

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON TWENTY-ONE COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

This week we are noticing that Naomi and Ruth safely arrived in Bethlehem. They must have been exhausted, but also relieved that they reached their destination. Now they suddenly met some known and unknown people to Naomi. Would they be accepted by them? We were only told that it caused a stir. When some people asked if this is Naomi, they may have been excited to see her. Some probably wondered where she was living for so long. Some may have remembered that she left with a husband and children but questioned why they were no longer with her now and why she was with a gentile woman? They were probably in a bit of an uproar among themselves. I imagine her appearance changed also. Time, grief, and exhaustion were probably apparent on her countenance. Ruth was a young gentile woman who would not automatically be accepted easily in this land. Would they be accepted and receive hospitality and love? Naomi and Ruth probably felt they had to work hard toward acceptance in spite of Naomi once belonging to the community and was previously even a land-owner. We only know that there was an uproar which could have been seen as excitement, or it could just have been a lot of commotion from people who had a lot of questions and had to decide how they were going to receive them.

When we go through tough times we often long for friends and loved ones to surround us with love and care. Those who have close loved ones and/or a loving church family can usually find great comfort and strength to recover more easily than those who feel alone or feel like no one understands or cares.

I am so grateful for my wonderful family and my Christian brothers and sisters who have surrounded me in my time of needing support. It has been a tremendous help throughout my grieving process. Yet the process of grief still affects me in so many ways, including physically. I often feel like I have been on a long tough journey. I know it is nothing like what Naomi and Ruth must have experienced, but I can certainly get a glimpse of the exhaustion, grief, and longing for comfort. Sandy Harber had just gone through losing her husband also, so she was one of the first ones to reach out to me and comfort me. I attempted to do the same for her. It has been amazing to feel the friendship and encouragement that God gave us during this time. My sister also lost her husband 2 weeks after my husband died. We have also been blessed to develop an even deeper love and growing closeness through all of this. Naomi and Ruth developed a deeper friendship and love also, but they now also looked to others for acceptance and care. Non-acceptance could have made things much worse, but as we continue to read this story God shows us how He opened their hearts towards them. Remember how much He loves us and accepts us always, but also remember that God wants to use us and our grief to love and care for others. I have grown closer to God and others through my grief. It is amazing how God heals, restores, and strengthens us during tough times. It is also amazing how much He uses His children to take our hand to help us walk in the right direction.

Have a blessed week as you reach out to others for encouragement and to encourage them. God's wants His people to become available to others so He can carry out His plan for each of us, just like He used His people to become a major difference in the lives of Naomi and Ruth.

May God bless you,
Sandy Yates