

Hope in Despair

Ruth 1

- I. **Despair is caused by sin and circumstances (Ruth 1:1-5).**
 - A. Israel was suffering in famine, perhaps due to God's judgments in time of Judges (1:1).
 - B. Naomi's family experienced tragic deaths in the land of Moab (left Israel, married Moabite women).

- II. **Hope requires risk (Ruth 1:6-18).**
 - A. Naomi has hope of food back in Israel (1:6-7).
 - Although sin may contribute to our despair, God still graciously reaches out to us.
 - B. Naomi plans to separate from her daughters-in-law and past despair (1:8-13).
 - Our natural reaction to trials is to assume we have it the worst and that God is against us.
 - C. Orpah goes home to her gods, but Ruth determines to go with Naomi and embrace the true God (1:14-18).
 - Hope begins with the risk of trusting God and leaving our comfort zones.
 - God usually uses people to give us hope in His goodness.

- III. **Hope can be ignored (Ruth 1:19-22).**
 - A. When Naomi arrives home to Bethlehem she expresses her bitterness to her friends (1:19-21).
 - Different circumstances won't change our despair if we haven't changed.
 - Bitterness is a choice – when we focus on what is wrong and blame God.
 - B. When Naomi and Ruth return, God is still determined to give them hope as barley harvest begins (1:22).