  - e. Your God is my God

- i. Here is conversion's evidence!
  - 1. I no longer consider my former gods to be mine
  - 2. I belong to your God and place myself under Him as my Lord
  - 3. This is the center of Ruth's vow of faithfulness and love to Naomi
    - a. Through the journeying, the homelessness, the insecurity, the struggle, your God is my God
    - b. This is in the midst of Naomi's conviction that YHWH is against her!!
- ii. Now we may see how this Moabite woman would marry old "sickly" from the land of bread, she saw the beauty of the God of this family, the One True God, and clung to Him
- iii. She will also swear by the name of YHWH at the end of this promise, indicating His Lordship over her
- f. Where you die, I will die
  - i. I am with you to death, Naomi!
  - ii. She identifies with her mother-in-law so deeply and truly that even after Naomi dies, Ruth will remain in her land as one of her people, belonging to her God!
  - iii. She announces a curse upon herself
    - 1. "if anything but death separates you and me"
    - 2. "may YHWH do unspeakable things to me"
      - a. It is common in the ancient near east not to speak the actual curse for fear of the words carrying the power to perform them
      - b. So, Ruth says, "may YHWH do such and more to me if I anything but death parts us"
      - c. This is the deepest of curses she pronounces on herself if she does not follow through on her loving commitment to stay with Naomi
        - i. This is not so much about the curse as it is about the severity of Ruth's promise
        - ii. She is strongly stating her love for Naomi and her persistent pursuit of her all the way to death...and beyond.
    - 3. She vows in the name of YHWH, not Chemosh the Moabite god
  - iv. There I will be buried
    - 1. Burial was a family rite, a sacred position where families were buried in plots for generations
    - 2. Ruth is saying that she wants to be completely in Naomi's family, even after death
    - 3. This faithful, loving commitment to her
    - 4. The Believer and Christ: 2 Cor 5:6-9 and Phil 1:21-28

## Conclusion:

When Naomi saw the persistent pursuit of Ruth's love, what was her response? She shut her mouth! There is nothing more to say to the one who dedicates herself with such passion and persistence, resolving to go all the way to death for you. Isn't this our initial response to Christ?! Awestruck dumbness. How could He...why would He...a cross?! Really?! I'm not worthy, but He did!! Oh, the glorious gospel of my Savior, who did not only promise to take my death upon Himself, but also bore the wrath of God for my guilt so that I would no longer be condemned! Oh, the beauty and the riches and glory of the love of Christ for you, my brothers and sisters. See His glorious love for you, shown and publicly displayed through His sin-atonement cross. Gaze in awestruck wonder at the incredible grace of God, which didn't merely pass over sin, but PAID for it in blood! God paid for your sin and my sin in His blood! That is love! That is persistent pursuit, from the glories of heaven to the sorrowful agony of the grave, He persistently pursued you!

How do we respond to such love? We respond like the beautiful example of Ruth. We respond with real love in return. Real love means leaving everything else behind and clinging to its object, following hard after it. This is what it means to trust in Jesus. We leave everything behind and cling to Him, trusting in Him alone for our joy, following hard after Him, vowing with all that we have within us to go where He goes, to bear up His reproach, to identify with His people, and accept His God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Repent and believe! It's not about tears, Orpah had tears, it's about a repentance that flows out of love. Because I love Jesus, I will persistently pursue Him and turn my back on other things as my savior or lord. It is out of our deep, deep, love for Jesus that we forsake sin, turn away from trusting in our performance and perfection for the idols of our hearts, running away from identifying with the world and clinging to the LORD.

This beautiful vow of love and faithfulness proclaimed in the crossroads of Moab by a weeping widow to a weeping widow gives us great pause in our own proclamations of love and commitment. We are all in or we are not in at all. Today is the day of salvation, cling to Christ and His glorious cross of salvation, His powerful risen life, and His always reliable promises! He loved us first with love deeper than we can fathom, that our love for Him might glorify His greatness for all of eternity. To the glory of God alone through the glorious gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ, for all of eternity.