

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON EIGHTEEN COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

Do you recall a childhood prayer that goes like this?

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee Lord my soul to take.

In our house this was followed by –

God bless mommy and daddy, brothers and sisters, and every relative that could be named.

Then the time often was extended to the birds, the trees, the bumble bees (ok maybe not bumble bees) or anything the child could think of to prolong the personal attention and effort of having to go to sleep. This actually was a good prayer to help them not only recognize the need to give God their lives, but it also reminded the child to give a blessing to loved ones even though they may not have completely understood it.

Sandy Harber and I recently heard a speaker talk about the first chapter of Ruth and he stated that Naomi pronounced a blessing on Ruth and Orpah even though she was encouraging them to return to their mothers. We have been slowly reviewing every detail of the book of Ruth, but it never stood out to me that Naomi was providing a blessing on her daughter's in law. Ruth 1:8-9 "And Naomi said unto her 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. 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." We talked about the great love and emotional turmoil that they went throughout these verses, but in reviewing them again God suddenly made this blessing stand out to me also. Naomi was devastated and filled with grief. Yet she not only realized that she had to return to her homeland, she showed that she remembered God and her previous teachings as she called on the Lord to deal kindly with her daughters in law and grant them rest. She then kissed them and shared in their weeping. Naomi grew to love and care for Ruth and Orpah. She recognized that she didn't have much to give them, but she could give them her blessing from the Lord. It was truly a valuable gift. She didn't just bestow it on Ruth who chose to stay with her. She also blessed Orpah. Naomi showed appreciation for both and wanted God to bless them.

God gave us an amazing gift when he gave us the opportunity to bless others. There are many times in which we should bless others. He even told us to bless our enemies (Matt. 5:44). Romans 12:14 even tells us to bless those which persecute us. Bless and curse not.

We sometimes forget that we can even bless God too. In Psalms 34:1, David says "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. Psalms 103:1-2, " Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Giving blessings is one of the Lord's many benefits. God gave us the authority and opportunity to bless others.

Pastor's often end the service with blessings on the congregation. This past Sunday the pastor made a special point of announcing his blessing in a powerful way. We often don't pay much attention, but it truly is an important part of the service that sends us out to serve under the blessing and power of God. We should consciously receive that blessing and draw on God's many benefits to grow stronger and closer to Him.

I hope we can each prayerfully consider blessing God and others daily. Who does God want you to bless today?

Psalms 115:14-May the Lord richly bless you and your children.

May God richly bless you and your family as you seek to serve Him and allow God to use you to love and bless others.

God's Blessings,

Sandy Yates