

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON THIRTY-SIX COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

I hope you are having a good day. I praise God for His faithfulness and promises, yet I have to admit that some days are a little tougher than others to look forward to what He is doing next. I recently finished a book on grieving, and even though it was an excellent book, it was difficult. I struggled to look ahead rather than dwelling on my loss. I don't have many days in which I cannot see God's hand in my circumstances and how He is using my loss to draw closer to Him, I appreciate His provisions as I go through this process, but I definitely have moments when wonder what God is up to next.

I wonder what Ruth was feeling as she left her family and homeland. As she made the tough journey with her mother-in-law I wonder what was she thinking. How fearful was she for their lives? How much hope did she have that she would be accepted in the new place? How alone did she and Naomi feel even though they had each other? Women were very much dependent on their husbands during this time. Would they risk being raped, abused, or have other safety issues? How can they find a way to provide for themselves? Naomi must have been a loving example of a better homeland so she may have given Ruth some assurance that they would be ok together in this journey. Did that mean that the new homeland would have better values than the land in which she grew up? Did it mean that they would be kind, like her mother-in-law, so that they could find a way to provide for themselves? I don't imagine everything changed for the better without some discouragement along the way.

Do you ever feel discouraged when you can't see beyond the moment? Is it hard not to look back to easier days? Do you see hope for better days ahead?

Isaiah 45:18-21, "Forgetting the former things, do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen. The people formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."

When we can get our eyes off our present circumstances and are able to diligently continue to be faithful no matter what we are facing, God honors that faithfulness. Ruth's diligence and efforts, despite her tough circumstances, was noticed by Boaz. In fact, he requested that God give her full reward. The enemy wants to steal our rewards, or at least our joy, but God wants to reward us as we faithfully serve Him. When we praise Him in the midst of those circumstances, we get to dwell in a higher place where we can be closer to God. The closer we are to Him, the more He can reward us with His fullness of joy and the more He can use us to help others. Ruth was rewarded in many ways. God has an abundance of blessings waiting to bestow on each of us also. It doesn't always happen immediately, but as we faithfully seek Him and follow His direction in our lives, the more He can show us His plan one day at a time. Looking back may have some great memories that we can cherish, but looking forward gives us hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an unexpected end." Ruth was rewarded with a great plan, and she was certainly given an unexpected end. He has a plan for us too. It's always the best plan.

It is a daily choice that we must make. Will we make Him our foundation and let God build our lives according to His plan or allow the enemy to steal our rewards? When we are tempted to get discouraged or feel like giving up, we can turn to Him for greater strength in our time of weakness. God is always doing a new thing. He is ready to provide water in the dry land. We are His chosen people who He formed to dwell with Him in praise. He longs to show us a love that only He can give us and guide us into a life that only He can give. It is not always easy, but the effort is worth it.

Sandy was right that we can't earn salvation, but we do get to work for rewards both eternally and here on earth. The good news is that we don't have to do it on our own.

My husband felt very inadequate when God called him into the ministry so God gave him the following verse to claim. *"1 Thessalonians 5:24 - Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."* He not only provides everything we need, but He promises to do it through us if we give Him the opportunity.

Phillipians 4:19- "But God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

I sincerely hope that you have a great day because Jesus will provide all that we need according to His riches in glory.

Love and Prayers,

Sandy Yates