

Ruth 1:19b-22

The excited people of Bethlehem—1:19b (after 10+ years absence—cf. 1:4)

- 1) Generally—*the whole* (walled) *city was stirred* (abuzz) *because of them*.
 - a) Imagine the unsettledness in their hearts when they see these two women walk into town alone. They remember when Naomi left with her husband and two sons.
“Where is her husband, and where are her sons? And who is this with her now?”
 - b) Cf. 2:11; 3:11 (small town news)
- 2) Specifically—*And the women said* (to one another), “*Is this* (really) *Naomi?*”

Naomi the theologian—1:20-21 (the key portion of this paragraph)

- 1) Naomi’s theological response part 1—1:20
 - “*Do not call me ‘Naomi’* (pleasant); *call me ‘Mara’* (bitter)
 - *because very **bitterly** [marar]* (emphatic) *the Almighty (Shaddai) has dealt with me*. (cf. 1:13)
 - a) She is accurate—she views Shaddai as being sovereign
 - b) She is inaccurate—she views herself as a special object of God’s wrath
- 2) Naomi’s theological response part 2—1:21
 - ²¹ **Full** (emphatic; i.e. with a husband and 2 sons) *was I when I left here*,
 - **but empty** (emphatic; i.e. no husband or sons) *Yahweh has caused me to return*.
 - *Why do you^{pl} call me ‘Naomi,’* (note the legal language she uses)
 - The Witness—*seeing that Yahweh has testified against me*,
 - The Judge—*and the Almighty (Shaddai) has brought disaster to me?*
 - a) She is accurate
 - i) She views Yahweh as being sovereign
 - ii) She views herself as being vulnerable (financially and legally) and dependent
 - b) She is inaccurate
 - i) She struggles with viewing Yahweh/Shaddai as her enemy and not her ally
 - ii) She struggles with the loss of her roles as wife and mother
 - iii) She struggles with appreciating Ruth’s devotion
 - Perhaps Ruth is thinking, “Empty, huh? Uh, thanks?! Hello! I’m standing right here!” (cf. 4:15)

The narrator’s summary—1:22

- 1) The summary—cf. 1:1-6
- 2) The setting—... *at the beginning of barley harvest*. (mid-to-late April)
 - a) This serves to set the stage for the harvest/gleaning theme in chapters 2-3.
 - i) Cf. 2:2, 3, 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23
- 3) Question: Will the needs of these two widows be met?

Questions:

- Should we treat people the way they ask us to?
 - How many people in the rest of the book refer to Naomi as “Mara”?
- Do you know someone who feels rejected by God?
 - How can you respond to them in practical, Christlike, self-sacrificing love, even if it may go unappreciated?