

Naomi – A Case Study in Despair

Ruth 1:2b – 5, 19b - 21

2b They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

3 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.

4 These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,

5 and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

19b And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

20 She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.”

21 I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

- In Hebrew, Naomi means “pleasantness”
 - Mara means “bitterness”

Despair Causes us to Lose Perspective

- Practical tip: In a season of melancholy, hold a healthy bias against your ability to make sound decisions.
 - In your pessimism, you don't want to say or do something that you won't be able to roll back.

Eight Spiritual Medicines for the Sorrow of the Soul

1. Give Attention to Your Physical Needs
 - a. You are an embodied being who needs rest, good nutrition, and exercise.
2. Learn to Pray the Psalms
 - a. Make this your morning devotion time
 - b. **Psalm 6, 13, 30, 43, 55, 126, 133**, and on your darkest day **Psalm 88**
3. Don't Listen to Your Heart, Preach to Your Heart
 - a. Don't ignore your emotions; But don't bow to them either.
 - b. Learn to do **Psalm 42**
4. Give Priority to Fellowship with the Saints
 - a. **Proverbs 18:1** and **Hebrews 10:25**
5. Share Your Sorrow with Those Who Are Your Gospel Friends
 - a. **1st Samuel 23:16, John 15:15, James 5:16**
6. Practice Gratitude
 - a. All that you are and all that you have is by grace. Therefore, you are always doing *better* than you deserve.
 - b. **Psalm 51:12** and **Psalm 100:4**
7. Trust That God Is Always Working for Good
 - a. **Romans 8:28**
8. Meditate on the Hope
 - a. **Romans 8:18**

Naomi's Happy Outcome, in One Year's Time

Ruth 4:14 - 17

14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!

15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

17 And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Psalm 16:5 - 6

The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.