God is King: Naomi’s story

Sermon Handout

What’s in a name? In the Bible, a name often conveyed the character of the person.

Elimelek: God is King

Naomi: Pleasant

Mahlon: Sickness

Chilion: Failure

Orpah: Stubborness

Ruth: Friend

Mara: Bitter

Boaz: Pillar in front of the Lord’s Holy temple.

Obed: Servant

Jesse: Outstanding

David: Beloved

Bethlehem: House of Bread

Moab: Begotten of the Father

Israel: Prevails with God

Ephraim: Fruitfulness

Judah: Praise

**Ruth 1:1-22 (NLT)**
1 In the days when the judges ruled in the land of Prevails with God, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from the town of House of Bread in the tribal lands of Praise left his home and went to live in the country of begotten of the Father, taking his wife and two sons with him.
2 The man’s name was God is King, and his wife was Pleasant. Their two sons were Sickness and Failure. They were of the tribe of Fruitfulness from the town of House of Bread in the land of Praise. And when they reached the land of begotten of the Father they settled there.
3 Then God is King died, and Pleasant was left with her two sons.
4 The two sons married women from the land Begotten of the Father. One married a woman named Stubbornness, and the other a woman named Friend. But about ten years later,
5 both Sickness and Failure died. This left Pleasant alone, without her two sons or her husband.
6 Then Pleasant heard in the land Begotten of the Father that the LORD had blessed his people in the tribal lands of Praise by giving them good crops again. So Pleasant and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave the Land begotten of the Father to return to her homeland.
7 With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Praise.
8 But on the way, Pleasant said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me.
9 May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.
10 “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”
11 But Pleasant replied, “Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands?
12 No, my daughters, return to your parents’ homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what?
13 Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD himself has raised his fist against me.”
14 And again they wept together, and Stubbornness kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Friend clung tightly to Pleasant.
15 “Look,” Pleasant said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.”
16 But Friend replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.
17 Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”
18 When Pleasant saw that Friend was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.
19 So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to the town of House of Bread, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Pleasant?” the women asked.
20 “Don’t call me Pleasant,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me.
21 I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Pleasant when the LORD has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”
22 So Pleasant turned bitter returned from the land of Begotten of the Father, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Friend, the young woman of that foreign land. They arrived in House of Bread in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

**Ruth 2:1-13 (NLT)**
1 Now there was a wealthy and influential man in House of Bread named Pillar of the Lord’s Temple, who was a relative of Pleasant turned bitter’s husband, God is King.
2 One day Friend from the land Begotten of the Father said to Pleasant turned bitter, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.” Pleasant turned bitter replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.”
3 So Friend went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Pillar of the Lord’s Temple, the relative of her father-in-law, God is King.
4 While she was there, Pillar of the Lord’s Temple arrived from House of Bread and greeted the harvesters. “The LORD be with you!” he said. “The LORD bless you!” the harvesters replied.
5 Then Pillar of the Lord’s Temple asked his foreman, “Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?”
6 And the foreman replied, “She is the young woman from the foreign land of Begotten of the Father who came back with Pleasant turned bitter.
7 She asked me this morning if she could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes’ rest in the shelter.”
8 Pillar of the Lord’s Temple went over and said to Friend, “Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don’t go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field.
9 See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well.”
10 Friend fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. “What have I done to deserve such kindness?” she asked. “I am only a foreigner.”
11 “Yes, I know,” Pillar of the Lord’s Temple replied. “But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers.
12 May the LORD, the God of the people who Prevail with God, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done.”

What unfolds hereafter is a cultural drama and a burgeoning love story between Pillar in the Temple of Lord and Friend. There are social etiquettes to be played out and some interesting exchanges, but at the end of the drama, Pillar and Friend marry.

**Ruth 4:13-17 (NLT)**
13 So Pillar in the Temple of the Lord took Friend into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the LORD enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.
14 Then the women of the town said to Pleasant turned bitter, “Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous among the people who Prevail with God.
15 May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!”
16 Bitter turned back to Pleasant took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own.
17 The neighbor women said, “Now at last Pleasant has a son again!” And they named him Servant. He became the father of Outstanding and the grandfather of Beloved.

From Naomi we learn that God’s power to redeem is always far greater than we can think or imagine! Our problems and our perspectives are so small when compared to God’s grace!

**Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NLT**)
17 Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vines; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty,
18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!
19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength! He makes me as surefooted as a deer, able to tread upon the heights.

Remember: **Romans 8:28-31 (NLT**)
28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.
29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.
30 And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory.
31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?