



Daily Devotionals

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RUTH 1:1-2 LEAVING HOME

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¹ In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ² The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

This was not the first time that a family left the land of the promise because of a famine. It was due to a famine in Canaan that the family of Jacob migrated to Egypt and there God expanded them from a family into a people. But this time it was different. While the backdrop of Jacob's move to Egypt was God's provision through the ascendancy of Joseph, this story begins with the ominous juxtaposition of the "days of the judges" and "there was a famine in the land." It takes no leap of imagination for the reader to connect the apostasy rampant in the time of the judges with both a spiritual and physical famine among God's people. Just for emphasis, even Bethlehem, literally the "House of Bread," was empty. Where Jacob had been virtually dragged to Egypt by God, this man left Judah on his own to make his own way for his family. What makes this even more poignant is that the man's name, Elimelech means "(My) God is King." Like Israel he left God and took matters into his own hands.

When things go badly in life we are to turn to God and not away from him. Throughout the Book of Judges, it was when the nation was suffering and returned to the Lord that their fortunes were reversed and they began to thrive again. Unfortunately the cycle continued with the leaders and people neglecting their relationship with God and being plunged once again into desperate waters. We cannot allow the role of God in our lives to be usurped by anything else and not experience the consequences of our decision. But, at the same time, when we return to the Lord in faith we can be sure that he is faithful and true and will draw us closer to himself.

As you read through Ruth, ask yourself where your Moab is and what is keeping you from coming home?

Father, you have demonstrated over and over again how faithful and merciful you are to those who call upon you as their God. In brightest and

darkest moments, Lord, may I ever be mindful of my need for you and for your desire to reach out to me in love and deliver me. Amen.

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