

LIVING BEYOND OUR COMFORT ZONE

Text: Ruth 1:16-17

Key Word: Comfort

Key Thought: God Allows Conditions in Our Lives to Cause Us to Grow

There comes a time in all our lives when we are confronted with having to make a big decision. Quite often it means letting go of someone or something you love. It may also mean being uprooted from a fairly stable situation.

Ruth was a Moabite woman. Her mother-in-law (Naomi) was an Ephrathite who had previously lived around Bethlehem. Due to a severe famine, Naomi along with her husband and two sons had traveled the King's highway to the land of Moab. Through a series of events and time Naomi lost both her husband & sons.

It seems more and more that people are placed into situations when they must live beyond their comfort zone. It's a time when you really begin to understand whom you are and what keeps you going in life. It's a time of testing. It's during these times that you begin to understand what faith is all about.

There is a world of opportunity before all of us. Some of it will be good and wholesome while the other will carry a high price of pain and sorrow. It's like the roads that Jesus spoke about.

*"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it.
14. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it."*

Matthew 7:13,14

God therefore wants us to live outside of the comfort zones of our lives. The comfort zone is where most of the world is and it will lead to destruction. It may appear more exciting and with greater rewards but it comes with a high price tag. There are at least three things that we need to conquer in life to become successful in God's eyes. We must be willing to live outside the comfort zone.

I. LIVE BEYOND THE GLAMOUR SET
II. LIVE BEYOND A LIFE OF SECURITY
III. LIVE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF TIME

I. LIVE BEYOND THE GLAMOUR SET

We all have been bombarded with glamour. Our store shelves are filled with books promoting the perfect body, hair style, clothes, homes, cars etc. It's been called the "American Dream" which has now become the "Canadian Dream."

Our teens are under a tremendous stress to look good. Zits are out - cover up any blemishes you may have. We live in an airbrush society where the oddball is out.

When I attended elementary school, it was similar in many ways. I noticed how certain people avoided me because I had a limp.

Some of my friends were mocked because they wore thick glasses. Some were despised because of physical or mental handicaps.

I often had to stand against the flow with its vile mockery. Lets face it bullying is not something new. I became a bully myself once I felt I was part of the 'in-crowd.'

If Jesus stood amongst us today He would be able to identify with those who cannot walk the glamorous path. God could have chosen to be beautiful like David's son Absalom,

"In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him."

II Samuel 14:25

Absalom's beauty became a foothold for pride to develop. He usurped the authority of king David and tried to place himself on the throne. As you read the story of Absalom, you clearly see a man that thought that glamour and acceptance was the key to success. **His words were smooth but carried with them a deep conspiracy.** He undermined his father David.

He said,

"If only I were judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice."

II Samuel 15:4

I. LIVE BEYOND THE GLAMOUR SET (Contd.)

Scripture goes on to tell us . . .

"Absalom behaved in this way toward all of the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

II Samuel 15:6

Everything eventually backfired on the glamorous prince. He paid a high price for his trust in beauty. The Bible says that he had his hair cut when it became too heavy and it weighed about 5 pounds. That's a lot of hair! **But his hair (which became the focal point of his glamour) was the thing that caused his death.**

The day of reckoning came when David's men led by Joab attacked the army of Absalom. The young prince was riding upon a donkey when his head of hair became caught in the thick branches of an oak tree (II Samuel 18:9). He hung there waiting his fate. Joab along with 10 men struck and killed Absalom. Absalom had no son to carry on his name. **He built a monument in the King's Valley that in time collapsed but the word of his deceit carried on.**

It was glamour that led to pride, that finally destroyed Absalom. He walked the broad way that led to death.

Jesus could have chosen to be glamorous but Isaiah tells us He didn't fall for that trap.

"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."

Isaiah 53:2

II. LIVE BEYOND A LIFE OF SECURITY

The second trap that can lead to major trouble is also found in our comfort zone. Many people strive to live for a life of security. We look for a good education, job, home, car wife/husband and children. These things in themselves are not wrong. Yet they have become a major stumbling block for God's will in many people's lives.

When Jesus began His earthly ministry He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. It was about 4:00 p.m. when it happened (John 1:38). Some of John's disciples wanted to follow Jesus and asked,

II. LIVE BEYOND A LIFE OF SECURITY (Contd.)

"Rabbi, (which means teacher), 'Where are you staying?'"

John 1:38

"Come," he replied "and you will see."

John 1:39

Scriptures do not indicate where they went but it's clear that it wasn't an elaborate house.

After entering into ministry and performing miracles large crowds followed Jesus and some of them got caught up in the excitement thought it would be great to walk with Jesus.

They said,

*"Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."
20. Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

Matthew 8:19,20

The followers of the hyper prosperity doctrine often bypass Scriptures like this and become unbalanced in their walk. God may choose to give you these things but don't make the mistake of finding security in things.

The Psalmist offers us some excellent council to keep us from trusting in these things.

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the name of the LORD our God."

Psalms 20:7

Where Do We Find Security Today?

*** During a flood in the hill country of Texas in 1978, there was a lady who needlessly lost her life. Her daughters told the reporter,

"My mother did not climb the tree with us. She lost her way before we got to the tree. See, she always kept every bill and slip and stuff. She would not let go of her purse with those papers in it."
(Contd.)

II. LIVE BEYOND A LIFE OF SECURITY (Contd.)

The family had joined their hands together to make a life chain. By doing so they made it to the safety of the tree. But the mother had her insurance policy papers in her hands and wouldn't drop them to hold on to her family. She was swept away by the gushing current of the water. ***

Ruth could have chosen to stay in her security of Moab but instead she joined with her mother-in-law on the road to Bethlehem. The flood waters had overtaken her life, and so she reached out and placed her hand in someone who could offer security. It's interesting that Naomi could not see the blessings she had in God while Ruth could.

"But Ruth replied, 'Don't urge me to leave you, or turn back to you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God my God.'"

Ruth 1:16

They headed back to Bethlehem, the place of the birth of our LORD. That's where security begins and Ruth was determined to get there. God rewarded her for her act of faith.

Boaz, became her kinsman redeemer by marrying her and offering her a rich inheritance. They had a child that they named Obed (*"servant"*) who became the father of Jesse who was the father of David.

Ruth was used to carry on the royal lineage of Jesus Christ. Now that's security!!!

III. LIVE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF TIME

I realize that time is very important for all of us. Few people walk about without a watch. We are a very time conscious society. I try my best to be on time or ahead of time.

Time consciousness is something that has grown as nations developed their culture. We've progressed beyond the limits of the sunrise/sunset phases of the moon into years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes and fractions of a minute.

During the 2016 Summer Olympic games in Rio de Janeiro (Aug 5-21/16) the competitors in various swimming activities are striving to beat the clock. Often they lose by just 100's of a second. All of their intense training and bitter discipline is awarded in a moment as the time keepers record the finishing times. A momentary change is all that keeps some from them from the winner's podium.

III. LIVE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF TIME (Contd.)

Time is a hard task master.

"Americans have more time saving devices and less time than any other people in the world."

"A committee usually keeps minutes and wastes hours."

"No wonder time flies. Have you ever noticed how many people are trying to kill it?"

It took 10 years in the life of Naomi to bring her to the point that she felt bitter. She probably questioned God about the famine in Judah that forced her family to Moab which in 10 years saw the death of her husband and two sons. Time became a bitter enemy which only seemed to bring affliction and misfortune. She had to learn that God uses a different time table than we do.

1. Abraham waited 15 years before traveling to the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:1-5; Acts 7:2).
2. Joseph spent many of his late teenage years in an Egyptian prison until Pharaoh released him (Genesis 39-41).
3. The children of Israel stayed for 430 years in Egypt before the Exodus (Exodus 12:40).
4. The children of Israel spend 40 years in the Sinai wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2).
5. "The Lord blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the first" (Job 42:12).
6. There were 400 years silence between the Old Testament and New Testament.
7. God put Paul into Arabia for three years to prepare him as the greatest spokesman and writer of the New Testament (Galatians 1:17,18)
8. Why has God waited almost 2000 years to return for His Church?

III. LIVE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF TIME (Contd.)

Don't put time limits on God. He always chooses the right time to act. Don't try to determine the boundaries of time that He has placed into your future. Simply trust Him to do what is right. You may find it comforting to set time limits on goals in your future. BUT don't become bound to goals if circumstances prove your timing to be wrong.

In time, Ruth received her reward which was well beyond anything she could have imagined. Our Father knows best.

There is a G.S.T. that we must all conquer . . .

Live Beyond the GLAMOUR Set
Live Beyond the Life of SECURITY
Live Beyond the Limits of TIME

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Date: Sept 18/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Lord Be Glorified (In My Life Lord) - D

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II Samuel 14:25; II Samuel 15:4; II Samuel 15:6; II Samuel 18:9; Isaiah 53:2

II. LIVE BEYOND A LIFE OF SECURITY

John 1:38; John 1:38; John 1:39; Matthew 8:19,20; Psalm 20:7; Ruth 1:16

III. LIVE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF TIME

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