

# JOURNEY

Part Two: Settling Down in Enemy Territory  
Ruth 1:1-5

Let's meet the **family** vs. 1-2

Meet dad: **Elimelech** = 'God is King'

Meet mom: **Naomi** = 'Gracious; God has been gracious to me'

Meet the sons: **Mahlon** = 'sickly'; **Chilion** = 'Tired, Wasting'

Let's look at their **decisions** vs. 1-4

'**Sojourn**' in enemy territory – live for a while vs. 1

They decided to '**remain there**' – settle in vs. 2

They ended up staying about '**ten years**' – residents vs. 4

Their sons married **Moabite** women: **Orpah** and **Ruth** vs. 4

Their journey went from **visitors**, to **inhabitants**, to **immersed**

Let's look at the **consequences** vs. 3, 5

Elimelech dies; Naomi only has her sons left

Naomi lost the **protection** of a husband

Mahlon and Chilion die, Naomi is now also **childless**

Naomi lost the **future** help of her sons

Life in enemy territory is a **downward spiral**; more calamities

Applications:

A Word of **Wisdom**: Sometimes following God includes difficulties, but don't be seduced into believing that life is better in enemy territory.

*'Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."'*

1 Corinthians 15:33

A Word of **Warning**: Bad choices still lead to bad consequences

*'Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. Galatians 6:7-8*

A Word of **Welcome**: Don't hesitate to redirect your journey back toward God!

## Life Group Discussion Questions – January 21, 2024

**Ruth 1:3-4** Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. They took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years.

### DISCOVER

1. If you were to uproot your life and move to a country that was very different from our own, how long do you think it would take for you to be completely immersed in that culture? What happens to a people group's homeland upbringing once they have been assimilated to another culture?
2. Discuss why you think Ruth was so insistent on leaving her homeland and adopting the people of Israel as her own.
3. Identify the components of Israel's "calamity cycle" that Pastor Phil presented, (According to the Book of Judges there were seven of these cycles.) Where does the account of Ruth fall in the cycle? Give three reasons for your response.
4. What does it mean to be "living our lives in enemy territory"? Why is there always an associated downward spiral as a result? What kind of consequences might we anticipate? Is it OK to just "visit" enemy territory for a short time? (see Galatians 5:9)

### EXPLORE

1. Moab was a detested perennial enemy of Israel. (see Judges 3:12-30) "Elimelech" means "my God is king." This name was probably ascribed to him because of his devout commitment to the God of Israel. Why would a 'pillar of the (spiritual) community' take-up temporary residence in a sworn enemy's country? What might we conclude about human leadership?
2. Most are familiar with the expression, "We reap what we sow." Explain how this is a moral law of our righteous God's determined response to sin. Now read Galatians 6:7-8. In this short passage, what can we learn about God? About people?
3. Chapters 7 through 11 in Exodus describes the 10 plagues that God sends over Pharaoh. Why was God chastening Egypt? Where do you see that God showed restraint? Now read Isaiah 30:13-14 and 45:6-7. How are God's judgments in the Isaiah passages different than the Exodus account? Is there a difference between natural disasters and calamities? In other words, in the Book of Ruth, why would God send a famine on Israel rather than an overwhelming invading army? What life lessons can we personally glean from the manner in which God judges?

### EXPERIENCE

1. Have past traumas, broken relationships, or adverse circumstances created any bitterness in you? If so, how does the story of Ruth encourage you?
2. How can a believer remain hopeful when doing the right thing is often difficult and evil people seem to prosper?
3. Reconsider DISCOVER #3. How would you answer this question by inserting America instead of Israel? Justify your answer. Is the "calamity cycle" applicable to all cultures? What does this imply about the human condition and God's redemptive character?

### PRAY

*Pray...Father in heaven, Your sheep are exceedingly prone to wander. At the slightest provocation, like from the lust of the eyes, we hasten to encamp in enemy territory. Help us, O God, to be laser-focused on whatever is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and what is of good repute...that is, to be laser-focused on Jesus... that we might not sin against Thee. Amen.*