

RUTH 1:15-22 (RETURNING TO THE PROMISED LAND)

Introduction: As we walk along life's highway, we never really know where we are going, do we? We may have plans, maps, and gas for a trip, but in reality we are as blind to what will happen one second from now as if our physical eyes were blind and we were on a twisting, crooked, dangerous path.

Not to be morbid, but as we sit in church, a meteor could come through the roof and destroy us. A car could come through the front wall and crush us. Or, a jetliner could have trouble on the way to the airport and plow through us like a steamroller.

And yet we sit here contently despite actually having no control over anything around us. Naomi had left Bethlehem to go to Moab with her family and she lost everything. When she left, she had no idea what would happen. Now as she starts her trip back to Israel, she has no idea what will transpire there.

Each moment of our life is uncertain and without God it is a useless, vain existence which ultimately ends in futility. However with God, the unseen future may be a mystery, but it is not futile. Whatever happens along the way, the end... the final destination is assured. Naomi struggled to see this, but we have her life recorded to show us more than what she could see.

Text Verse: "I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16

The Bible, with its many unusual stories and hard to figure details, is still very plain nonetheless. It shows us where we were, where we are, and where we are

headed. And even though the details of our lives are left out, the Bible shows us the truth that there *is* an overarching hand of Providence which is guiding all things to a very good end for those who are willing to accept its premises.

It is a book of stories which tell one greater story. That God has a plan, that it is being worked out, and that it centers on His entrance into the world in order to make all things right. It is all focused on Jesus Christ. Naomi didn't know this, but we do.

And so with the assurance that God loves us enough to give us His Son and to reveal Him in His superior word, let us turn to that word again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Wherever You Go, I Will Go (verses 15-18)

¹⁵ And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods;

Orpah has turned away to return home, thus as we saw last week, she lived up to the name she was given at her birth. Orpah means "Mane" or "back of the neck." As she walked away, this is the last of what they saw of her.

And so as they watch her depart, Naomi says to Ruth words of true sadness. She has "gone back to her people and her gods." In this verse is a confirmation that Orpah and Ruth had both previously accepted the God of Israel as their God when they married into the family. One cannot "turn back" to something they never left.

Therefore, they had to have left Moab's form of worship in order to be united to that of Israel. Now, with her husband dead and her mother-in-law departing, she

is turning back to Chemosh, the god of Moab. She has become an apostate to the true faith of Israel.

Instead of going to the land of promise and seeking out the face of God who gives both blessing and hardship at His will, she turned her neck from Jehovah to that which is not God and is thus completely dropped from the biblical narrative from this point on.

In her words to Ruth about Orpah she uses the word, *elohim*, translated here as "gods." However, the word she uses doesn't necessarily mean a plurality. It could be singular or plural. A way of translating it so that this term would be understandable would be that she went back to her own forms of worship.

Because there isn't either an adjective or a verb to indicate a number, we can't really clearly translate the thought. But a way of understanding the worship of the word *elohim* - be it god or gods, is that it is "over there." *Elohim* is in another realm and that is where the worship is directed.

15 (con't) return after your sister-in-law."

As Orpah fades into the distance, Naomi now speaks again to Ruth. Are her words sincere, that she wants her to return with Orpah, or are they a final test of her allegiance to the God of Israel? The latter is certainly correct. She has already, several times and in various ways, shown that following the Lord requires understanding that hard times come with worshipping Him.

Her words that Orpah "has gone back to her people and to her gods" means that she wasn't willing to accept this premise and she felt that the god of Moab would be more responsive to her physical needs and desires than the Lord. And this is exactly what drives people from Christianity or from right exercise of it.

We are self-centered beings and what we desire most is gratification and satisfaction in the "right now." People will walk away from the faith because of the death of a loved one, blaming God for their sadness.

And people will ignore the parts of the Bible that they don't like or that they don't agree with because their relationship with God is about them, not about Him. We want the good and none of the bad; but that is not how it works in reality.

Naomi has placed the reality of the situation before the daughters and one has turned. The second is standing on the battlefield and the lines are drawn and set. This is a battle not unlike that which Jacob faced on the banks of the Jabbok River. As Fuller says -

"God wrestled with Jacob with desire to be conquered; so Naomi no doubt opposed Ruth, hoping and wishing that she herself might be foiled."

The fact is that Naomi does hope to be foiled in her attempt to persuade Ruth to depart. But she is not willing to be defeated without presenting the reality of the situation which Ruth will face. She must continue to embrace the true God as she had when life was sweeter. Will she be willing to do so?

The answer is "Yes" and it comes in one of the most memorable passages in the entire body of sacred Scripture. It is comparable to the words of Esther before her time of fasting and trial, and to the response of Job when he was told to curse God and die. Ruth's words are even as confident and faithful as those of Mary as she spoke out the words of the Magnificat. And her words begin with...

¹⁶ But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,

To "entreat" is to ask someone earnestly or anxiously to do something, even to

beg. Naomi has entreated Ruth numerous times and in various, heightening ways, to thoughtfully consider her choice to go to Israel with her.

Now Ruth asks for the begging to cease. She will not be deterred and the breath is wasted on continuing such requests. She will remain steadfastly with her and by her side.

16 (con't) **Or to turn back from following after you;**

Naomi had just said, "return after your sister-in-law." Instead, Ruth will follow Naomi. Where Orpah goes will be up to Orpah. Her choice is made, but she will go alone. Where Naomi goes is where Ruth will follow. Naomi will have company on the path she takes.

16 (con't) **For wherever you go, I will go;**

Whatever difficulties lay ahead. No matter what trials would come or the hardships of the journey, Ruth would accompany her. Didn't Naomi have the same distance to walk? Wouldn't she also be tired? Wouldn't there be the same chance of robbers or beasts attacking on the highway as for her?

If so, and she was older and more frail, then certainly Ruth could face the same challenges. If there were mountains to climb, she would climb. If there were rivers to cross, she would cross. If there were sharp, difficult stones to walk over, she would walk them too.

But more than the physical trials was the surety that the God she was following would be there too - through both good and testing. Ruth had certainly heard the family stories of the God of Israel - how he had led them out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and over the Jordan.

He was with Israel as they subdued the Canaanites and He would be with them as they travelled. Like Rahab at the time when Israel entered Canaan, Ruth was willing to live by faith because she knew of the power and the omnipresence of the Lord Jehovah.

Some years later, her own great-grandson, David, would demonstrate the same understanding of the Lord when he would pen these words in the 139th Psalm -

"Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me." Psalm 139:7-10

Ruth now understood this and she trusted in the providence of the Lord enough to commit to following Naomi on her travel home.

¹⁶ (con't) **And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;**

The NIV translates this "where you stay I will stay." This might give the impression of the house they are heading to. The reference, however, is not to the final destination, but to the nightly stops on the way to the final destination. The verb, *luwn*, indicates to spend the night.

It could be at a cottage on the highway, it could be in a cave in a mountain, or it could be sleeping under the stars with a stone for a pillow like Jacob once slept. Whatever place they stopped - both on the journey to Canaan, or at any place during their earthy walk once in Canaan, she would be willing to sleep in that same spot.

¹⁶ (con't) **Your people *shall be* my people,**

Amekh ammi - in the Hebrew, there is no verb. "Your people - my people." In her mind and forever afterward, Naomi's people would be her people. She, whether accepted by them or not, was counting herself and her destiny as entwined with Israel's common destiny.

The blessings they would receive from the heavens would be showered on her as well. The famines or wars they faced would be her portion and her lot. Should the mountains fall and the earth beneath her feet quake, she would remain steadfast amidst it all.

¹⁶ (con't) **And your God, my God.**

veloha-yikh elohai (3:19). Again, there is no verb. It is the assertion that the God of Naomi, who has been her God since her marriage, is and will remain her God. Whether He provides wealth and prosperity, or poverty and deprivation, she will serve this God to whom she is united.

Again as we have seen elsewhere, her words are reflective of other faithful souls seen in the Bible. What she says here is a beautiful match with the words of Job -

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.

Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.

¹⁶ He also *shall* be my salvation,

For a hypocrite could not come before Him." Job 13:15, 16

As Matthew Henry says about her words, "Ruth is an example of the grace of God, inclining the soul to choose the better part."

Regardless of the state of this life, be it great or be it sore and displeasing, following the God of Israel is to always choose the better part. And although they are far distant relatives of Ruth, there is a group of people who will descend from her that will someday follow the Lord with the same marked determination. We read about them in Revelation 14 -

"These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from *among* men, *being* firstfruits to God and to the Lamb." Revelation 14:4

It is the true mark of the redeemed throughout all ages. Enoch, the seventh man from Adam, and in the time before the Flood of Noah, was said to have walked with God. Abraham followed the Lord from his native land and walked with him all his days.

Time and time again, in both testaments of the Bible, we are told to walk in the commandments of the Lord and in a manner worthy of Him. Ruth is just one of countless examples of the faith which is found pleasing to God. Without seeing Him, but only hearing of Him, we please Him when we follow Him as we walk. In this, there is a reward waiting for the faithful. Even in death...

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die,

"My dear mother, as we walk in life, so we will walk until death. And even after death, I will stay put until that day when I also die. I will not leave you in life and should you go before me, I will stay to lay flowers on your grave. And in that day when the God of Israel calls me to my place of rest, it will be in that same place of your calling."

17 (con't) **And there will I be buried.**

We still often follow this practice today. There is a common burial ground or even a mausoleum where families are placed. The record of this began with Abraham and Sarah and it continued on in the heart of Ruth towards her beloved mother-in-law.

They would possess the same spot of soil in the hope of some day rising together at the call of the Messiah who was promised to the people of Israel by the God of Israel. She abandoned the worthless graves of Moab where death's hold would stay firm and welcomed the graves of Israel where death's sting would be removed in Him.

17 (con't) **The LORD do so to me,**

In these words, Ruth now begins a petition of imprecation. It is the first such time it is used in the Bible and it will be seen in the books of 1 Samuel and 1 Kings. She is invoking the name of the Lord, Jehovah, and calling down upon herself a curse from Him if she fails to adhere to the words of her solemn vow - may it be so.

Her words here and to follow are a sort of euphemism, which more conceal than reveal the true weight of the penalty that she should, and rightfully would, endure for violating the oath.

17 (con't) **and more also,**

This is a way of adding additional weight to the imprecation she was calling down on herself. It is an impossible state, one which could never come about and yet it *should* happen if she were found to violate her pledge.

In essence, it is saying, "If there were something more punishing than what Jehovah could mete out, then that is what I would deserve. May such horrible and awesome terrors come upon me should the truth of my words be found wanting."

¹⁷ (con't) **If *anything but death parts you and me.***"

To complete her oath, she utters the finality of her decision, *ki ha'mavet yaphrid beni uvenekh*. In these words, "death" is emphatic - *ha'mavet*; - the death. As the Pulpit commentary says, "It is as if she had said death, the great divider." Nothing but this will come between us.

¹⁸ **When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.**

Having heard the substance of Ruth's words, the exchange ends.

The very thing that Naomi had intended has come about. Her previous words were meant to show the reality of what lay ahead and to obtain a sure, truthful, and heartfelt commitment from Ruth if she were to actually return with her to Canaan.

And in fact Ruth has shown her faithfulness to the road set before them. No greater promises could come from her mouth even if Naomi were to continue to dissuade her. Because of the gravity of what she spoke, she has shown that she will not be deterred. To Canaan, the two will travel together.

*Where can I from Your Spirit go?
Or where can I from Your presence flee?
If I ascend into heaven, You are there, I know
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there with me*

If I take the wings of the morning, indeed

*And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea
Even there, me Your hand shall lead
And Your right hand shall have hold of me*

*If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me
Even the night about me shall be light
Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You
But even shines as the day, the very darkest night*

II. The Almighty Has Dealt Very Bitterly With Me (verses 19-21)

¹⁹ Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem.

This was a journey of no less than 50 miles in a land which is hilly, rocky, hot, and arid. It also would have included crossing over the Arnon and then the Jordan rivers. They would have had to carry whatever they owned and the water they would need to drink. It would not be an easy trip.

It would be like picking up from Sarasota and walking to Tampa. Driving there takes an hour, but walking there would be a long tedious venture. At a normal pace, it would be about 17 hours, but with carrying their things, stopping for rest and sleep and the like, it would take at a minimum between two and four days.

If they lived more than the minimum 50 miles, it could have been longer. And again, as seen last week, there is a masculine instead of a feminine pronoun in the words "the two of them." There are little treasures in the book of Ruth that are yet to be explained

19 (con't) And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

Upon their arrival the entire city was abuzz with the news. The translation here "and the woman said" is from a single word *vatomarnah*, which literally is "and they said" but it is in the feminine. The translators inserted the word "women" to make it understandable for us.

The women of the town were astonished at the person they once knew. More than 10 years had passed. Naomi would have gone out as a much younger lady and with her husband and sons. Now she has returned, certainly looking older, more worn down from the sadness and the years. She, a widow with only a daughter-in-law.

Any nice clothing or ornaments she had would be missing. The exclamation is certainly akin to us saying, "The years have been tough on her!" The entire picture is one which would have been shocking to the women who stayed in Bethlehem. The verse is a true to life, graphic touch of the reality of Naomi's situation.

20 But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi;

The name Naomi, as we saw before, is translated in a variety of ways by scholars - beautiful, sweet, pleasant, lovely, or something like that. Some take the "i" at the end of her name to be possessive and so it would mean "my sweetness."

But the "i" at the end may be a reference to Jehovah and so it would be "Pleasantness of the Lord." This is certainly what is intended and for a reason we will see in a moment. But because of her afflictions and trials, she asks them to not call her Naomi. It is no longer a fitting name for who she has become.

20 (con't) **call me Mara,**

Instead of Pleasantness of the Lord, she asks to be called Mara, which means "Bitter." In hearing her given name repeated time and again as she encountered the people of Bethlehem, she could only think that it was no longer appropriate.

The Lord, the covenant God of Israel, was distant from her and she felt the pain of it each time her name was repeated. And so a change to reflect her sad state was needed. Call me Bitter. Interestingly the way the name is recorded is not the normal Hebrew form of the word.

It is lacking the letter "h" at the end of the name which is the same letter that was *added* to Abraham and Sarah's name as a sign of covenant grace. It is as if she is outside of the Lord's covenant provision, wallowing alone in her bitterness.

20 (con't) **for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.**

Only in the light of interpreting her name as "Pleasantness of the Lord" can the full implication of what she says in this verse be properly understood. Instead of being "Pleasantness of the Lord," who is the one who monitors the covenant and the covenant people, she is "Bitter from the Almighty" - the one who bestows or withholds fruitfulness.

It is a double play on her name; bitter instead of pleasant, and affliction from the Almighty instead of grace from the Lord. Her words here are almost mirror of the anguish that Job himself felt after all of his many afflictions. In Job 27 we read his words -

"As God lives, *who* has taken away my justice,
And the Almighty, *who* has made my soul bitter," Job 27:2

Both of these people failed to see that the kindness of the Lord was just around the corner. Thinking they were the objects of God's wrath, they had misinterpreted the sad and troublesome hardships they had faced. What seemed at the time to be harsh and cruel was in due time to be replaced with joy and comfort.

But even more, the troubles they faced have served a larger purpose as their lives have been used to show us the greater, and often unseen, hand of God as He unfolds history in a way which displays His sovereignty and His redemptive plans for us.

²¹ I went out full,

Naomi had forgotten that she went out with her family during a time of famine in search of bread and livelihood. If she was full, it was only because they ate their last meal before departing. But the overwhelming exaggerations of memories colored over the original reason why she had left.

All she could think of is who and what she had left with. Her memories were of a husband and two sons and the things they carried along for their temporary pilgrimage. She had forgotten that she had left a land which was beset by a lack of food.

^{21 (con't)} and the LORD has brought me home again empty.

The word translated as "empty" doesn't mean exactly that. It is an adverb rather than an adjective. Her words are *v'reqam hishivani Yehovah* (3:12) - "and *emptily* has brought me home again the Lord." It is as if the entire process of her journey has been without any positive benefit as the Lord continually drained her.

Again, in her misery, she failed to acknowledge Ruth who had clung to her and promised to continue clinging to her no matter what would come their way. The faithful words on that dusty road leading home from Moab were overshadowed by her own pitiful condition in the eyes of the women of Bethlehem.

And in her return, she is now in a land that is productive and fruitful once again. She may have come home emptily in some respects, but she has also come home with, and to, great abundance in other ways.

As she will find out before her days are through, the daughter-in-law she now has taken in is worth more to her than seven sons. The Lord will heap upon her a good and blessed latter life, just as He did upon His faithful servant Job.

^{21 (con't)} **Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me,**

In her words, and based on the meaning of her name, she is repeating a pun. "Why do you call me Pleasantness of the Lord, since the Lord has testified against me?" She is misreading what has happened. She is finite, in time, and unknowing of the future.

Like Job, what she sees as the Lord testifying against her is simply a lack of the full resource of information that God possesses. Job misunderstood his circumstances and Naomi has as well. And like Job's friends, she is seeing her afflictions as a result of penal punishment. In other words, she feels she must have done something wrong and the Lord is punishing her.

But there are other forms of suffering that are not at all because of punishment. The book of Job shows this as do many other examples in both testaments of the Bible. A perfect example of this is found in John 9 -

"Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ² And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³ Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.'" John 9:1, 2

Like the man born blind, like Job, and like Naomi and many others, suffering is a part of the fallen world in which we live. At times that suffering is used by God to demonstrate His glory. This is the case with the life and trials of Naomi.

To some extent, every one of us fails to properly interpret the signs which surround us as we live out our lives before the Lord. What is needed is a firm belief in the promise found in Romans 8:28, that "...all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose." (LIFE APP)

21 (con't) **and the Almighty has afflicted me?"**

Her words in Hebrew are *v'shaddai heraa li* (4:21). This form of the verb *heraa* implies an evil doer, a doer of wickedness, or simply evil or wicked. If taken in that light, she is actually ascribing the evil that was accomplished *to* the Almighty. As the Pulpit Commentary says, she is "walking on a theological precipice, where it is not needful that we should accompany her."

Instead of ascribing the evils that come our way to God, it is right that we humble ourselves and our hearts before His providential hand. The afflictions we bear may not do us good, but the way we carry ourselves in midst of them is what is right, honorable, and noble. And above all, we are never to ascribe evil to the Lord.

It is we humans who chose the path we are on and it is the Lord God who has worked to correct it and to put us on a new and eternally good path.

*Shall we indeed accept good from God
And shall we not accept adversity?
Who is it that lays out before us the path we trod?
Let us never contemplate such perversity*

*It is fair when things go ill to be dejected and lacking strength
But it is right to remember that God has not forgotten us
He will return us to paradise and eternal joy in due length
And we have this certainty because He gave His Son, Jesus*

*So when trials, heartaches, or much loss comes our way
Remember to not blame God thus making matters worse
For He is God and He is working out every single day
His glorious plan when soon there will be no more curse*

III. The Time of the Barley Harvest (verse 22)

²² So Naomi returned,

So Naomi returned... She has come again to the land of her birth which is the land of promise. She had crossed the Jordan and now she has crossed it once again. She has again come to the land of favor and the land of blessing.

22 (con't) and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab.

This continues to reiterate what we already know. Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law has come. It identifies her specifically as a Moabitess to remind us of the account of Lot and his daughters. They were relatives of Abraham, but not of the covenant line.

And more, the Moabites had hired Balaam the prophet, to curse Israel as they travelled toward Canaan. Later, they caused Israel to trip up and fall into idolatry and sexual immorality. She is a gentile from what many would consider an unsavory line of people.

However, her ancestor Moab was born to a woman who was looking forward to the coming Messiah. Unless you saw the sermon on Lot and his daughters, you might not understand this. But it explains why this verse in Ruth continues with the unlikely thought that she "returned from the country of Moab."

One commentary said that this verse is both "remarkable, at once for its simplicity and for its inexactitude." (Pulpit) They said this, because Ruth didn't actually return from Moab. Rather, she came with Naomi who returned.

However, if this verse is taken in light of their great ancestor who slept with her father in order to have a child who would lead them to the Messiah, then Ruth did, in fact, return to the Land of Promise. They once lived in it and left many generations earlier. Now she had come home.

Words aren't wasted in the Bible. And words are neither redundant nor inexact. They are precise, carefully chosen, and intended to show us God's overall plans, which come in short, interesting sentences and concepts. In this, Ruth truly did return to Canaan through the loins of Lot and his faith-filled daughter.

***22 (fin) Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.**

Naomi and Ruth returned to Canaan and have arrived at the House of Bread, Bethlehem. It is the same spot where the Lord Jesus, a descendant of Ruth, will be born in a bit over 1000 years. And it is at the time of the barley harvest.

The barley is ready for reaping during the month of Abib which is our March/April time-frame. It commences during the Feast of Unleavened Bread when the firstfruits of the harvest are cut and presented to the Lord, a picture of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is at this same time of year when the Lord was crucified and then rose from the dead that these ladies arrive in the House of Bread. Barley is known as the crop of hairy ears because of its hairy appearance. The word "barley" in Hebrew is *seorah* which is closely related to the word *se-ar* or hair.

Hair in the Bible indicates an awareness of things, especially that of sin. The goat for example, which is used in Leviticus for the sin offering, is known as *sair*. We have an awareness of sin in the hairy goat sin offering. In Numbers there is a type of person known as a Nazirite. This is someone who made a vow or was consecrated to the Lord.

During the time of that vow, they were never to cut their hair. Samson was a Nazirite from birth as were Samuel and John the Baptist. Paul took a Nazirite vow in Acts. The hair on their head was a reminder of their state, just as the hairy goat is a reminder of sin. It is man's place to be aware.

We are sentient beings, ever in search of more knowledge and experience and hopefully seeking out the cure to the sad state we are in. These things are all going to be seen in and revealed in the story of Ruth as it continues. Much is in store in the coming three chapters and it all revolves around the work of God in Christ.

But it also is a true story of real people, living out their lives in the stream of time. God has carefully sewn them into pictures of greater things that affect us all. It is a marvelous way of Him showing us that He is attentive to the big things in history, but also the little details as well.

And one of the little details in the big picture, but the biggest detail of all in our individual lives, is where we will spend eternity. God has worked out a plan where we too can return to the Promised Land. And it revolves around the giving of His Son for us.

Closing Verse: A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly,
But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother. Proverbs 18:24

Next Week: Ruth 2:1-7 (Whose Young Woman is This?) (4th Ruth Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He knows your trials, troubles, and woes and He is there with you through them. So cling to Him and let Him do marvelous things for you and through you.

Your People, My People; Your God, My God

And she said, "Look, as you can see
Your sister-in-law Orpah has gone back
To her people and to her gods
Return after your sister-in-law, don't be slack
But Ruth said in words heartfelt and true
"Entreat me not to leave, please don't do so
Or to turn back from following after you
For wherever you go, I too will go

And wherever you lodge, I will lodge too
Your people shall my people be
And your God, my God, it is true
I shall not ever leave you, this you shall see

Where you die, I will die, may it be so
And there will I be buried, I speak plainly
The Lord do so to me, and more also
If anything but death parts you and me

When she saw that she was determined to go along
She stopped speaking; her determination strong

Now the two of them went
Until they came to Bethlehem
When finally the miles were spent

And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem
That all the city was excited because of them

And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"
She was a different woman, they could plainly see

But she said to them just the same
"Do not call me anymore Naomi
Instead now Mara is my name
For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me

I went out full many years before
And empty has the Lord has returned me to my door

Why do you call me Naomi
Since the Lord has testified against me

And the Almighty me He has afflicted
I have been tried by His trial and convicted

So Naomi returned along with Ruth
The Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her
Who returned from the country of Moab
Their future unknown and unsure

Now they came to Bethlehem the town
At the beginning of the barley harvest
There they together settled down
As the Bible story does attest

Lord, help us to see Your hand in all things
As directing our lives not for evil, but for good
Help us to accept everything that our life brings
And to honor you at all times as we should

Yes, troubles come our way, but there are always blessings too
And both the troubles and the blessings are being used by You

For our good and for Your glory
Everything comes as a part of Your plan for us
This is the message we find in Your gospel story
And it is all because of our Lord Jesus

Yes, thank You Lord for such kind and attentive care for us
And thank You for our blessed Redeemer, our Lord Jesus

Hallelujah and Amen...