

Love Stories from the Old Testament

Friends Stick Together

02/07/10

Text:

Ruth 1 & 2

Thesis:

True friends stick together through thick and thin. If we truly are a friend to God we will stick with Him through thick and thin.

Discussion:

I) Faithfulness and Dedication

a) Decisions

1) Ruth 1:15-18

2) Orpah decided to go back to her people and who would have blamed her.

(i) Naomi had lost a husband and two sons.

(ii) Later she tells her country men to call her Mara (Bitter).

(iii) Probably not the easiest person in the world to live with.

3) Ruth decided to stay with her mother-in-law.

(i) There was no personal gain.

(ii) As far as Ruth knew she would enter Judah a widow at the mercy of whomever showed them kindness to survive.

(iii) Ruth turned her back to her family and the gods of her youth.

(iv) Ruth chose to make Naomi's God her God.

(v) Is it possible that over the 10 years together that Naomi had told Ruth about the God of Heaven?

(a) Notice whose God she chose in time of trouble.

(b) Even though Naomi was struggling with her own faith.

(vi) Naomi tried to talk her out of following along but gave up.

b) Demonstrations

1) John 3:16

(i) God has demonstrated His love toward us.

(ii) John 15:14

We can learn the lesson of demonstrating faithful love.

(iii) Luke 9:62

(a) We are only fit if we are committed to Him.

(b) Do we believe He knows if we are committed?

(iv) Hebrews 10:38

(a) Friends of God have faith in Him.

(b) Those who stand one foot in the boat and the other on the dock find no safety.

2) Some follow God simply because they expect personal gain.

(i) Romans 16:18

(a) Philippians 3:18-19

(ii) Some follow simply to keep peace in the family.

(a) Watch a ball player who is not committed to the team.

(b) The uncommitted player drags down the whole team's vision.

(c) The uncommitted family member drags down the whole family.

(iii) Following for any reason of earthly gain is treason before God

(1 Timothy 6:5).

3) Paul's attitude is example for us.

(i) Philippians 3:7

(ii) Philippians 4:11

c) What Faithfulness and Dedication do we Demonstrate

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II) Fervor and Devotion

a) Sacrifice

1) Ruth 2:11

(i) Ruth brought home food for Naomi

(a) An "Ephah" of barley is about 5 gallons of flour.

(b) Tremendous work for a single day.

(ii) Friends are willing to help each other because both understand the value of labor.

(a) 1 Timothy 5:8

(b) Friends would not dare take advantage of another's help.

2) Ephesians 4:28

(i) Friends of God obtain uprightly.

(ii) Friends of God share.

b) Sensitivity

1) Matthew 16:24-26

(i) The Devotion of a friend is demonstrated by attention to needs.

(ii) Matthew 22:37-39

2) James 1:27

c) Ruth shows us Fervor and Devotion in caring for Naomi. What do our actions demonstrate?

III) Fortitude and Determination

a) Not easily turned back

1) Ruth 1:18

(i) When mother in law stops arguing.....

(ii) Ruth did not compromise on what she was going to do for Naomi.

2) Ruth 2:2

(i) The proof was in the putting up with hard labor.

(ii) This was a hostile and competitive environment for single women.

(iii) Men would take advantage of women who labored in the fields.

b) How easily are we turned back?

1) From the love of others.

(i) Sickness

(ii) Money problems

(iii) Neighbors and friends that simply get on our nerves.

2) From the love of God?

(i) Prayer answered, "No".

(ii) Dealing with difficult others.

(iii) Temptation

3) Knowing what God has done for you and invited you to be His friend...

(i) Would you talk bad about Him? What about His church? Would you leave Him over a disagreement?

(ii) Would you stick together with Him, knowing He will provide for His promises? Would you step out on faith and demonstrate your love for the Best Friend anyone could ever have?

Conclusion

1. Ruth demonstrated Faithfulness, Fervor and Fortitude.

2. I can be patient with my brothers and sisters and demonstrate the same for them.

3. I can reap the promised rewards from God by demonstrating Faithfulness, Fervor and Fortitude.