

God's At Work Even When We Don't See It: An Exposition of Ruth and Esther #1

A Short Cut That Leads To A Dead End
Ruth 1:1-5

I. Introduction To The Series

- A.** Two women – surprising
- B.** In what seems to them as disaster, God is at work to do something amazing that is a complete surprise.
- C.** These two stories encourage God's people that the God of Romans 8:28 is true and can be trusted.
- D.** We want God's wonderful plan for our lives but we are sometimes uncertain about how it occurs. God never is!

II. Introduction to Ruth

- A.** A four-act play
- B.** With 3 main characters
 - Naomi
 - Ruth
 - Boaz
- C.** Premise: To see how God works in the lives of ordinary people
- D.** Why was this story written?
 - To give legitimacy to David becoming King even though his great-grandmother was a Gentile.
 - To show the inclusion of everyone who comes to God in faith and how God cares for them.

III. Going Where the Grass is Greener VS 1-2

"In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there."

- A.** Why move?
 - Political considerations
 - Economic considerations
 - Relational considerations – pressure from sons
- B.** Risk of moving
 - Losing Elimelech's status – the Kennedy's of Hyannis Port

- Losing inheritance – the land
- Being treated badly in new country

C. Insights

- "The grass is always greener over the septic system" – Erma Bombeck
- Did they consult the Lord?

IV. Learning How To Fit In VS 3-5

"But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband."

A. Without a leader

- Father dead
- God silent

B. Get married – assimilate

- Mixed marriages
- Rarely works out for everyone

C. Ten years an alien

- Why so long?
- They got comfortable

D. Both sons and father die

E. The end or the beginning?

V. Thoughts

- A.** The quick and easy way
- B.** The danger of influence from those less mature
- C.** Follow your commitments even when it is hardest.
- D.** So, don't change course just because that grass looks greener or you are pressed by others – be faithful to your commitments
- E.** A decision to take a spiritual short cut could bring you to a disastrous dead end before the Lord.