

Hear God's word and understand it. Rom. Mat.13. Ruth 1. 7/12/26

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. Amen.

Thank you Rev Sandi for inviting a fellow retired priest to share from the pulpit today, (I last preached from the pulpit 8 years ago) and to the congregation for the warm welcome to strangers.

When I got the readings for this Sunday service two things jumped up for me. When that happens I need to pay attention. Its a warning sign.

The Epistle: The flesh (human nature) does not submit to God's law.

The flesh cannot please God. X2

**Those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit and have life and peace*

The Gospel: the one who hears the word and understands it X2

**is like a seed that fell on good soil bears fruit and a good yield.*

In order to understand God's word I need to ask myself three questions:

What does it say?

Facts

What does it mean?

Meditation/chewing the cud

How does it apply in my daily life? Application/putting it to use in the daily challenges of life.

Our conference theme is, "heroes of faith, in the bible, were migrants/immigrants who trusted God, so can we."

There are 66 books that make up the Bible. Only two are named after women, Ruth from Moab, now Jordan, a descendent of Lot who slept with his oldest daughter when he was drunk. The other is Esther, an orphan Jewish girl forced to marry the king of Persia.

The book of Ruth is not on what Naomi and Ruth did but how the hidden hand of God led them in ways they never imagined.

Naomi and Ruth understood God's law and applied it over things they had no control over.

What happened to Naomi and Ruth still happens to us.

1) No control over the moral, spiritual, political, economical state in the country. V1

It was in the days the judges ruled. A pointer to the last verse in Judges 21:25: "In those days Israel had no king, everyone did as he saw fit."

They were not the first nor the last to live as they pleased:

Before the flood, Gen 6:5 "their hearts were inclined to live as they liked."

Sodom and Gomorrah- "everyone lived as they liked."

In the Exodus. Deut 12:8 "They rebelled against God and lived as they liked."

When Israel settled in the promised land, "everyone lived as they saw fit."

Naomi and Ruth believed God's law and practiced it when everyone lived as they pleased. May we learn from them.

2) No control over the drought/natural disasters. V1

Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and his sons, Elijah, the prophet were migrants/ immigrants in Egypt and Palestine where they found shelter and food.

They too like Naomi and Elimelech trusted God to protect them where they could become easy targets.

3) No control over death. V3 and 5

V3 Elimelech died. V5 both Mahlon and Kilion died.

Abel died young, murdered by his older brother Cain, Methuselah lived for 969 years and he too died.

Death happens to everyone regardless of age, color, social or economical standing.

God said to Adam and Eve, after they sinned, "since from the ground you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you will return."

The death of Elimelech and his sons left three childless widows, without identity and means of survival.

Naomi and Ruth were not afraid to go back to Bethlehem because they felt led by God's hidden hand.

4) No control over pregnancy. V4

Ruth and Orpah were married for ten years before their husbands died and none became pregnant.

Sarah, the mother of Isaac, Rebeca, the mother of Jacob, Hannah, the mother of Samuel and Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist were barren until God enabled them to bear sons who fulfilled God's purposes.

When Ruth eventually married Boaz, a kinsman redeemer of her dead husband she had a son, Obed who became the father of Jesse, the father of king David.

Ruth, a childless widow and migrant from Moab believed and applied God's law is one of the four women mentioned in the gospel of Matthew and Luke as ancestors of king David and Jesus Christ.

5) No control over outcome of the choices we make.

Elimeleck and Naomi chose to move to Moab to survive the drought but unknown to them the husband and sons died there.

Ruth and Orpah married Mahlon and Kilion, migrants from Bethlehem, lived together for ten years and none became pregnant before they died.

While Naomi and Ruth had no control over the outcome of their choices they believed and practiced God's law that gave them hope.

In things that we have no control over may we learn from Naomi and Ruth in their understanding of God's law:

What does it say?

What does it mean?

How does it apply when the worst happens?

In the prayer after communion we say,

"You have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son,

You have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.

Send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to serve you with gladness and singleness of heart."

What do these words say?

What do they mean?

How do they apply in our daily lives?

Amen