

Where You Go, I Will Go: Ruth 1:6-18 Explained

Scriptures for Today: Ruth 1:6-18

""**Ruth 1:6-18**

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. 7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. 11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; 13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. 14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. 15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. 16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. 18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.""

Introduction — From Genesis to Ruth: How We Got Here

Before we get into Ruth 1:6–18, let's remember where this story fits in the whole Bible. Ruth is not an isolated love story tucked between Judges and Samuel. Ruth is a **continuation** of God's plan of redemption for all mankind.

Genesis — The Seed Promised: God created man. Sin entered. Yet God promised a Redeemer — the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15). God then called Abraham and promised him a land, a nation, and a lineage that would bless the world.

Exodus — A Redeemed People: Israel grows into a nation in Egypt, is enslaved, and God raises Moses to deliver them. They receive the Law, the priesthood, and the tabernacle to teach them about holiness and redemption.

Leviticus — Holiness: God teaches Israel how to approach Him through sacrifices, priests, and offerings — including the kinsman principles that later appear in Ruth.

Numbers — Testing and Wandering: Israel journeys toward the Promised Land. They experience failure, judgment, mercy, and God's faithfulness despite their unbelief.

Deuteronomy — The Covenant Renewed: Moses preaches his final sermons. Joshua is appointed. Israel is warned: obey and be blessed, rebel and be judged.

Joshua — Conquest and Inheritance: Under Joshua, they enter the land, conquer, divide territory, and settle. But not everything is conquered. Not everyone obeys fully.

Judges — Decline and Chaos: After Joshua dies, Israel falls into a cycle of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance. "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

And during this dark, chaotic, violent era... the book of Ruth happens. Ruth is the bright candle in a dark room. Ruth is the flower growing out of the cracked pavement. Ruth is the quiet story of God working behind the scenes while the nation is falling apart.

Introduction — Summary of Ruth 1:1–5: Famine, Flight, and Loss

The first sermon covered Ruth 1:1–5. Here is the recap:

- A famine hits Bethlehem — ironic, because Bethlehem means *house of bread*.
- Elimelech moves his family to **Moab**, a pagan nation rooted in incest, idolatry, and hostility toward Israel.
- His wife Naomi and their sons Mahlon and Chilion go with him.
- In Moab, everything collapses:
 - Elimelech dies.
 - Both sons marry Moabite women (forbidden but tolerated in that era).
 - Both sons also die.
- Naomi is left with **three funerals and zero hope**.

She is empty. Broken. Bitter. A foreign widow in a foreign land with foreign daughters-in-law. And then the turning point arrives — **the return from the country of Moab**. Now, let's take a close look at the word of God starting there in Ruth 1 verse 6.

Verse 6 — Naomi Hears God Has Visited His People

""Ruth 1:6

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.""

This is the first ray of light in the book. The famine that drove Naomi away is now reversed. God "visited His people" — meaning God intervened, restored, and blessed. Three truths shine here:

1. **God remained faithful even while Naomi wandered.** Naomi left Bethlehem. But God never left Bethlehem.
2. **God knows how to bring people home.** Naomi returns not because she has hope but because she has nothing else.
3. **God often begins restoration long before we notice.** Naomi hears about bread before she tastes it. Ruth sees grace before she experiences it.

The journey back to God starts with hearing good news.

Verse 7 — The Return Begins

""Ruth 1:7

Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.""

Naomi is leaving Moab with Orpah and Ruth. She is not simply changing geography — she is changing direction. Moab represents loss, emptiness, compromise, and death. Judah represents covenant, presence, promise, and restoration.

The phrase "*went forth out of the place where she was*" reveals a spiritual reality: **God often begins His work of restoring us by moving us out of the place where sorrow shaped us and into the place where grace will restore us.**

Before blessing comes obedience. Before restoration comes repentance. Before fullness comes leaving the place of emptiness. This is the pattern of Scripture:

- God called Abraham *out of* his country so He could bless him in a new land.
- God called Israel *out of* Egypt before He gave them the Law.
- God called Jonah *out of* rebellion before He used him in Nineveh.
- God calls every believer *out of* darkness into His marvelous light.

Leaving Moab is not just Naomi's decision — it is **God drawing her back into His story.** Returning to Judah is the first step toward Ruth's redemption, Boaz's marriage, David's lineage, and Christ's coming. **Every return to God begins with a turning away from where we should have never been.**

Verses 8–9 — Naomi Tries to Send Them Back

""Ruth 1:8–9

And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.""

Notice that they had left for Judah. But Naomi stops right here. Naomi's heart is tender but broken. She blesses them, praises them, loves them — but urges them to stay in Moab. "Return each to her mother's house." She is telling them to go find another husband and have rest in the house of her husband. She then kisses them and weeps.

Why does Naomi urge them to stay in Moab? Because Naomi believes **God is against her** (v. 13). She doesn't want these young widows to suffer because of her. Her request is emotional. Her words are sincere. But her advice is wrong. She is encouraging Moabite daughters-in-law to return to Moabite gods. That is NEVER a good thing.

We learn something very important right here: **Hurting people often give bad counsel. They lead people in the wrong direction. Sometimes when you are hurting you are making very bad decisions. So, you need to be very careful with the decisions you make while hurting.**

Naomi loves them — but pain blinds her from seeing God's bigger plan. The women weep because loss creates bonds between people. And now she is allowing them to leave and to depart from her. It's a sad time. They may never see each other again.

Verse 10 — Their First Response: Loyalty

""**Ruth 1:10**

And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.""

Both Ruth and Orpah respond with affection and commitment. But emotional commitment is not the same as spiritual conviction. Sometimes people say things when they are emotional and they don't follow through with those things.

Many people are very happy when they get saved, and they promise they are coming to church. They are excited and happy but we never see them at church.

Some people start toward God... Some people begin the journey... Some people walk part of the road... but many people quit when facing hard times. Only one of these daughters in law will walk every step side by side with Naomi.

Again, look at the verse: "And THEY (both of them) said unto her, SURELY, WE will return with thee unto thy people." But only one — Ruth — will walk every step with Naomi. Orpah feels loyalty. Ruth has loyalty **and** faith.

Verses 11–13 — Naomi's Pain Speaks

""**Ruth 1:11–13**

And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I

am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; 13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.""

Naomi paints the bleakest picture possible. She uses Israel's **marriage law** to show the absurdity of waiting for new sons to grow up. She is referring to the law that said a man's brother could marry the widow to continue the family line. She thinks she has nothing to offer these young women. Naomi is doing her best to talk them out of continuing with her.

She has nothing to give them. She says she is too old to have an husband. She can't have any more sons that could be their husbands. But her biggest mistake is that statement right at the end of verse 13: **"the hand of the LORD is gone out against me."**

Has God judged her? No. Is God punishing her? No. Has God cursed her? No. Naomi interprets tragedy as rejection. Many people do this same thing. They think God is against them. God is not against her — **He is arranging Ruth's salvation, Boaz's marriage, David's lineage, and Christ's genealogy.**

Think about that. God's plan is coming together, but Naomi sees it as the Lord being against her. Remember that in your life too. Sometimes you might think God is against you, but it might just be His plan coming together. And His plan is the absolute greatest. Sometimes the hand of the Lord that feels heavy IS THE hand of the Lord that is guiding you home.

Verse 14 — Two Choices, Two Directions

""Ruth 1:14

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.""

Both women weep. Both women feel grief. Both women love Naomi. But one kisses goodbye. That is the goodbye kiss that you see from Orpah right there. She is going to return to the house of her mother. She is going to stay in Moab here she is from. That's more comfortable to her. That is more safe to her.

But the other, Ruth, clave unto her mother in law Naomi. That word "*clave*" is the same Hebrew verb used in Genesis 2:24 — "cleave unto his wife." It means to glue, to fasten, to hold with commitment. Ruth is going to stay with Naomi. She loves Naomi, and she cannot leave her.

Orpah walks away respectfully but permanently. Orpah loved Naomi too. But we see the difference in the women. You want to be like Ruth and cleave to the people you love. Cleave to the people who care. Ruth refuses to move.

Here is one of the strongest truths in the entire chapter: **"Emotion may move you toward God, but only commitment will keep you with God."** In other words, emotion can spark

your desire to seek God in a moment, but only a steady, daily commitment will keep you faithful when the feelings fade.

Verse 15 — Naomi Tries One Last Time

""Ruth 1:15

And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.""

Naomi unknowingly reveals the problem: If Ruth returns to Moab, she returns to **Moab's gods**. Chemosh. Idols. Paganism. A dead religion with dead hope. Naomi urges Ruth toward a spiritual disaster — yet God will use Ruth's refusal to bring forth the Messiah Himself.

Sometimes even well-meaning saints encourage the wrong direction. We can't encourage people to go the wrong direction. If something is going to take them away from God, don't send them that direction. We have to be very careful when directing people here at this church. Is it better that they continue with us or be sent another direction and lose God's people?

Here, Naomi is even encouraging Ruth to leave her and to go back the false gods. But Ruth will not go back. We cannot go back to all the things from the past. We cannot worship the things of this world.

Verses 16–17 — Ruth's Fivefold Covenant of Loyal Faith

""Ruth 1:16–17

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.""

These are among the most beautiful, powerful, and profound words in all Scripture. Her words are beautiful words from a woman that God sees as simply beautiful right there within her heart. And you can see how much God loves Ruth by how God uses her to fulfill His will. Ruth makes a **five-part vow** right there:

1. "Where thou goest, I will go." She commits her future.
2. "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge." She commits her daily life.
3. "Thy people shall be my people." She abandons Moab's identity.
4. "Thy God my God." She converts — fully, permanently, wholeheartedly.
5. "Where thou diest, will I die... the LORD do so to me..." She seals her vow.

This is not romance. This is not emotion. This is not impulsive. This is **faith**. Ruth is showing us her faith right here through her words that she means. Many people say things that they don't mean. Listen, only say things that you mean. Don't make promises you won't keep.

Ruth chooses poverty over possibility, widowhood over remarriage, uncertainty over security — because she believes Naomi's God is the true God. She is choosing God here. Ruth becomes the first in Scripture, in the Bible, to make a covenant commitment to God **from outside the nation of Israel** using covenant language.

This is a saved person. I believe she was already saved and Ruth is showing her faith in the Lord here. See what she chooses over the obvious choice most people would make. Most people wouldn't make the choice to be here in West Louisville. But we see things differently. We see the great need for souls to be saved. And they are out there waiting everywhere.

Verse 18 — Naomi Gives Up Arguing

""Ruth 1:18

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.""

Ruth's mind is set. Her faith is firm. Her commitment is unbreakable. Naomi realizes she cannot stop her — because God is drawing her. Ruth's steadfast mind becomes the hinge for the entire book:

Ruth will meet Boaz. They will marry. They will have Obed. Obed will father Jesse. Jesse will father **David**. David will lead to **Jesus Christ**.

One Moabite girl's decision to cling to grace becomes the turning point for the entire world. Ruth becomes the great grandmother of king David, that young man with such great faith that defeats the giant Goliath.

Where do you think that great faith came from? Who do you think helped David to have that great level of faith as a young man? Do you think maybe Ruth might have played a part in that? Ruth is a Gentile woman brought into Israel by faith who becomes a part of the line of Jesus Christ, leading ultimately to David, and later to Jesus Christ. See how God does things.

Practical Applications from Ruth 1:6–18

1. God begins restoration long before we see it. Naomi heard about bread before she tasted it — God was already working. They were hungry. God does this at times to us as well. People come here because they are hungry physically and spiritually.

2. Returning to God always requires a step of faith. Naomi "arose" and "went forth." Movement matters. What you do matters. How you make matters. The steps you take matter.

3. Pain does not always speak truth. Naomi believed God was against her — but God was setting up redemption. God is not against His people. God is for His people. But sometimes things don't work the way we want them to work.

4. Emotion is not enough — commitment matters. Orpah cried and left. Ruth cried and stayed. Make a commitment to the right things in your life. Leave the bad things behind. Commit to the good things.

5. God calls people from every nation. Ruth proves salvation is open to anyone who chooses the God of Israel. Salvation is for all people, but God doesn't make a person believe.

6. Your decision today can impact generations. Ruth's choice shaped Israel, shaped the kings in Israel, and shaped the lineage of Christ. For example, if the young men that come to this church would choose the right things, all the generations coming after them will change.

7. True love is loyal, sacrificial, and covenantal. Ruth's love is an echo of God's love toward us — steadfast, unchanging, faithful. Ruth is faithful. God is faithful.

Conclusion — The Power of One Right Choice

Judges shows a nation falling apart. Ruth shows a woman standing firm in faith. Naomi saw tragedy — but God saw a tapestry where He was weaving all of those hardships together into a bigger plan that would bring far greater things.

Job says, "When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." We will suffer at times, but we will come forth stronger.

Ruth saw a bitter widow — but God saw a future mother in the line of Christ. The message of Ruth 1:6–18 is simple and world-changing: **When you cling to God, God weaves your life into His story.** Don't ever forget that.

Ruth's story is our story — leaving the old land, walking by faith, clinging to grace, trusting the God who leads us home.

Where you go, I will go. Your God will be my God.

Let's pray.