



# Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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## the COMMITMENT of COVENANT

*Message preached as a part of a Tag Team Message on Sunday Morning, October 22, 2023*

We have all heard the phrase, a “**committed Christian**”. While heathens would use the word “committed” different than us...I am not talking about that type of committed. A committed Christian is one who is loyal and steadfast to God, His church and His system (ways of operating).

While we know that God desires us to be committed in relationship to Him...we see, in Scripture, that our commitment to ONE ANOTHER is as important.

The greatest command was two-fold...

- \* Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.
- \* (the same as the first) Love your neighbor as yourself.

You cannot have that commitment to God without being committed to His people...especially those He has connected you with.

That is what got me, as I was meditating, this week.

### ***The commitment of covenant.***

**HONESTLY:** I could have gone many places...but the greatest success story in Scripture (at least one of them) comes in the book of Ruth...someone who had nothing and ended up with everything...including a legacy.

**(turn to)** Ruth 1 and let's dissect part of this first chapter today.

## **Temptation to Run**

Ruth 1:1-5

**1** Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

I find a lot of information in this first verse.

Famine hits Bethlehem (house of bread).

“**Sojourn**” – means that they did not intend to stay there...but to just visit until things got better at home.

**MOAB is a type of this world**...specifically pride and arrogance. Doing things your own way instead of God's way.

That is interesting...because they didn't INTEND on continuing doing things their own way...just until after famine stopped...but guess what?...they did!

The thought hit me...instead of watering the ground...they left because MOAB looked more fruitful.

**THINK ON THIS:** God promised His people that there would always be plenty in the land if they stayed obedient to Him. So, apparently, this is a time in history that Israel was doing it's own thing.

Instead of changing things...they left and kept doing their own thing.

**SIGNIFICANCE?** Children of Israel were in a covenant with God and with one another in this land. There is a built in commitment to community. They left!

Instead of working to clean it up...they left...they went and did their own thing for 10 YEARS!

**BELOVED:** How often have we decided to do our own thing...not meaning to continue to do it...but to do it until things turn around...but things do not turn around...they get worse and worse.

2 **And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.**

3 **And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.**

4 **And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.**

5 **And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.**

When you do things your own way...depending on your pride and arrogance, you will NOT enjoy what you think is fruitfulness.

Vs. 21 – she came back EMPTY!

**BELOVED:** So often when you are WHERE YOU ARE SUPPOSE TO BE...and things seem to be dry... not how you think they should be.

There is always a temptation to run...but your power is in commitment...in staying.

## Better Late Than Never...Go Back!

Ruth 1:6-14a

6 **Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.**

7 **Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.**

I have always thought that Orpah and Ruth were obligated to go with Ruth...but they were Moabites... they were not obligated to do anything.

There seems to be a genuine affection for Naomi with her two daughter-in-laws.

**NOTICE:** Naomi seems to be making this decision on her own...look at the SHE'S in verses 6 and 7... four of them...Naomi was planning on doing this by herself...but her daughter-in-laws were going to go with her.

It isn't until the last phrase in verse 7 that "THEY WENT".

8 **And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.**

9 **The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.**

10 **And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.**

This is kind of important...because BOTH Ruth and Orpah make commitments to Naomi. They said they would return.

This seems to be Orpah's problem. She made a commitment and then broke it when things persisted.

- 11 **And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?**
- 12 **Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;**
- 13 **Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.**
- 14 **And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.**

Naomi sees herself as EMPTY (vs. 21). She has nothing...no future...nothing to give. She legitimately sees the only shot at a normal life for these two ladies is to go back to their own way of doing things. Moab!

**YET:** Ruth sees Moab as her past...Naomi as her hope! Her life!

**HOWEVER:** Oprah is convinced and leaves...after making a commitment.

**NOW...** I am not simply trying to scare anyone into breaking covenant...but it is interesting how Jewish history describes Orpah's life.

- \* She goes back to Moab but is rejected by her countrymen because of her marrying a foreigner and leaving town.
  - \* She goes to the land of the Philistines where she bore six children out of wedlock.
- NOTE:** She did not get the life she thought.
- \* All of her children were killed by David (including Goliath).
  - \* 2 Samuel 21:15-22

## The commitment of Ruth

I want you to really focus on the fact that Ruth DID commit to Yahweh...she did commit to the God of Israel, yet her main focus was on a person. Her commitment to that person was a connector to Yahweh.

**UNDERSTAND:** I am not saying we are more faithful and committed to a person than to God...but I am saying that...

1 John 4:20 – “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

Ruth 1:14-18

- 14 **And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.**

**“Clave unto her”** – to hold tight, bone to skin...so tight it hurts

**NOTE:** This is our first hint that we are dealing with covenant is this word. It is the same word used in Genesis 2:24 of a man and wife covenant (first mention).

This was more than just a gesture...it was a binding action.

- 15 **And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.**
- 16 **And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:**

**“Intreat me not to leave thee...or return from following after thee”**

**“leave thee”** – relinquish (put out this fire)

**“following”** – pursue or shadow

***“Where you go I will go”*** – literally we will be together...in person...in fellowship.

**UNDERSTAND:** Too often we think we are committed to each other because we see each other periodically...don't forsake the assembling of yourself.  
Committed to each service...each event.

***“Where you lodge, I will lodge”***

***“lodge”*** – to tarry or take up residence (obviously)

Also brings out to complain, murmur, grudge

The thing I see here is what you don't like...I don't like. What you like...I like! Those who are against you are against me...visa versa!

***“Your people shall be my people”*** – your countrymen are now mine, your family is now mine.

If we can understand this...this way...covenant commitment connects us to one another.

My children are your children...yours mine.

We belong one to another.

***“Thy God my God”*** – this is the center point for all covenant!

Yahweh is now mine!

**BELOVED:** This is the key to this whole thing. Ruth isn't just interested in going to the land that is prospering again...she what Naomi's God! She wants that covenant relationship!

**BELOVED:** Your commitment to one another **MUST** draw each of us deeper into that relationship with God, Himself.

**17** **Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.**

**18** **When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.**

***“Where you die, I will die”*** – commitment even after death!

If you had any question whether this was covenant making..this seals it!

It starts with cleaving...and ends with this statement,

***“The Lord bury me if anything but death parts you and me!”***

## Conclusion

**BELOVED:** Covenant isn't rules...it isn't bondage. It is a gateway to a new life...a prosperous life.

Yet, it is a life of commitment! A life that sticks around even when things are seemingly drying up. As a matter of fact, they grow stronger the more things look dry.

Just like Ruth...her commitment connected her to Boaz and a victorious life!

Your commitment to those whom God has joined you with...is your connector to God's shalom life.