



## KINDNESS AND TRAGEDY

Ruth 1:6–22

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### RELATED SCRIPTURES

Ruth 1:1–5 | Isaiah 53:6 | 2 Corinthians 5:21

### STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 6.9.24

### SUMMARY

Having lost her husband and her two sons, Naomi is now a widow with no social or financial stability. She is in a foreign land with no hope, so she resolves to return to her home, Bethlehem—the land of promise to every Israelite. With the passing of her sons, Naomi was left with her two Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, who are now widows as well. Naomi discourages Orpah and Ruth from following her to Bethlehem as they would then be the widows in a foreign land, and as foreigners, they would have little hope of ever marrying again. Naomi encourages Orpah and Ruth to stay in Moab with their families and start new lives in the land they are most familiar with. Orpah does as Naomi suggests, but Ruth pledges her life to Naomi and makes a covenant with her, promising that only death will separate them. Despite the emotional pledge, Naomi stops resisting Ruth and reluctantly acquiesces to Ruth’s pledge. When Naomi returns to Bethlehem, she tells the townspeople to refrain from calling her “Naomi” (which means “pleasant”) but instead to call her “Mara,” meaning “bitter.” Unquestionably, Naomi is bitter with the Lord because of the circumstances in which she finds herself. Moreover, in Ruth, she has a physical reminder of all the tragedy she has faced now following her around. The gospel parallels become increasingly evident as the story proceeds. Like Ruth, Jesus sacrificed himself, pledging his whole being to a people who, by nature, are bitter towards God. We, like sheep, have all gone astray, each turning to his own way (Isaiah 53:6); nevertheless, Jesus says to us, “My life for yours.” Jesus became sin for sinners so that we who were enemies of God might have life (2 Corinthians 5:21).

### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Ruth 1:6–22.

After Ruth pledges her life to Naomi, Naomi’s response seems less than grateful or warm. In what ways are you able to draw parallels between Naomi and Christians, both before and after conversion?

How does Ruth model Christ? Do you notice more than one way? If so, enumerate the various ways Ruth’s behavior foreshadows what Christ does for his Church.

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.