



Decision to Commit

Ruth 1:6-16

- We saw last week how God can lead us from one place to the next and use our situations for His glory. How he weaves together the story of our lives in His own divine sovereignty.
- This week we want to focus on the story of Naomi and Ruth, how difficult it was, and how there was a decision made to follow God's plan.
- There are situations in life that can be hard to navigate. We wonder why we're going through a particular situation, or we pray for God to remove us from the situation. But at the end of the day, we are where we are because God wants to use us where we are.
- A few years ago, I read the memoir of former President, George W. Bush. Called Decision Points. It's interesting to me how presidents going back to George Washington

have had an agenda going into office, but what really matters is how they respond to what happens while they're in office. The situations beyond their control.

- President Washington had the Whiskey Rebellion, President Madison had the War of 1812, President Bush had 9/11, President Trump had COVID.
 - They have been judged on their response to these challenges, not necessarily what they set out to accomplish. That is a principle that is true in leadership.
 - We're faced with similar situations in life.
- ***Ruth and Naomi were faced with unbelievable challenges. The rest of this story is a result of their decision to follow the Lord no matter what.***

Main Point: **We can look to God and commit to His plan regardless of our struggles.**

I. Overwhelming loss

- a. First, Naomi lost her husband. That's a hard thing to endure for women in ancient times. Her sons would have had to step up and help provide for her. Then ten years later, she lost both of her sons.
- b. It's hard to imagine the amount of grief and loss she experienced in this time. Losing people so close to you can be a life altering situation. Sometimes, grief will impact you for the rest of your life when faced with this kind of loss.
- c. Grief isn't something we want to experience or something we want others to experience, but grief and loss will make its way into every one of our lives. The question is how do we respond in a way that brings God glory and brings healing in our own lives.

- d. We all experience it differently. I try to make it a regular habit to not say – I know exactly how you feel. How should we respond?
 - i. Bury our grief – when that happens it’s like a beach ball that you put under water. It will eventually pop back up.
 - ii. Become bitter – lash out and blame others around us.
 - iii. Become a victim – blame our circumstances and never grow through our trials.
 - iv. Trust in God – doesn’t get rid of grief. It gets us through our grief.

II. Insurmountable odds

- a. After the death of Naomi’s husband, she would have looked to her sons to help meet her needs.
- b. There were a lot of questions about what should be done next and for good reason. The ancient world was a very hostile place. It was unforgiving. It would have been inconceivable that they would try to fend for themselves without a man providing for them.
- c. They didn’t have the same rights. It would have been hard for them to defend for themselves.
- d. No matter who we are, there are times in life where we feel like we are fighting in an uphill battle. It can seem overwhelming when these moments in life come.
- e. But we serve a God who makes it a regular practice to use those who feel inadequate to face the challenges ahead.

i. David and Goliath

ii. Moses with a speech impediment

iii. Common fishermen called as disciples

iv. Paul had a bad history with a lot of Christians

- f. It's in the moments where the odds don't match up that God gets the glory. When He pulls us through, we couldn't ever try to take credit for it.

III. An Impossible future

- a. There were legitimate reasons why Naomi would try to dissuade Ruth and Orpah from going back to Bethlehem with her.
- b. Naomi had no more sons to offer them. How could they possibly have a future in which they could be provided for?
- c. There are some choices we make that reflect on the immediate circumstances. Other choices have more long-term significance. Financial planning, job opportunities, where to live, how to treat health conditions.
- d. We try to plan, but things don't always go as planned.
- e. Other reason to dissuade them – *did they really believe in God?*
- f. This is the most important question of all. Orpah decided to leave. Ruth decided to stay.
- g. ***What will get us through? Our belief in the one, true, and living GOD.***