

# Keys for a Successful Family Life - Part 6

by Don Courville

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*The sermon explores the story of Ruth to illustrate the importance of family choices and God's providence in our lives.*

**Duration:** 1:02:12

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 30:19, Psalm 37:5, Psalm 37:23-24, Proverbs 3:11-12, Luke 15:17, Acts 27:22-26, James 1:2-4

**Topics:** "Family Life", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the story of Naomi and her family's journey from Moab back to Bethlehem, highlighting the consequences of their choices and the correction needed for blessings. It emphasizes the importance of trusting God's providence even when it seems contrary to His promises, and the significance of repentance and returning to the path of faith. The sermon encourages listeners to rise and go in the right direction, seeking God's guidance and blessings.

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## Transcript

Well, you ready for more? I'm going to shift gears a little bit this morning. I love to go through books of the Bible and sometimes do a character study. And I thought about doing that this year.

And then the expression was put out a couple of times to maybe focus on the family and in that area. So I'm going to do that this morning. I do have one message that I gave, I think it was last week at our church.

I can't remember the last week or the week before. And I would like to close up with that one this evening. But I'm going to take you for a little bit just into the life of Ruth.

Now, I can't do all of it. It would be, we could do the whole weekend on Ruth, maybe. But the reason is it's because of its theme of the family and basically how a father took his family down to Moab and they all died except Naomi.

And you know the story. But there are some principles there that will help us. And so let's open up with prayer.

Our Father, thou art gracious and you're kind and you're forgiving and you're merciful and you pour your grace out upon us undeserving folks, especially me. And we come again as beggars back to our fathers saying we need more blessing. We want more blessing.

Would you bless us again? And we've learned some tremendous things from your word. And Father, the kids have really enjoyed the stories. Father, I'm planning on going a little bit deeper today with maybe not so many stories, but just to dig into your word and draw out truths that the Holy Spirit could open up to us.

And again, we pray if there'd be anybody that would be listening to this message or watching this message without Christ or possibly here, that the Holy Spirit would draw them to the lovely Lord Jesus, that they would see that you died on the cross for them and you want them to give their heart to you, to surrender themselves to you, to believe on you and to do it by faith, to be willing to turn from their sins. Now, Father, we come again asking you to bless us and that we might be a blessing to you and maybe what you give us, we might could use to be a blessing to others. Father, you know, we have some hard things happen in our lives.

Some of us, some of us have had some great tragedies and we come and ask that the healing power of the word of God with the work of the Holy Spirit would work in our hearts, that we would be free. You said the truth would set us free and sometimes it's a challenge to us to obey your truth, but you've given us everything that we need for life, for godliness to make it and your grace is sufficient for all our needs. So we thank you now for this time in Jesus name.

Amen. Okay. The book of Ruth, you're familiar with that and I have an outline.

I gave this so at our church, actually, I think I started this August the 15th in 2010 and while I was given that message that morning and afterwards, I wrote a son's wife was giving birth to a baby, their first born and Christina Hope and it was really amazing to hold that little girl that afternoon. She lived nine hours. She was a preemie.

I think she was 23 and a half weeks along and that was a hard day. They really wanted that little girl and then the Lord's given them a couple more little girls and boys since, but I got that marked here. That's how I remember that.

So as we go into Ruth, I'm going to give you some questions later on somewhere in here, maybe this afternoon I'll have those questions, but I do want you to ask God to teach you. I ask God to show you something you need to hear. Ask God to open up your heart to maybe an area you never even thought of and maybe he'll give you something for somebody else.

You see, Jesus left us to be his hands and his feet and his eyes and his tongue. He left us to do the work that he started. So let's don't fail him.

And I know we're full of weakness and fear and we have issues, but there's nothing too hard for God as I've shared what he could do in my life. He can do in your life. Ruth, now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land.

You'd like to stand while I read a few verses. Your last stretch before we go three hours. Just kidding.

I don't think I could make it three hours. Now it came to pass in the days when the judges rule that there was a famine in the land and a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife, Naomi, and the name of his two sons, Melon and Kilion, Ephratites of Bethlehem Judah.

And they came into the country of Moab and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband died and she was left and her two sons, and they took them wives of the woman of Moab. The name of the one was Orphan, the name of the other Ruth, and they dwelled there about 10 years.

And Melon and Kilion died also, both of them. And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughter-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people and given them bread.

Wherefore, she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, go return to each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them and they lifted up their voice and wept. And they said unto her, surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

And Naomi said, turn again, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Are there any more sons in my womb that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way, for I'm too old to have a husband. And if I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight, should also tonight and should also bear sons, would you tarry for them till they were grown? Would you stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

And we'll just stop there. There's more. You may be seated.

Warren Wiersbe shared a story years ago, how a maid at a motel found a dead man in the room when she went to clean it. And he had left a note. And here's what the note said.

I leave to society a bad example. I leave to my friends the memory of a misspent life. I leave to my father and mother all the sorrow they can bear in their old age.

And I leave to my wife a broken heart. And I leave to my children the name of a drunkard and a suicide. And to God, a lost soul that has insulted his mercy.

This is not how you handle life. This is not how you lead your family. In thinking about this, I've got a list in one of my little prayer books I wrote probably 10 years ago.

I don't know, eight, 10 years ago. And I've got a list of eight families I know of that were crashed by the father. And I could probably add two or three more to it now.

And this is why I'm sharing this morning on Ruth, even though we can't go through the whole book, just to get some principles for us fathers to know how to make it in these rough days. Even right now, I know of some that are in the process of crashing their families. It's life is hard.

And here's one thing about life. Life has no handles. You just can't grab a hold of it.

Okay, we're going to hang on to this and this is going to go right. It just doesn't always work that way. We can't guarantee health.

We can't guarantee our wealth to continue our jobs, live long lives. And just we have no handles. Success, fame, honor, all these things can be crashed in a moment in our lives.

But there is a handle of hope we have in the Lord. There is that. Praise the Lord for that.

So the book of Ruth is about a family's hard times. You can maybe even call it a prodigal family led by a father. And he's going to teach us some things I think that would be interesting.

This is a story of redemption. Of course, we know how it ends because we got the last chapter there and it all leads to Christ. It's about Christ.

It's about actually I titled this for you guys that want titles. Christ in Ruth and Ruth in Christ. Christ in Ruth and Ruth in Christ.

And of course you got Naomi there. But Ruth seems to be the main one I've got in my outline when I did this series. I've got words for each chapter.

In this chapter I had four C words and these C words were choices, consequences, correction, and coming home. And I don't think we'll go very far into these. And then the next chapter I have five P words.

The first one was providence. Next one protection, prostrate, and provision and possibility. Chapter three I had five S words seeking, surrender, sensing, seizing, and sitting.

And then chapter four I had nine A words. Anticipation, attempting, assured, announced, approval, accomplished, adored, adopted, ancestry. We would have a whole weekend to go through all of that.

And if somebody wanted a copy of this I do have an extra copy or you could take a picture of it. But what we want to focus on probably this morning is the first two or maybe three as we go through this. So let me just jump in and I may not have as many stories as I've been giving you, but you need some meat.

We can't have all dessert, even though we might not mind that as kids, but it won't be very healthy. I want to give you some, a little bit more meat. We're going to get into some meatier things this morning.

And the providence of God is just an amazing subject. And I do have a couple of stories we might go into about the providence of God, but there was a famine in the land. And sometimes we have famines in our life and there was a famine in the land and it was the time of Gideon, probably around 1130 BC and the time maybe they said of Eli the priest back in those days, the time of the judges, there's no King.

And if you go back over to the last verse in judges, verse 25 there, in those days, there was no King in Israel. Every man did that, which was right in his own eyes, not the best of times when it's like that, they need the King under the headship of Christ. And so that was sort of the setting and not the greatest of times.

As a matter of fact, the way of the reason of the famine was God was judging them because they did their thing. God set them out, got them out of Egypt and they got free. And then they go through this cycle of getting free and then getting back into bondage, worshipping idols, getting chastened by God and getting free again.

And so it's up and down and it's not the exact pattern of a spiritual life. So the book of Ruth is a subject, is the subject about Christ though, and how the Lord is always there. It's Christ in the life of Ruth.

This is the theme, as I said, is redemption and Ruth being a Gentile, a Moabitess girl. The line goes through Boaz all the way to Messiah, though, not through her. But it shows God's mercy and grace to take somebody you wouldn't think should be in there to be in the line of Messiah and put her in there.

The amazing grace. It's a love story. It's a love story out of tragedy of God's love for these people.

There's a birth. There's triumph over tragedy. And at the end there, of course, the amazing thing of how the Messiah.

New beginnings come out of our tragedies. Out of poverty, they have an experience that they didn't plan on. So many times we do these things.

Out of their sorrow comes the Messiah. Out of these tragedies of life, God always is leading us to triumph. We talked about that last night.

So what I want you to do is learn some lessons. And I've got these. And I'll let you know when I hit one each time.

We're going to just sort of roll through here and just hope you're taking notes. So we'll just get some lessons. And, of course, the Holy Spirit is the one that teaches us and leads us and guides us through the word.

Someone talking about the Holy Spirit said, Christian life and character in its beginning, middle, and end is the Spirit's work. So it's the Spirit of God working here as he works in lives. He said, we're natural lovers of independence.

Isn't that true? And slow to learn that it is the fundamental law of nature that we're lovers of independence. And that's where we get in a lot of trouble. But just as no one can be good without God or a Christian without Christ, so no one can be holy or useful in the New Testament sense without the Holy Spirit.

So let's trust the Spirit of God to teach us. And then he said, this is from James Denny, as King Robert of France in his hymn to the Holy Spirit wrote in the 11th century, what without thine aid is wrought, skillful deed or wisest thought, God will count but vain and not. So independence, separation from God, leads us into trouble.

All right. I might say something more about providence in a minute. So we're going to try to learn some lessons as we go into the life of Ruth here.

Ruth helps us understand the purpose of suffering and trials, and gives us these wonderful lessons, these principles. And the cross is actually all through these lessons here. The cross of Christ, because the Lord sets us free at the cross, he died on the cross for our sins.

And we've got the song at the cross and all these things. But would you like to see God do some things in your life that's beyond the normal, beyond maybe what you expect? The Bible gives us tremendous promises. Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knewest not.

And these different things. When I was over in Turkey and in our Bible study there, I just got saved. And after going through my training in the Air Force, my basic training and schooling.

And there was an army guy there by the name of Bill Stewart, been a missionary, just retired here just in the last few years. And then his wife's been fighting cancer down in Pensacola. But he would take men and disciple them.

And I was one of those. And what he did, he spread. He's got preachers and missionaries all over the world, probably hundreds.

And I was one of them. And he took and put his life into use over in Korea for about almost 30 years working with servicemen. And so there's a verse.

There is a verse. Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. That was our verse.

And God did it. So use the verses and the promises of God for your life. OK, so Ruth helps us understand the purpose of suffering some things.

And I'm hoping that God will use these things in your life. Are you willing to stay in your Bethlehem and tough it out? Some people like to run. We glory in tribulations, Paul said in Romans 5.3. We don't necessarily enjoy them, but we learn to glorify God in our trials.

There was a young man that asked, I don't know if he was a Puritan or what. He was in England back in the old days, George Goodman, maybe you know him. But he said, would you pray for me that I would have patience? Sure.

And he prayed that God would give him tribulation. His tribulation works patience, Romans there. So Ruth is about life.

It's about a father who makes the decision to take his wife and sons down to another land. It's a subject of family, and marriage, and a bad economy, and love, and all these normal things of life. All right.

I've got a statement for you. And this is no new statement. We've said it before, but God always gives his best to those who leave the choice to him.

Now they make a choice because there's a famine to go down into Moabite territory. And as we go through these principles, I want to ask you to ask yourself these three questions. Number one, what is God saying to me right now? Number two, what new insight have I gained? And number three, is there something I need to do? All right.

What is God saying to me right now? What new insight have I gained, and is there something I need to do? OK, I'm jumping into it. Verse one, now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled. And so the atmosphere is not the greatest.

It's not the greatest of times because there's no king, meaning that the sovereign working of God there was not really working that good there. They had turned from God and got into their typical thing of going after idols and stuff like that. And so judges rule, but judgment is given to them with the famine that's in the land.

And so they're dwelling in Bethlehem area there, which is the house of bread, the house of blessing, place of praise. But there's no crops and no rain, normal things of life. And so here's a lesson.

When we get into the hard times where we're going to go to Moab, are we going to stick it out and stay in the place where God wants us to stay? This prodigal father of Moab, Psalm 68, God calls it his washpot. Wasn't exactly a place, and we're going to learn some interesting things here. Was there anything wrong with going to Moab? Maybe not, but as we go through here, you might say, well, maybe that wasn't the wisest thing to do, and we're going to learn about what God does when we do get into the wrong places.

Because as I said, God's going to fix you with the fix that you're in. And we try to fix the fix you're in. He'll find another fix to fix us with until finally we get fixed.

But he's not going to give up on you. You may give up on God, but he'll never give up on you. And so what they're going to do is they're going to turn aside.

When they go, in verse 1, it says, they go there to sojourn. Came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land. And verse 2, in the name of the man, we go on to these things.

But they go down to sojourn down there. And that's a word that means to turn aside from the road. It means to go and dwell as a stranger someplace else and to live among people that they don't know.

And so he said he went. He went there. And I've got a principle here I'm going to move into.

And here's what I wrote out years ago in this area. As I meditated on them going down there, went down there and everything, they didn't believe God could take care of them where they were at, the house of bread and praise. So they ran off to the land of Moab, thinking God would take care of them where they were not at.

And so many people think their circumstances need to be changed or whatever. But most of the time, it's us. Our heart needs to change.

And here's a principle. The more we get what we want, the less we want of what we get. Think about that.

The more we get of what we want, got to have this, got to have that, that, that, the less we want of what we got. Think of Judas. He wanted money.

He wanted more money. And Judas was just, he was there to be the treasure in the kingdom with Jesus and whatever. But when his dreams began to dissipate, at least he's going to get 30 pieces of silver out of the deal.

But after he got what he wanted, he found out he really didn't want what he got. So we need to be careful in what we do in this area. And this is why we need to let God make our choices for us.

And so actually, Ruth, at this point, and we look in there, when she comes back to Bethlehem, she's not looking for a husband because she's resting in God. And God met her and took care of his needs. So God always gives his best to those who leave the choice to him.

And so Ruth begins with no king. And they end up with the line of a king coming, a great grandson, David, is going to be born. And the king all the way to Jesus.

All right, here's another principle. Whoever your king is makes your choices. He guides the affairs in your life.

And so I'd have to say that this is the normal thing of life. We're going to logically do what we think is best. I don't know if he prayed about going down there or whatever.

But choices have consequences. And we're going to get into that next thing. Because we reap the consequences of our choices, good or bad.

That's why we really need to have God direction us clearly in what we do. Years ago, I think this happened in Atlanta, over in there, there was a preacher that went to preach in a prison. And one of the prisoners knew him.

And so just before he's fixing to preach, this prisoner jumped up. And he said, I want to tell you something. I want to tell everybody here.

I don't know if he could get away jumping up in a prison. But he said, I want to introduce you to this preacher. And so here's what he said.

At one time, there were two boys. They were in the same town. They went to the same church.

They went to the same Sunday school. And one dropped out and rejected Christ. And the other one went on to follow Christ.

And that's the pastor that's going to speak to you. And I'm the other boy that dropped out and rejected Christ. And I'm here because of my choice.

And he's here to speak to us because of his choice. Wasn't that quite a story? So we reap the consequences of our choices, a major lesson here. Where we are, sometimes we have homeless people come.

We're near an area where there's a lot of homeless people. And they're there most always because of bad choices. They live lives that's amazing.

And they're almost always lying to us, trying to get money out of us. And so we try to separate them if there's two and find their stories and whatever, and all their choices and things. My favorite story is the one about the couple that came there.

And they're usually always shacking up together. But my favorite one, and this guy got mad, is they were not married on the same day. They were not married in the same month.

They were not married in the same year. They were not married in the same state and not married in the same town. He got mad at her for lying.

Oh, wow, we had some really interesting times. But there was one man that was desperate for money. And so what he did, he went to one of these convenience stores.

And he handed a \$10 bill. And he said, I would like some change for this. And so the gal opened up the drawer.

And he reached around and grabbed the door, dumped everything in his bag, and ran off out of the store. Left his \$10 bill and got back to his shack or wherever he was. And he got \$4.34. He's \$5.66 short.

We're going to always come up short when we try to provide for ourselves and not let God help us out. There's your story about that one. OK, Elimelech means my God is king.

That's what it is, El, and then coming from Melech, and just digging into this, looking at the Hebrew on all this. And I don't know much Hebrew. I do know a few Hebrew people.

But Jehovah is the sovereign of Israel. He's the sovereign of my life. This is what Elohim is talking about.

He's the great creator. And he's my king. These are all the things from Elimelech.

And so here's the principle from his own name that I wrote out. The king always has the final word. But for that to work, he needs to have the first word and the last word in our life.

And so this is why we go to God and get directions. Sometimes it's really hard to know. And so we struggle with so many things.

But it works best if the king has the first word and the last word. And we do good if we just listen and obey. Doesn't do too good to tell the king what to do and how to do things in our life.

We sing that song, king of my life, I crown thee now. But he probably needs to be crowned every day. Choices, choices.

I probably shared with you this the last two years I was here. But since the kids like stories, I'll give you another one. Because this is one of the great stories in my life.

And we have things that happen that we don't necessarily like. When I was in Turkey in the Air Force back in 1967 and 68, we could travel. I could actually just go out and hop on a plane and go anywhere in the world.

If there was room on the plane, it's a lot more complicated nowadays. And if you had the time, you had to leave. And so also we would have what they call R&R tours.

And so all my buddies and all of them, they got lined up to go on this R&R tour to Israel. Y'all remember this story? And so we all signed up for that. And I got cut off.

I was the last one, and I got cut off. And all my friends got to go to Israel. This is 1967 in June, the first part of June in there.

And so they went down there, and I stayed and got to work. And so I wanted to go to Israel. I wanted to get down there someday.

And so another whole year went by. And I'd been out in the agency. Our base had a tugboat.

And so we would go out into the Greek islands. I'd go to Patmos a couple times, and we'd go to Chios and these different Greek islands. And so I'd come back.

I'd been out on the boat, and we'd gone a few days. And I had to leave. And I had money.

And I had my suitcase sitting there. And I'm sitting on my bed, and I'm thinking. And it's like I hear God speaking to me, not out loud.

But it's like, get up and go out to the airport and see if there's any planes going to Israel. Oh, I never even thought about that. So I did.

I grabbed my suitcase. I had it unpacked it, went down three flights of stairs, went out to the terminal out there, really remote. It was a small place.

It's 100 miles from Athens over. Actually, it was in Smyrna, the seven churches. I lived in the middle of the seven churches for a year and a half.

Just a wonderful blessing. After I got saved, God gave me an education there. I go in there, you got any planes going anywhere? You'd just be glad to go anywhere from there.

And he said, yeah, we've got one coming in 15 minutes going to Athens. Got any room? Yeah, put me on it. I flew over to Athens.

I went into the terminal there. I said, you got any planes going to Israel? And they said, yeah, we have one plane a week that goes to Israel. Oh, wow, that's great.

And he said, it just left three hours ago. Oh, no. So I hopped on a bus, went all the way around to the civilian side of that airstrip, went in there.

He said, you guys got any planes going to Israel? And they said, yeah, we got one a week. I thought, oh, I've heard this story before. And it goes in three hours and we have one seat left.

Well, I just say, I'll go pray about it for a while. No, I'll take that seat. Cost me \$147 to go to Israel.

And so my whole trip went like that for 10 days. When I got there, I was standing out there by the curb where the cabs are and started talking to this gal there waiting for the cabs. And she found out I wanted to go to Jerusalem.

And so a cab come up and she stuck her head in there and talked to that cab driver. And she said, he will take you to, I forget what it was, YMCA, a place like that or something. And also, I told him not to rip you off.

And my whole 10 days went like that. But I'm saying, I just let God do that for me. I just said, once I was cut off and couldn't go, I just forgot it.

I just gave it to God. And so this is the lesson. We give God our choices.

So he went. And leaving, he turned his back on his inheritance, though. You know that? He turned his back on his inheritance.

And he's actually running from the chastening of God. He lay him on his kids. And so if we try to run from the chastening of God, because God deals with Israel as a nation.

He did back to those points. Now he's individually dealing with people. But then he'll come back later and deal with them.

But he's running from the chastening hand of God. That doesn't usually work out too good. And so here's another principle.

Better, get this one, he's going down to Moab. And I wrote this, better to stay with God's people under chastisement than to go live with the devil's crowd with food. And there's going to be some lessons here.

So the famine represents rebellion. I wrote this out this morning. God will cover us when we get into Moab.

But it's, or get into, I wrote down, Bypass Meadows, if you read Pilgrim's Progress. God's going to cover us. But it's usually going to cost us something.

And it usually does. It costs him his life. And his sons died there and left his wife as a widow.

Now Naomi, in verse 2, the name of the man, we go in through his name, but his wife, the name of his wife was Naomi. And that means delight or pleasant. And so when God is my king, then I am his delight.

And I delight in him. I delight in his ways. So that's what I get out of her name.

And I delight in his choices. Milan, I guess Milan and Cillian, these boys, wow. Be glad that your mom and dad didn't name you Milan and Cillian, because Milan means sick or painful and weak.

And Cillian means pining or consuming, consumption or failing. I don't know. Maybe she had a hard childbirth or whatever.

But anyway, we need to be careful what we do with our kids and how we name them even. Let me tell you a little story. You want stories, I'll give you a story anyway, along with some of this meat.

This is an amazing story. One time there was a kid by the name of Phineas Taylor. And I'll give you his last name in a few minutes.

Phineas Taylor, and he had a very kind old grandfather who told him that he was going to give him the deed to a sizable piece of ground. And so Phineas Taylor, little 10-year-old boy, looked forward to the day when he would get this piece of ground. And he dreamed about it.

And the story went like this. He dreamed. It was called Ivy Island.

And he dreamed of it as a land rippling streams and waving grain. He dreamed of this fabulous island every day. This was his dream.

His grandfather promised him this. And he looked forward. He would beg his father to take him there.

And his father never would. And finally one day, his father said, OK, Phineas, I'm going to take you see your Ivy Island. And oh, he was so excited he could hardly even sleep that night with all the anticipation.

And so he was taken to the island. And he dashed out to the end of the meadow of his property that his grandfather had promised that would be his. And he stood there.

And he looked at his dream. It was the big moment. And finally he gazed upon these five barren acres of worthless, snake-infested mainland, struggling vines clung for their lives to a few scrubby trees in the midst of a dismal swamp and nothing more.

And so as young P.T. Barnum looked at what had been promised to him, he realized that he'd been made a fool of. And his dad was there and another friend. And they were just rolling over with laughter.

This big joke to this little boy. And he was devastated. It was the great humiliation of his life.

But this joke shaped his whole future. So what we do, fathers with our children and mothers with our children, is very important. It shaped his whole future.

And so his dream was turned into a drive. And his drive was to do this. And let me read it to you.

Young Phineas was not laughing. He eventually forgave, but he never forgot. He became the ultimate con artist in our country.

One of the greatest con artists, maybe there's better ones nowadays, that the country had ever seen. He forgave, but he never forgot. He became the ultimate con artist determined to prove the world is full of fools.

He was inspired to make a lifelong career of deception. P.T. Barnum, whose fondest hopes once rested on a soggy patch of worthless real estate, became the master of the greatest show on earth. He declared that there is a sucker born every minute.

And he spent his life proving it. We've got this circus that comes to town at the fair and all this. They walk off.

I think one of the guys there told me one time they can make a quarter of a million dollars a night sucking people into their little booths and everything. Satan never delivers what is promised. In every case, Satan comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse and deceiving. And so this father took his family down into a country there was going to be no fruit. And so, verse 2, you talk about they were the Ephites, the descendants of Ephita, the son of Joseph.

Ephraim, son of Joseph, was one of them, which meant fruitful. But that fruitfulness only came after God did what he did down there with Joseph and all of those guys. But he had another son named Manasseh, which means causing to forget.

God caused me to forget, but also to be fruitful in naming his children, just to go through some names. And here's a principle out of all of this. And you see, we're not going to go very far in Ruth here.

But if you choose to live by faith where God has placed you in your Bethlehem, no matter how hard your situation, then God will, in his time, cause you to be fruitful in the land of your affliction. That's what I got out of Joseph's two sons' names. So many times, we just want to run.

We want to get out of it. But God's fixing to bless you where you're at. You just wait.

And maybe it's really tough, and we do have those. So Joseph stuck it out, and whatever. I broke that out.

Okay. Now, let's go into consequences. How are we doing on time here? Okay.

We're going to go into the consequences of making these choices. Three through five, Emelech, Naamah, Naomi's husband died, and she was left, and her two sons, and they took them wives. Now, her husband died, and these are the consequences of walking out of the line of faith.

We usually have a life of death and barrenness and all these things. And we walk away sometimes from our blessings and our curses. Think about it.

While they're down there, God came back and brought abundance in Bethlehem. In the meantime, they were down there, she was down there 10 years, or so the scripture said. And so he's walked his family down there, and he dies, the two sons die, and we'll talk about this a little bit more.

And so they're not in the best of places. Moab is probably about 30 miles to the east, they said, or 50, so it wasn't very far because the distance in those countries might take you a long time to go that distance. But here's a principle I've got in their mood that they went down there.

Moab should always have, as a top priority, the spiritual atmosphere. I've known of some fathers that moved their families into a place where there's a lot of money and whatever, better, but the atmosphere. And some of you drive long distances to go to church, our people do too.

But sometimes you can move them into a desert spiritually, and the influence can get to our kids, and it can become really hard. But it should be a top priority. Where he said, if you want to destroy your life, then make these three mistakes.

One, try to run from your problems. Two, try to cover up your disobedience. And three, become bitter against God.

Because this is what happens to Naomi. The consequences of her husband led into her heart being influenced with bitterness. So these decisions that we make, the consequences can be bad, be good or bad.

And so, there's four reasons why they ran. One, living by sight and not by faith. If you look at your Bethlehem and it seems to be dry, then you need to make sure that you just don't look at your circumstances, but get back to God and look at His faithfulness.

There's a guy years ago when we were in Nebraska, living out there, and he had a conference, he said, you just take a glance at your circumstances, but keep your gaze on God. But if we look at our circumstances too long, we begin to get distracted from God, we get discouraged, and we'll be deceived, and all these other things happen. So, just another thing there.

So we shouldn't look at the enemy either. If the enemy's coming in, there again, we just take a glance, oh, wow, he's really doing some damage. We'll come back and go to the tower this afternoon.

I think I'll close up with a message about going to the tower. So, living for the physical and not for the spiritual, that was what was going on here, and we're just getting into the introduction of His life and going in there. Living for the physical and not for the spiritual, just to get the flesh fed and moving from the place of blessing.

And of course, Jesus was tempted in these areas too, in Matthew 4.4. You know, when the devil makes you a deal, and he's going to offer you a meal, he's going to offer you a bologna sandwich. But if you stick with God, he's got prime rib on the plate. But he might want to let you get really good and hungry for it, so you appreciate it.

But remember, the devil's going to always offer you a bologna sandwich, and it's bologna. His deals are just bad deals, as we know. Most of you probably wouldn't eat a bologna sandwich unless you're starving to death.

I haven't had one for a long time. How long will you run from God? There's a song we used to sing this. We sing it in the rescue missions when I preach there.

How long will you run from God? You've been running for a long... I won't sing it. You've been running for a long, long time. You regret the day you turned away and became a fugitive from God.

Then he goes in there about how God's searching for you in different things. Don't run from God. Come on back.

So there's the setting here. And I had another principle here I wrote down. A Christian may get where he's not supposed to be, but God will get you out in his good time.

Sometimes he lets us really sweat it out. And you look at Jacob getting into the deal there. He deceived and he was deceived, and all of these different things.

But here's what happens. The Esau Christians, or the professing Christians that are around, actually live for the world, but want to have the appearance that they're living for God. Maybe you're an Esau Christian.

Whatever. You've got this in your heart. Whatever.

But it's not going to help you in your life. Because there's no hypocrites in hell. They're all real.

No hypocrites in heaven. They're all real. But what's on your heart is what you are.

And so if we live for the world, it just shows that you're not living for the Lord. And the world is a cotton candy. It may taste sweet for a minute, but it's all gone.

When I was a kid, we'd go to this little place where they had the train, you know, and the boats you ride on. I always wanted cotton candy. Pay the dime and get it.

No king meant you do your own things. And so they're following along with this. All right.

Now, by the way, where was Boaz all this time? There was a famine. He stayed put. The Boaz don't go to Moab.

So here's your heart. Now here's another thing. Living for the physical world, physical and not the spiritual, living for the world and not the Lord.

And I didn't lay these out very clear, but ignoring the source of the problem is what's going on here. Instead of going to God and repenting and getting everybody, hey, we need to have revival gods. God's chasing us.

Don't you recognize there's no rain in our life? We want to deal with circumstances and not get before God and fall on our face and say, hey, it's us. It's me saying I need a prayer. And so what we do is we take our problems with us because the problems usually are not the circumstance but us and our attitude.

Just like I shared yesterday or Friday, whatever, where somebody said the problem with that guy is he takes himself with him everywhere he goes. So it's really important that we be right with God. And so he died.

And now let's move on a little bit. In the problem here with Elimelech going down there into Moab, they're living their lives without God. Now, they moved out of the place of blessing because of the chasing and hard times.

They're living their lives outside of the will of God, I would say. But I've got a great thing to say about that in a few minutes. The heart of every problem is the heart, somebody said.

Take a look at your problem, take a look at yourself, but come back and look at God. And so, verse 3, grave 1 is established. And the marker maybe on it was, and she was left.

Whatever, I don't know how they do about graves. But there's grave 1. And maybe some kind of marker is put there or whatever. And so she says, I'm left.

I'm left. Look at verse 3. Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died and she was left. And you could put in there, she was left behind and her two sons.

And so here we're going. Things are going to go from worse to worse. Consequences are the result of choices.

Another principle here is the more we get what we want, the less we want what we get. And so we're working down these principles. But the other principle of the path of blessing, remember we started off the first night, Friday night, with blessings and cursings.

We curse ourselves with our choices. And that's what they did. They left a place of blessing and whatever.

And so choices have consequences. All right. Go into verse 4. We are moving a little bit.

Then they took them wives. The woman of Moab, the name of the one was Orpha, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelled there about 10 years.

And so they took them wives. Probably a transgression of the law, the word of God, about them to take these strange wives. But again, God's going to cover them.

He's going to bring the good out of all the bad. Because the marriages by the law, I guess from Deuteronomy, was, you know, there was complications. Orpha means neck, firmness.

Like a gazelle, a stiff neck, maybe. And Ruth means friendship. A friend that sticks closer to brother.

So Ruth is in this to be a friend to Naomi. She's going to stick there. And so after about 10 years, they're going to head home.

Verse 5. She's going to head home. And Milan and Kilian died also, both of them. And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

So things have gone from bad to worse. And whenever we run, where we go, we can't outrun death. It's going to be there.

So grave marker two and three are left. And she's left of her two sons. And I've got a principle here.

It's just really hard to prosper outside of the will of God. That's why we really should work on being in the will of God. And trust God.

Trust God. There's a story about another family that the husband died. And the little boy is in Sunday school class.

And he hears the miracle of this white children. They're just so trusting. You've got to be careful.

They're just so trusting. You've got to be careful even how you joke with them. The kids, they take it serious, you know.

But he was in his Sunday school class. And he heard the miracle about Peter going to the sea and getting the money out of the fish's head. And he knew that things were hard for his mommy.

And so he got his little piggy bank or whatever and got out all this money. And he went down to the market. And all he could afford was a fish head.

But he remembered that story. And he believed that God would have money inside that fish head for his mommy. And so he took it home.

And the mother said, I'm sorry, Billy, but this is just not going to work. Look, there's no money inside the fish head. Oh, I spent all my life savings, you know, to buy this dead fish head.

What use is a dead fish head? When God is in it, it's valuable. When God is in it, there's nothing impossible for him. And no telling what he could do with your dead fish head.

We could have titled this message The Dead Fish Head. But listen. She's fixing to throw the paper away and she reads something on there.

She noticed that there's going to be a reading, a will that's being executed by one of her late husband's relatives. Wow, that was my husband's relative. And so she went and checked it out.

And the attorney shared with her, because of that advertisement, that she would get a great inheritance. A fish head resulted in a great... There's nothing too hard for you and your problems. Oh, what problems? I don't have any problems.

Wait till Monday. You know, just wait. That's the way God works.

Now, how can God do a miracle unless there's a problem in your life? It's just the way God works. You know, I hope we don't bore him with our unbelief sometimes. And so they took wives and so here we are.

Let's move on and see if there's anything else. So God's working out his plan in their lives. And he's going to do something with the man of the flesh.

He's going to do things in the flesh and get his family into more trouble. I wrote a question out for myself in verse 4. You know, why did these guys take foreign wives? You know why they took foreign wives? Because they were boys and they liked girls. And there wasn't any Hebrew girls around.

Okay? ABC. This is just simple. ABC.

They liked girls and so they found them some Moabitish girls and married them. The dad put them in that position. What are you going to do? They're getting older.

They need to be married. You know? And so this guy is a little bit different from, you know, Joseph. When he was placed in a situation, he ran from part of his life.

He ran. David didn't. Up on the roof, he should have ran from the temptation.

So these choices have consequences in all our lives. And this family is reaping these things. Okay.

I'm going to slip on over here. And let's go a little bit more. What's it like when Jesus steps into this situation? Well, he changes a lot of things.

Because God delights to bless. He doesn't delight to see us in the swamp of despair. And often to bypass into doubting castles and all these places.

He didn't delight us to be there. He wants us to be walking with him. You know, he made the sacrifice for Adam and Eve.

He does all these things. And so he's going to fix us sooner or later. Maybe sometimes after we suffer quite a bit.

But he just delights to bless. And of course the sins that we get into these things always have a price. So correction is the path to blessing.

So despise not the chastening of the Lord. And it may not be you. Maybe you're one of these people who never gets any problems.

Or never has any trouble or anything like that. You know. But God gives you these things in these rooms to help somebody else.

Maybe he's letting you have the struggle. Whatever you've got right now. Or something to help somebody else.

Or maybe just to listen to some things. Because tomorrow he's going to bring to you somebody who's needy. He's going to always be bringing to us needy people.

Because Jesus wants to live through our bodies. You know. Well.

My desire is to go to the mountains and live in a cabin and get away from all this. You know. I'd probably starve to death up there.

But. You know. When Jesus dealt with his disciples.

When he dealt with them intimately. And he taught them in things. He would separate themselves.

My philosophy of really a day off is what Jesus said. Come apart and rest for a while. Getting away is really good.

My wife and I for her. A few weeks ago for her 65th wedding anniversary. We got away for a few days.

There's a cabin down on the lake. It's a big nice house. With four bedrooms.

We can go there any time we want. Free. And we just got there.

And it's so good. Sorry about telling your age. Just to get there with God.

And rest. And I just. I got things.

And I listened to things. I could hear the Lord. It just.

You know. It was quiet. We need that.

So let's get into this about correction being the path to blessing. You know when Jesus come into this one place. They're carrying out this man that's dead.

And his mother's there. Widowed now. And Jesus is just.

This is him for us. He sees this come along. He sees this crowd of people.

He sees this mother crying. What's he gonna do? You know. Oh lady.

I'm sorry you got this. Sorry. I'll pray for you.

You know. God bless you. No.

Jesus wants us to lay our hands. Get our hands dirty sometimes. And reach out.

Of course we're not gonna touch a coffin and have the dead rise. We're all gonna be getting out of there probably. You know.

But this is the principle. Where Jesus is. He's gonna bless.

And so Jesus is gonna jump into this situation here. And it just gets good. And so verse 6. They die.

Verse 6. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab. For she had heard in the country of Moab how the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. And so she's rising.

She's going back home. I will rise and go to my father. The prodigal son said.

Someone said the first step is the hardest of getting things right. And repentance will reverse that direction of going down. Correction is the path to blessing.

Old Puritan had this principle. Maybe I ought to close with these principles on the providence of God. Because we're gonna see the providence of God turning things around.

Even if we don't even go all the way through the whole book. Which I don't think we can do that. It's not possible for me at least with all this.

But outside of Christ you'll always have spiritual drought. And now she's heading the right direction. Going back to Bethlehem.

The place of bread. The place of substance. The place of satisfaction.

The place where Ruth is gonna meet her Boaz. And so they're heading the right direction. Are you? It's gotta turn around at some point.

Going the wrong direction. Us guys, we hate to ask directions. You're going off into a different place.

We got good instinct. We'll make it. We may lose an hour or so and have to eat some crow.

Okay, where's the map? She's going the right direction. It's time to rise and come to Christ. Correction is the path to blessing.

This principle from this Puritan. When it is providence versus promise. Now there's some tough things that you face.

We all face sometimes. God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised David to give him the crown to make him king.

But providence turned contrary to his promise. David was pursued by Saul, was in danger of his life. But all this while it was David's duty to trust God.

It's David's duty to trust God. The Lord does oftentimes by cross providence bring to pass his promise. God promised Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship.

But now the providence of God seems to run contrary to his promise. The winds blow, the ship splits, breaks in pieces. And thus God fulfilled his promise.

Upon the broken pieces of the ship they all come safe to shore. Trust God when providence had seemed to run contrary to promises. So she's heading back the right way.

Let providence, not chance, have the honor of thy acknowledgements with God. Let's pray. We're going to take a break here.

Now Father, we've learned a few things and we went over some of these things over and over again. And the whole book just goes through with all these lessons, wonderful lessons. And it gets sweeter as we go on, like the closer we get to heaven.

We should look more to heaven as our bodies begin to fall apart and things happen. But now Father, help us to meditate upon these things and I ask you to add your blessing. As we just sort of dig it into your Word and try to draw out some lessons and some principles of life.

And applying these things. Help us to understand that these things are written for our instruction. For our understanding, to give us wisdom and counsel and encouragement.

And to maybe get us out of the sloth of despond. And maybe to give us wisdom for somebody that's going to have a serious need. And that you're equipping us with wisdom.

And again, if there's someone listening or not here without Jesus as their Savior. I pray that the Holy Spirit would speak to them. There's no promise, you tell us, there's no promise that we'll get 70 years.

As a young man that was buried yesterday, 20 years old. That our daughter went to the funeral. Second funeral in the week, in two days.

And so help us to realize that life is short. And we only have the promise of the moment. And the offer of eternal life is right now.

And if we reject your gift. The wonderful gift of salvation by faith in Christ. We only have ourselves to blame.

If we die and go to hell. So thank you Father for the offer of eternal life through Christ. Now bless this time together as we fellowship for a little bit.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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