

Ruth 1:6-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ruth/ruth-1/ruth-16-14/>

Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to return to their home so that they may find Moabite husbands. Orpah leaves but Ruth stays.

From Naomi's human perspective, both her present and future life seems to be hopeless. After leaving one's homeland, when things do not turn out well, it's natural to think about returning home, losing loved ones in death magnified her discouragement. Naomi *heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had visited His people in giving them food*. News reached her that the Lord had lifted the famine so she desires to return to Israel. *So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah*. Judah is the name of the tribal area in which Bethlehem was located.

Being older, Naomi found little hope of ever remarrying. Yet, unselfishly, she doesn't want her dilemma to be an impediment for her daughters-in-law to remarry and have a brighter future than hers. So Naomi exhorts her daughters-in-law to *go, return each of you to her mother's house*. Naomi gives them a blessing, saying *may the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me*. It seems clear that her daughters-in-law have treated her very well. Naomi now wishes to treat them well, seeking their financial security. She encourages them to remarry, saying *may the Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband*.

Then Naomi kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Naomi argues practicalities. They need their own husband and family. That was necessary for protection and sustenance in an agrarian economy and a time prior to machinery. Naomi can't raise sons for them. Even if she did *would they wait until they were grown?* Orpah relented and returned to Moab, *but Ruth clung to her*.

Biblical Text

⁶ Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had visited His people in giving them food. ⁷ So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸ And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ May the Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰ And they said to her, "No, but we will surely return with you to your people." ¹¹ But Naomi said, "Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹² Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, ¹³ would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you

therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me.”¹⁴ And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.