

The Life in Loss

Crystalene Reyes



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A Mini Ebook

Not intended for sale

And he said to them, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to all creation."

Mark 16:15

The *Life* in Loss

The Life in Loss follows the book of Ruth, an Old Testament history book. Throughout this study, scripture references have been referenced. These scripture excerpts can be found at the end of this exposition.

Let's begin with a picture of the climate of the time. The Book of Ruth begins with a crisis. There is a food shortage in the land... a food shortage. As the story begins, there is a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah. A political upheaval has occurred during the days... the days of the judges. Consequently, there has been a collapse of morality and true religious piety (holiness). Things are not looking good in Bethlehem (the house of bread). The bread basket of Judah is empty and hunger is stepping in. In the midst of this, is a Jewish family, facing a faith crisis and in an attempt to deal with it, they have moved from the bread basket of Bethlehem to the wastebasket, Moab. Elimelech, the patriarch of the family whose name meant that 'God is my king' is married to Naomi, whose name meant, 'Gracious one'. They have come to the decision that since they are used to a better life than this, they should leave the land of their faith and forefathers for 'greener grass' in this place called Moab. Hence, they compromise. Elimelech, the patriarch, like many of us, must have thought "We'll go for just a little while. God won't mind. We will come back home once better days are on the horizon." Except, they never returned, at least not as a family.

For a better life, this family forsook the assembly of the Lord and walked away from a community that most definitely would have needed their help. Rather than stay in Bethlehem, leading his people to repentance to worship the true and living God, Elimelech took his family and ran away. He went 'temporarily' (sojourned) to

where the grass was greener and ended up in a tangled wilderness (permanently). He died in Moab.

Much of the time, pursuing greener grass has a way of quieting our spirits. The compromise is temporary and it seems like no big deal. It's just one tiny sip, one little lie, one small bet, one quick look. But what does compromise cost? What is the opportunity cost of compromise? The opportunity cost of the compromise of trusting and obeying the call and the voice of God, most often, is loss. We **lose**. Elimelech lost. His wife lost. Her children lost. Greener grass may seem to make sense at times, but trusting the Spirit of the Lord is an entirely different thing. I can tell you firsthand that pursuing greener grass and doing our own thing rather than following the glory of God is the fountainhead of grief. **'Daddy' never loses. Don't even bother to get into the ring with Him. His patience never runs out.** Those of us who are older will remember our childhood days. I remember once getting into trouble at home and I ran away into our yard to hide from my mother. That never phased her as she would simply say, 'Doh worry. I not running you down. Yuh must come back in this house sometime,' At this, she would calmly go about her regular routine as she waited patiently for me, until the ultimate time of my consequence, when I could no longer run or hide anymore.

It is no secret that as a child of God, when you leave the path of obedience, you invite pain to travel with you. I dare say that famine in the will of God is better than feasting outside the will of God. Naomi learnt this the hard way. Her short trip became a ten-year stay in five biblical verses. Within those five verses, lay three funerals and three fresh graves. Can you imagine what that must have felt like? I can relate to three of my very own. I too, like Elimelech, ran for a while. In the end, I lost my grandmother followed by my mother. You see, God does not play with His children and their purpose! The consequence is loss. Loss of privilege, loss of distraction, loss of whatsoever He sees fit for you to lose because His Plan will not be side-stepped. Elimelech **and**

his sons lost their lives. Naomi lost her husband and her sons. Ruth and Orpah lost their husbands and the opportunity to bear children with them. It doesn't come in one mold, but when it occurs, it certainly captures our attention.

Now naturally, when we lose, we hurt. How do hurt people react? Well, it is no secret that more often than not, hurt people retreat. People who have lost, retreat. They pull away from others. This was the exact circumstance in the case of Naomi. She tried to isolate herself. In ***Ruth 1:8, Naomi had a whole case... fit for a jury! Scripture continues to explain...***

8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me."

Verse 11 continues...

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me!"

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

Like many people, Naomi was hurting and she felt undeserving, even of God's grace. The vast majority of us, when we are hurting, we just want people to leave us alone! In this family dynamic though, Ruth wasn't having it because she had grown to love her mother-in-law, Naomi, and more importantly, she had grown to love Naomi's God. You see, when you try to get rid of someone

that really loves you, they look at you like, 'you serious?' and they pretty much ignore you. In Trini words, 'They not going nowhere!' When I first truly perused God's Word, I fell in love with Romans 5: 3-5, which says, 'And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.' According to Scripture, pain manufactures maturity, crisis conditions character and difficulty develops depth.

We must always remember that no matter where life takes us, we serve a God of Grace and He always restores. That's His specialization! Remember that God is the Master Fisher of Men. He draws nearer to those who draw near to Him, and once He has your attention, He causes you to fall in **love**. Have you ever been in love? Do you remember that 'butterflyie', 'can't get enough' feeling that you initially felt? Yep, that's the kind of love. It's that warm, fuzzy feeling inside. He uses that to **pull you towards Him. It is in that moment when you eventually cry out, 'GOD, I'm sorry. I need You and I love You and I can't and won't do another moment of this life without You.** It is in that moment that you say, if we're hurting, let's hurt together. I will not leave you. **I remember when I fell in love with Jesus for real.** I have loved Him my whole life but I didn't understand that I hadn't been 'in love' with Him until the moment that I fell in love with Him. You see when you're in love, you can't stay away. You can't stay apart! At that point, I was ready to say, whatever you want God, I'll do it. Eventually, this love grows into mature love.

In like manner, God tugged at the heartstrings of Ruth. He drew closer to her like a thief in the night. She fell in love with the God of Naomi. It is important to note that true love is a three party transaction. This self-sacrifice that Ruth was able to offer Naomi was only possible because she has first fallen in love with Naomi's God. Now, understand something about Ruth. All she ever knew before was idolatry worship. Yet in **Ruth 1:16**, she found it in her to say to her mother-in-law,

*“Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your God, my God.*

Once it was understood that they were ready to thrust themselves into the faith covering of God, He began to **lead them**. In Ruth 2: 1 – 2, scripture says

2 There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. 2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”

Now understand this, Ruth was from Moab. She was not familiar with the land of Judah and its customs, and she was unaware that Boaz was a relative. Added to that, all she was hunting for was food for herself and Naomi to live on. She was not looking for a husband. Sometimes, most times, we need to stop looking in order to find things that we have been looking so hard to find. We look too hard and we’re not giving God a chance to say, ‘here, take this’. We must at times submit to the Potter’s moulding, to the stroke of His Pen... His storyline for us, His Drama, for things to begin to unfold. We are just the characters, the actors. Remember that.. You.. Me.. We.. are God’s story. If we profess to love Him, why not just submit sooner rather than later? The invisible Hand of God is revealed to us in the midst of ordinary, everyday decisions. This is the personification of Proverbs 3: 5-6 which says that we must

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Have you allowed God to direct your path recently? Ruth, being led to Boaz's field, was not luck. It was divine providence. Boaz and Ruth are proof that guidance from the Lord is promised but often comes on the heels of ordinary decisions and everyday circumstances. As David says in Psalm 37:23, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Now, I want you to understand that there was nothing normal or simple about the union of Boaz and Ruth but they both had a relationship with Jesus and their attraction had surpassed the physical into the spiritual. They were two people acknowledging God in all their ways and God had been directing their paths... together.

What happens next is what I call the **launch**. Once we begin to walk with Him, grace takes over, makes the first move and works behind the scene. Look at Ruth 3 - by the end of the harvest, the two are deeply in love and there's a midnight proposal followed by action on the path of Boaz. The Bible says in Ruth 3: 16 - 18:

16 When she (Ruth) came to her mother-in-law (Naomi), she said, "Is that you, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man (Boaz) had done for her. 17 And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.' " 18 Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter; until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Boaz fell for Ruth, knew what mattered most and he acted. He went on to encourage Ruth not to fear but rather to sit still for all the people of his town knew that she had been a virtuous woman, but undeniably, for many of us, there's a challenge in sitting still. It boils down to trust as it involves surrendering to whatever the hand of God will soon deliver to us. It is in this surrender that we actually find the strength to sit still. God had ordered Ruth to rest because Boaz wasn't about to. Ruth could wait because Boaz wouldn't. Boaz was doing anything but sitting

still. He was instead racing off to arrange for the redemption of his bride, Ruth. As if that wasn't enough, the tale of God's provision and power isn't over. The best was yet to come!

The Book of Ruth opens with death and ends with **life**. Boaz used strategy. In Ruth 4:5, we see that by the time Boaz was done, the relative who was supposed to be next in line to marry Ruth was more than happy to pass the task over to Boaz. You see one man's burden is another's man's blessing but only you, through the power and provision of the Holy Spirit, can identify which is which to you. Through this, **the blessing of life came**. **After that, in Ruth 4:13-15, we see:**

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him."

Scripture goes on to prove to us that following these events, Ruth would go on to become the great grandmother of King David. Boaz and Ruth would continue the line through which our Lord Jesus Christ came. Do we think that anyone could have stopped that plan of God? You see, we never know what our vessel on this earth is meant to bring for the Kingdom! **What it took 10 years to accomplish in Moab, Ruth surpassed in no time at all. In one verse... She became Boaz's wife and she bore him a son.** All because she *lost*, she fell in *love* with the Lord, allowing herself to be *led* by God, which *launched* His plan into action and restored *life*!

As I close, I dare to ask you, are you willing to break the Moabite mould in your own life or are you prepared to suffer the heartache of the consequence of compromise? Will you take the

long road home or will you journey with faith through the shorter, bumpier route? Only you, can decide.

Scripture Excerpts taken from New King James Version:

Ruth 1:1 – 5

1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 1:8

8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

Ruth 1:16

16 But Ruth said:

*"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people shall be my people,
And your God, my God.*

Ruth 2: 1 - 2

2 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. 2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor."

And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

Ruth 3: 16 - 18

16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

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Ruth 4:13-15

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About the Author

Crystalene Reyes is a devoted Christian, wife, and mother of five—three biological and two bonus children whom God blessed her with through the sanctity of marriage. Her love for the Lord began at a young age when her grandmother took her to church, igniting a faith that, though tested, has remained steadfast. She holds a Diploma in Theology, a Bachelor of Education, and a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. As a teacher and entrepreneur, Crystalene is the co-owner and founder of Divinely Guided Learning (CS Reyes Learning) in Trinidad and the founder of Divinely Guided Books, an online Christian platform offering both paid and free content to help others grow in their faith. Her

passion for God's Word drives her to share its truth with those willing to listen. She is the visionary behind the Through God's Voice series, which intertwines Biblical scripture with life lessons and self-development principles. Her ultimate mission is to positively impact lives and be the salt of the earth, just as God intended.