

HAPPY
Father's Day

Finding your True Identity. Ruth: 1

- In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So, a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ² The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion.

They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah.
And they went to Moab and lived there.

³ Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Sometimes the things that define us are very temporal, our next generation is in crisis of identity, the things we value today are not necessary the things we will value tomorrow. Someone once said, “*fashion in one way can be a form of ugliness*”.

Background

To understand the Book of Ruth properly, you need to read the book of Judges.

The first line in the book of Judges reads;
‘Joshua had died, and Israel had no leader to lead them into the war’

Joshua died without passing the leadership on to anyone. But lack of leadership wasn't the only problem. On entering the promised land, the Israelites failed to drive out all the original inhabitants. That was a breach of the covenant and disobedience to God

Judges 2:10-13

After that whole generation had been gathered to their Fathers, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. ¹¹ Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals

12 They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the LORD's anger 13 because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths.

During that period of Judges Israel lost her Identity, an awful state of affairs for Israel at a time when they were without a king. The Bible says: *“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit”*.

(Judges 21:25).

That’s why Ruth 1 begins like this; “In the days when the judges ruled ...”

The book of Ruth gives us of hope, although it begins by a series of setbacks. In chapter 1, Naomi, and her husband and two sons were forced to leave their homeland in Judah on account of famine.

Then Naomi's husband dies (*think for a moment*). Her sons marry Moabite women and for ten years the women prove to be barren. And then her sons die leaving two widows in the house of Naomi. Even though Ruth sticks with Naomi, chapter 1 ends with Naomi's bitter complaint

- ²⁰ “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, (*meaning bitter*) “I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty . . . The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”
- You have to understand that when you are away from home in itself you loose your identity. Everything is unfamiliar.

1) When you find your true identity, Setbacks and challenges of life cannot deter you from following your God.

a) When challenges and setbacks of life come, you want to change your name, you want to find a hole somewhere and hide. 21 *“I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi”?*

b)How do you face your neighbours?

c)Like Naomi, Share your bitterness and frustration with God.

d)Even with all these setbacks and challenges, Naomi stood firm, and that is what Ruth saw in her and said that,

“Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so”. (*Ruth 1:16-17*)

e) Someone said that stars are seen clearly in the dark or at night. Sometimes during your hardest moments is when the one that lives within you become bigger.

2) Finding our true identity helps us know that God looks at us and loves us equally.

a) For many years the society has looked at women, children and race differently.

b) James 1:27, *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world*

3) When you find your true Identity, you find your purpose.

a) You will not allow sin to tarnish your name.

b) You start to understand how valuable you are.
You start to see the things God values.

c) Naomi and Ruth started to understand their value. The Bible says that Ruth reminded faithful until she found Boaz the redeemer. *Ruth 4:13* says that Boaz and Ruth got Married and together had a son, his name was Obed, he was the father of Jesse and Jesse was the Father of David.