

## 2021.03.28 Sunday Sermon <The Life the Dreams of Heaven>

### **Ruth 1:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> *In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.* <sup>2</sup> *The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and remained there.*

<sup>3</sup> *Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons.* <sup>4</sup> *They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years,* <sup>5</sup> *both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.*

### **I. Introduction to Today's Message**

- What kind of dream are you dreaming of?
- Poster images of *Minari* written and directed by Lee Isaac Chung
  - Film about Korean family arriving to U.S. in 80's to reach the American dream
  - It touched hearts of many first and second generation Korean immigrants
- Immigrants Dream = The American Dream
  - Definition of American dream is the belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society in which upward mobility is possible for everyone.
  - People come to America for the freedom, opportunities, and hoping for better life for their children.
  - When we look at today's scripture, we meet family of Elimelek. Typically, we tend to focus on Ruth and Naomi, but today we will focus on this family

### **II. Understanding the Context and Key Points in Today's Message**

- Three Key Contexts
  - Historical Context
    - **Ruth 1:1a** - *In the days when the judges ruled...*
    - **Judges 21: 25** - *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*
    - As we read today's scripture, it is important to see that there was no king and the judges were the rulers of Israel. The people did not think about the nation but only for themselves.
  - Immediate Context
    - **Ruth 1:1a** - *In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land...*
    - On top of the country having no leadership, there was a famine that made things worse for the people.

- Regional Context
  - Ruth 1:1-2 - *A man of **Bethlehem in Judah** went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.*
  - Bethlehem in Hebrews means "house of bread". However, due to the famine, the house no longer had bread for the people.
- Two Choices for Elimelek
  - Stay at Bethlehem where there is no bread but wait for the Lord's promise? **OR** Leave the promise land look for better opportunities and living conditions?
  - It is important to note that today's message is not about which land is a better land, and compare the options current immigrants face (Korea vs. U.S.).
  - Elimelek forgot about the history and left the promise land the Lord provided. Of all land, he at least should have not selected the country of Moab.
    - Why not the country of Moab?
      - In **Genesis 19**, we read about Lot and his daughters forbidden union. The older daughter's son was Moab.
      - **Deuteronomy 23:3** - *No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord forever.*
    - Elimelek knowing all of the history mentioned above should have not gone to the country of Moab.
  - The meaning of Elimelek's name is "My God is King." Yet, instead of following the meaning of his name and the history of the promise land...he leaves to Moab.
    - **Ruth 1:1b** - *A man of Bethlehem in Judah went to **sojourn** in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.*  
(Sojourn - to temporarily reside)
    - **Ruth 1:2** - *...They went into the country of Moab and **remained** there.*
  - The result of Elimelek's decision leads to death.
    - **Ruth 1:4b-5** - *...They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.*
- Which Path Should We Choose in Life?
  - Which road should we go? There are so many choices for us, our family, and our future. Our wish is to select a good choice or choice that does not lead to failure.
  - Let's look at the images on the screen

- The first image is a painting where the people outside of U.S. sees big American cities, opportunities, and dreams.
- The second image shows our current events where Asians are protesting against hate crimes against all Asians.
- This is not about Korea vs. America. Both countries have troubles of its own. It is important to realize that when we come across two roads, we need to ask ourselves which road does the Lord wants us to take?
  - **Philippians 3:20**  
<sup>20</sup> *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...*
  - **Habakkuk 3:17-18**  
*Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no heard in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.*
- Are we living a nominal life?
  - Are we living in a "House of Bread" without bread?
  - Are we living like Elimeleck and not following the Lord?
  - Are we living a Christless Christian life?
- Christ-Centered Message
  - Elimeleck went after worldly materials and happiness, and went against God's promises and blessings.
  - Yet, our Jesus Christ left the glorious heaven and came to give us true blessings.
  - Always remember, if we gain everything and lose Christ, we gain nothing. But if we lose everything and gain Christ, we gain everything.

### III. Summary of Today's Message

- The famine does not mean God's oblivion. The pain in our lives also does not mean that God has forgotten us.
- **Ruth 1:6** - *When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there.*
- The life of walking with the Lord is the life of true heaven.

*What mat-ters where on earth we dwell?  
 On moun-tain top or in the dell, In cot-tage or a man-sion fair,  
 Where Je-sus is 'tis Heav-en there. O hal-le-lu-jah, yes, 'tis heaven  
 'Tis heaven to know my sins for-given; On land or sea, what mat-ters where?  
 Where Je-sus is, 'tis Heav-en there.*