



Newsletter

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Franklin Road Baptist Church

Christ is our Message . . . The Bible is our Text

In youth group on Wednesday nights we have been studying Ruth. We will, after Christmas, go to Esther. Our theme for the school year is "Completely Sold Out for God". Our challenge is how do we do that? What does that look like? This is our theme but I believe this should be the theme for our entire church.

The book of Ruth starts out with Elimelech and Naomi searching for food. They followed their "Earthly Wisdom" and headed to Moab. This was a place that was started by Lot and his daughter in a form of incest. They were next, for a lack of better words, rude to the Israelites when they wanted to come for provisions in the wilderness. They then again were the cause of 24,000 people dying because of their seductive women. This is not a pleasant place; it is described in Proverbs 60:8 as God's Wash pot.

Elimelech and Naomi then allowed their two sons to marry two women from Moab (Ruth and Orpah). After the death of Elimelech and their two sons, all that is left are three widows and three Jewish graves in God's wash pot.

Here is where I have been challenged. Naomi heard word that God has been blessing Bethlehem once again (unfortunately she is not there to reap the benefits of that). She decides to go back and pleads three different times for Ruth and Orpah to stay in Moab. Ruth loves Naomi and clings to her...Orpah kisses Naomi and heads back to Moab. This is what I find very sad - Orpah is never heard of again. Naomi watches her daughter-in-law head back to the "Wash pot" and doesn't do a thing about it.

It was easy for Naomi to bring Ruth with her to Bethlehem. Ruth had already decided with her whole heart to follow after God. Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me." (Ruth 1:16-17)

What stirs my heart though is that it seemed just as easy to watch Orpah head in the other direction. Why didn't Naomi bring her to where God was as well (this question is for another newsletter)?

I believe we have this same problem at times. It is easy to talk to, disciple, teach, witness, etc... to those who want to go, but what do we do about those who are headed in the other direction? Jesus went after the disciples who were walking in the other direction on the road to Emmaus, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25).

Charles Spurgeon said, "If sinners will be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms around their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.

Who is your Orpah? Who, in your life, if you don't go after them: speak to them, pray for them, walk with them, bring them...will keep heading to the wash pot of God (which is now Hell, and ultimately the Lake of Fire)?

We need to be active in our compassion and mercy to the unredeemed.

Pastor Andy