Ring of Truth daily devotion

Ring of Truth provides 366 daily 'proofs' that the Bible is consistent throughout from Genesis to Revelation and relevant for our lives today!

28 February

Ruth 1:16-17

But Ruth replied, "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. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."

The Book of Ruth is a love story in between wars.

But it is more than just a story between a man and a woman, although that in itself is beautiful. Take time to read the whole book - it will take you only about 10 minutes.

It starts with a famine in Israel, so Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons went and lived over the border in Moab. (Moab was the incestuous son of Lot to his older daughter.) The Israelites were to have nothing to do with the Moabites but over time, both of Elimelech's sons married Moabite women.

Famine turned to disaster. The two sons intermarried and then Elimelech and both his sons died. So Naomi found herself alone; a widow in a foreign land, childless and saddled with two 'foreign' Moabite daughters-in-law. Under Jewish custom, the daughters-in-law could marry any other male offspring from Naomi but by then she was old and even if she had more children, the two girls themselves would be much older by the time any boy was old enough to marry them.

Furthermore, Naomi heard that there was food once more in Israel and so decided to go back home. She had a full and frank discussion with her daughters-in-law and suggested to them that they should return home to their family, their people and gods and find suitable new husbands. At first they both agreed to accompany her but eventually Orpah returned home, however, Ruth decided to stay with Naomi. Naomi tried to dissuade Ruth and our verse is Ruth's reply.

Two things become very clear here:

Firstly, Ruth's devotion to Naomi. Somehow, somewhere along the line, over the previous 10 years, Ruth had become attached to Naomi. So much so that she was prepared to give up her home, her heritage, her past and even, it seems, her future, to stay with and stick by Naomi.

How many daughters-in-law would do that? It is hard enough getting a marriage to work these days, let alone additionally care for a mother-in-law. But Ruth did. She gave up all her rights, hopes and dreams in order to care for her mother-in-law. Despite her own distress, she was able and willing to reach out and minister to someone else. She gave over her wants and needs to help support and sustain Naomi.

What a beautiful picture of self-denial and of putting others first. Tell me, how do you rate on that scale?

Secondly, Naomi's willingness to let go of all her loved ones, for their good, and that she must have made her God so attractive, that even heathen Ruth wanted to serve her God as well.

Are you able to lay aside your wants, needs, hopes and rights to help support and encourage others?

Have others watched you and said, "I want to follow and serve your God because your relationship is so strong, real, vibrant and precious"?

Or is the opposite the truth?

(And remember - Ruth became the great grandmother of King David.)