

Ruth 1:19-22

This Too Shall Pass

I. Introduction

- A. **Naomi's name means "The Sweet One." And she seems to have lived up to that name before her trip to Moab.** She lived a sweet life and from what we can tell she was sweet to those around her.
- B. **Her life was "full" in that she had a husband (current security) and sons (future security).** She was blessed and her life was sweet.
- C. **She enters her hometown, the place she grew up, where people knew her best, and there is a tremendous commotion.** Everyone is "**stirred**" at her coming. This word means everyone was **talking and murmuring** about her arrival.
- D. There was no FaceTime, cell phones, cameras or text messaging in the ancient world. **Though only 30 miles separated Moab from Bethlehem, these people had enjoyed little or no contact at all for the previous 10 years.**
- E. So when Naomi returns the people are astonished. She has lived a very rough ten years and the events of her life, along with time, have taken their toll on her appearance. **The women asked, "Is**

this Naomi? We hardly recognize the “sweet one” we knew 10 years ago.”

F. Naomi responds with a quip which not only explains her physical appearance but gives insight into her heart. Her heart, like her physical appearance, had grown unrecognizable.

G. **“Don’t call me the sweet one”** — She tells about the past 10 years, summarizes the hardships of her life and her feelings toward God. She says don’t call me “sweet one” anymore...from now I am the “bitter one.”

I. Forever Changed

- A. Naomi had been through terrible trials and horrible experiences. These events had scared her...they had forever changed her.**
- B. What have you been through that has forever changed your life? I might have asked “Have you been through anything that has forever changed you” but that isn’t reality is it? We have all actually been through experiences which have changed us.**
- C. Hurricane Harvey — 19 Trillion gallons of water have fallen on Texas with Hurricane Harvey. 24 Trillion gallons have fallen on Texas and Louisiana together. It’s probably impossible to truly comprehend how much water that is! But there are comparisons we can make that help paint a picture. First, there are 18 trillion gallons of water in the Chesapeake Bay. If you piled up 20 trillion gallons of water over the District of Columbia (approximately 68 square miles), the height of the water would be 1,410 feet — or almost the height of the Empire State Building. The amount of rain that fell in Texas and Louisiana would have ended the historic California drought, twice over. Over Harris County alone — which is home to Houston — 1 trillion gallons of water fell in the four days from Saturday through Tuesday. That’s as much water**

as flows over Niagara Falls in 15 days. It's enough to cover the entire state of Arizona in more than a foot of water.

- D. Life changing experiences are a challenge. Sometimes they are a wonderful thing and other times they bring great heartache. But regardless of whether they are wanted or not, life changing experiences always offer an opportunity for a closer, more intimate relationship with God or anger, bitterness and estrangement from Him. Naomi chose the latter.**
- E. She believed God was mean, unfair and judgmental.** In fact, if we were to read this passage in **the Hebrew language, she makes a point to deny God's faithfulness to His promises, His covenant.**
- F. Naomi came home and basically said, "I am cursed, bitter, broken and it is God's doing. He has done these things to me, I don't know why, He is unfaithful and cannot be trusted.**
- G. Have you ever known someone like that?** I have had them in my office. Bad things happen and they blame God. Have you ever felt that way?
- H. Have you ever felt God could have done something to prevent the horror visited on your life. "Why did God allow me to be molested? Why did he or she die? Why did God allow it to rain so much? Why did God..."**

- I. In the mind of such a person God is guilty. He is the one who perpetrated these events on them by His inactivity in the midst of their crisis.**
- J. **Is it God's fault when bad things happen?** How do we interpret disappointing or crushing events which happen to every single one of us?
- K. The answer we offer says something of what we believe about God's power and character.**
- L. Naomi looked at her life and said God is all powerful and isn't good at all. "God has cursed me and He cannot be trusted." How many people in our life are saying the same things? Have you ever said that yourself?
- M. Even the best among us get depressed. Even the strongest grow weary. Even the most stoic cry. All of us have our breaking point. And we are all going to face times when we fall to our knees crying out to God asking why. Naomi was at her breaking point...and her conclusion was simply this... God is unfair and cannot be trusted**

I. Answers

- A. Let's address Naomi's hurt and bitterness by taking a look at who God really is...identifying His power and character. And then let's take a look at us and how we relate to both God and His plans for the world.
- B. God is all powerful and perfectly capable of doing anything.
He created the universe and us. He did so meticulously and perfectly, leaving evidence of His power and greatness all around us.
- C. **Romans 1:19-20** — “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”
- D. The fine-tuning necessary for life to exist on a planet is nothing compared with the fine-tuning required for the universe to exist at all. For example, astrophysicists now know that the values of the four fundamental forces—gravity, the electromagnetic force, and the “strong” and “weak” nuclear forces—were determined less than one millionth of a second after the big bang. Alter any one value and the universe could not exist. For instance, if the ratio between the

nuclear strong force and the electromagnetic force had been off by the tiniest fraction of the tiniest fraction—by even one part in 100,000,000,000,000,000—then no stars could have ever formed at all. Multiply that single parameter by all the other necessary conditions, and the odds against the universe existing are so astronomical that the notion that it all “just happened” defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row. Really? Fred Hoyle, the astronomer who coined the term “big bang,” said that his atheism was “greatly shaken” at these developments. He later wrote that “a common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as with chemistry and biology The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.” Theoretical physicist Paul Davies has said that “the appearance of design is overwhelming” and Oxford professor Dr. John Lennox has said “the more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator . . . gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”

- E. Look around you and consider the creation...not just the stars and the galaxies and the vast distances between them.

Look at the person next to you or even yourself. The complexity of life and the odds of any of this ever existing in the first place.

- F. But what about His character? Is God good?**
- G. If He created all of this and is so incomprehensibly powerful...why does He allow so much evil in the world?**
- H. Let's start with the big picture...**
- I. What does God owe us? He gave us a perfect world in the Garden of Eden. There was no sin, sickness, decay, disease or evil. We sinned against God. We welcomed sin, wickedness and death into the creation.**
- J. Evil is not something God created...Evil is the absence of God. Mankind chose to rebel against and reject God...to kick Him out of our life. God gave us what we wanted...The vacuum left by God's absence was the birth of evil.**
- K. Evil is the absence of God just as cold is the absence of heat... cold doesn't exist but heat does...heat is a measure of energy...cold is just a word we created to describe the absence of this energy. Evil is just a word we have created to describe the absence of God.**
- L. God owed man nothing...we wanted Him out so we could be our own god...and He gave us what we wanted...the result was evil and death**

- M. **But God didn't leave us to an eternity absent of Himself and lost in evil and death...He gave us a second chance...He chose to save us from our sin, rebellion and death. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so we might, by His grace turn from our sin, place faith in His work on the Cross and have relationship with him...that we might be saved from evil.**
- N. **God demonstrates His love, and ultimately His character in this...**
- O. **Romans 5:8 — “While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.”**
- P. **What about those times when things don't go the way we hoped or planned? When bad things happen to us? Do these moments call into question God's character? His goodness?**
- Q. **Answer...**
- R. **We live in a fallen and broken world. Sin has corrupted the whole of creation and everyone in it. And God's redemption of both the creation and us...isn't finished yet.**
- S. **What we are really demanding to know in those moments when we question God's lack of intervention in our life is why He won't go ahead and finish the job of redeeming the creation and us!**
- T. **Why won't you make the world perfect so I don't experience consequences for my sinful choices and the sinful choices of**

those around me? So I will no longer experience the horrors associated with living in a broken world.

- U. **And to this question Jesus simply says, [Revelation 22:12-13](#) “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”**
- V. **Justice is on its way...our salvation is at hand...but there are still some who have yet to place faith in Jesus.**
- W. **God’s timing is perfect. He knows the number of hairs on our head. He knows the number of human beings who will be saved and the time has not yet come when that number is complete. And we are a part of the process of seeing them come.**
- X. **We endure what we do in order that more may be saved. We suffer so more may come.**
- Y. **[Romans 8:18-21](#) — Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay.**

I. Conclusion

- A. Naomi's life was at a bitter point and had been changed forever by the tragedies she had endured in the previous decade of her life. Everyone could see the toil these events had taken. They could see it on her face and in her heart.**
- B. But this is not the end...**
- C. A pastor entered a tavern where a man, wishing to embarrass him, rose and suddenly called out quite loudly, "Es gibt keinen Gott" ("There is no God"). The pastor went to him, calmly laid his hand on his shoulder, and said, "Friend, what you have said is not at all new. The Bible said that more than 2,000 years ago." The man replied, "I never knew that the Bible made such a statement." The pastor informed him, "Psalm 14, verse 1, tells us, "The fool says in his heart, there is no God." But there is a great difference between that fool and you. He was quite modest and said it only in his heart; he didn't go about yelling it out in taverns."**
- D. God exists...He is perfectly powerful...completely in control...perfect in character...loves us infinitely and eternally...and this too shall pass**
- E. We know why bad things happen...evil exists...God is not fully present in this world as He will be in the one soon to come! Our sin has left us the consequence of living, for a time,**

in a broken system with broken bodies and a marred image of who were created to be.

- F. But...Some glad morning when this life is over...we really will fly away to a home on God's celestial shore...we will fly away O glory!
- G. **In the meantime...we take comfort in God's grace, love, promises, grace and mercy which were all demonstrated to us in our darkest hour...while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We take comfort in His power, love, character, and promises!**
- H. **Our word to Naomi and to every other "Naomi," especially when Naomi is ourself...**
- I. **2 Corinthians 4:17, "For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!"**
- J. **This too shall pass...God loves you Naomi...He has a purpose and plans to save many...and your pain is a part of their hope...your endurance and witness give one more day of opportunity for those souls who have yet found their salvation as you have...in Christ.**