



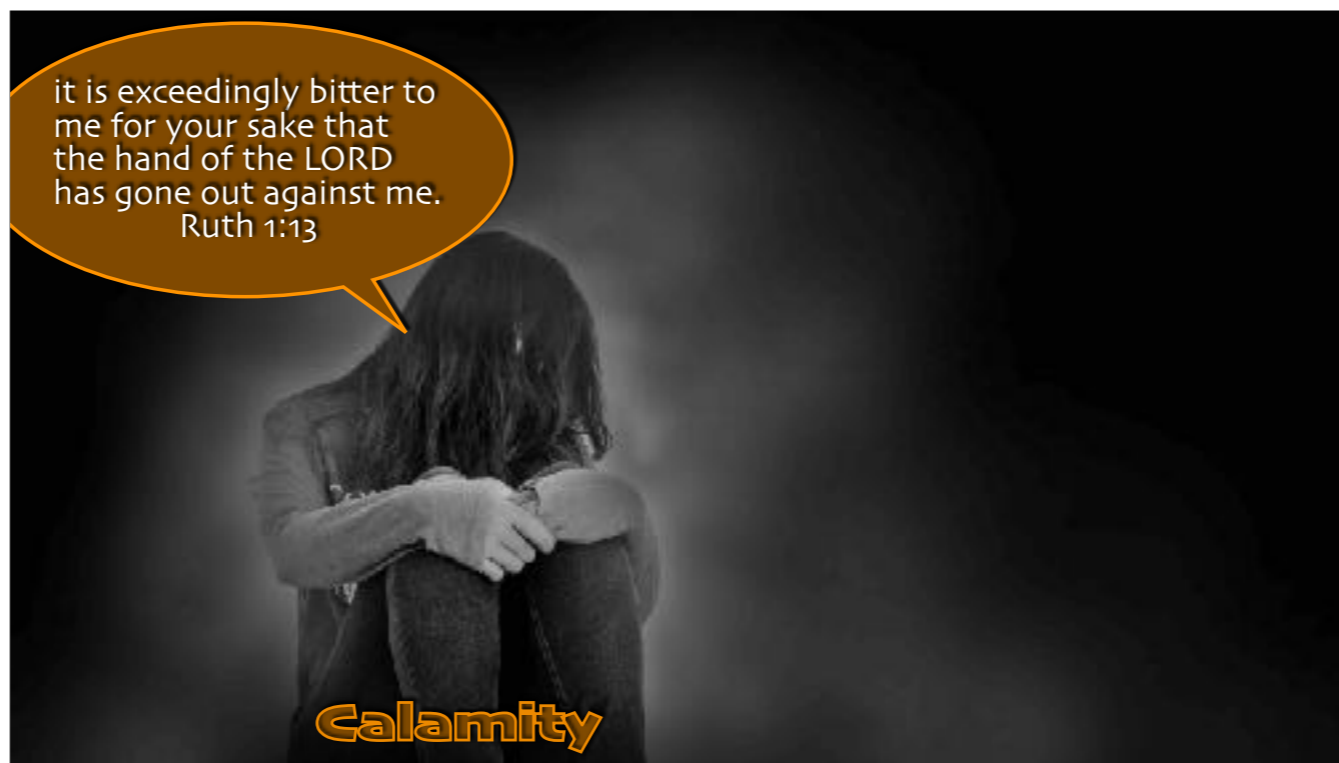
Calamity

Naomi / Mara

Ruth 1:21



- Ruth 1:13 — would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”
- Ruth 1:20-21 — She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”



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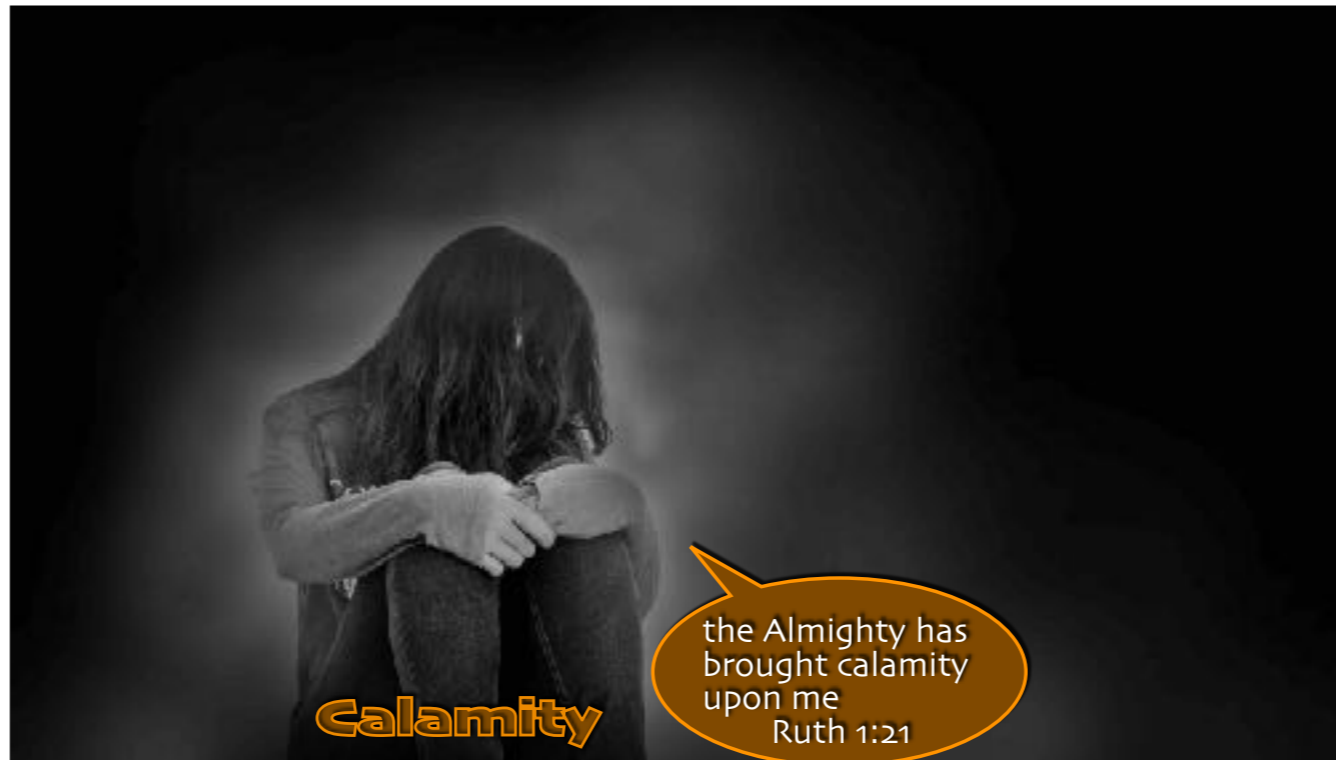
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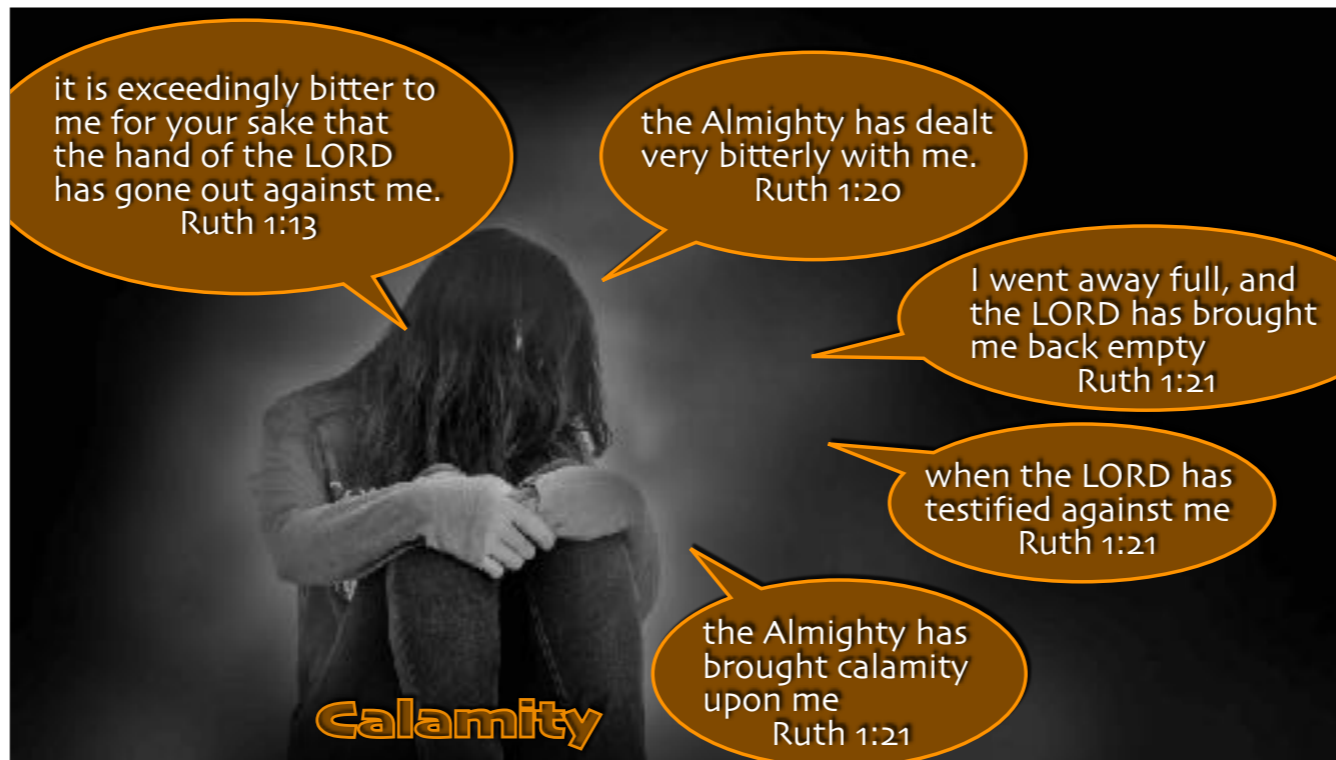
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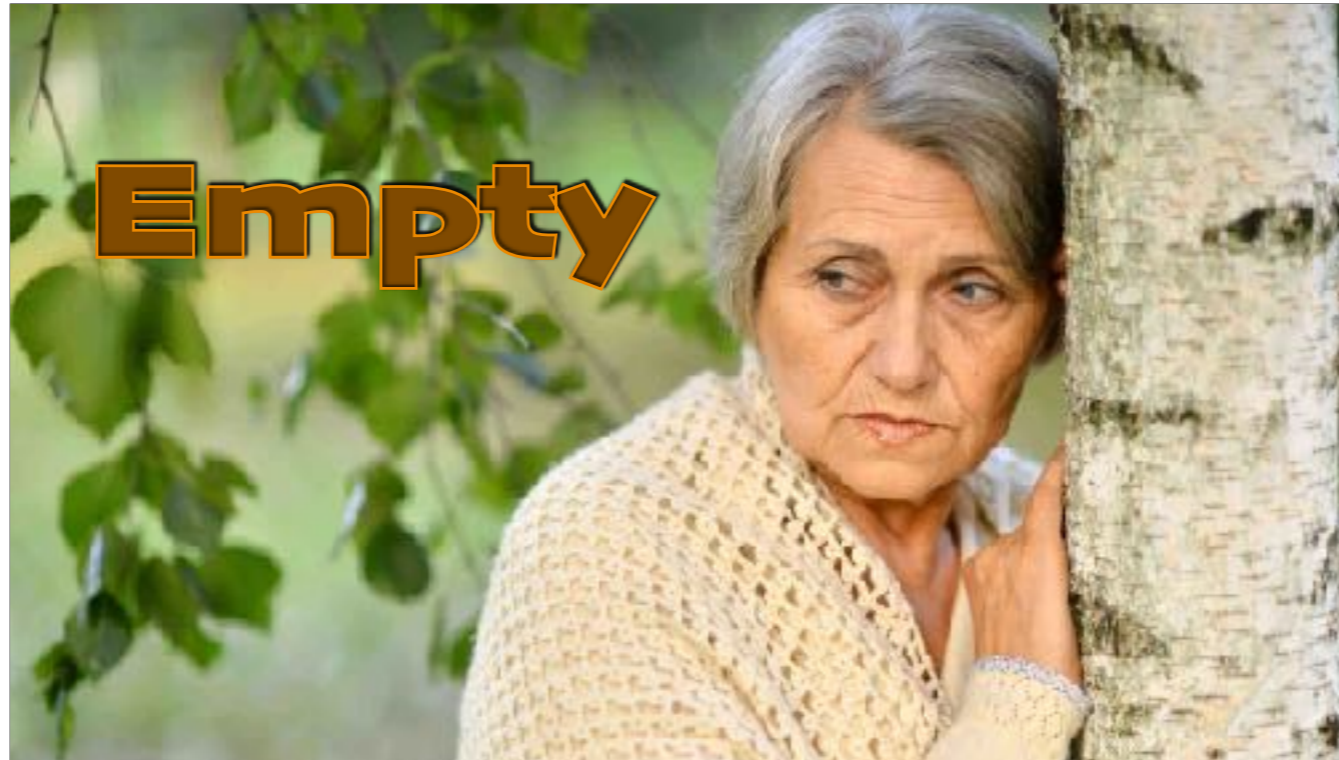
- Why did Naomi think that Jehovah was against her?
- Time of this event ... Judges, but nothing specific?
 - Everyone did what was right in their own eyes



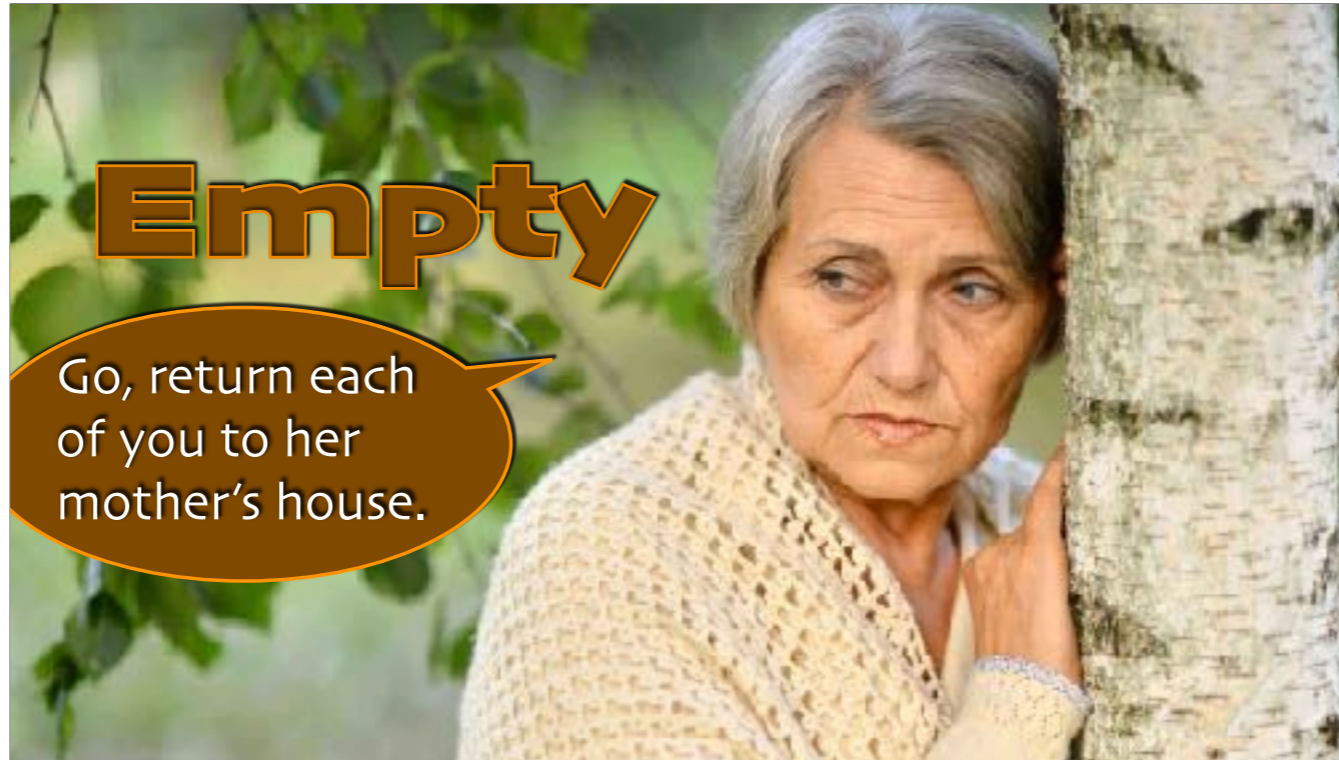
- Ruth 1:1 — In the days when the judges ruled there was a **famine** in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.
 - Why famine?
 - Usually famine happened as a result of God’s judgment for their idolatry
 - Amos 4:6 (ESV) 6 “I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places, yet you did not return to me,” declares the LORD.



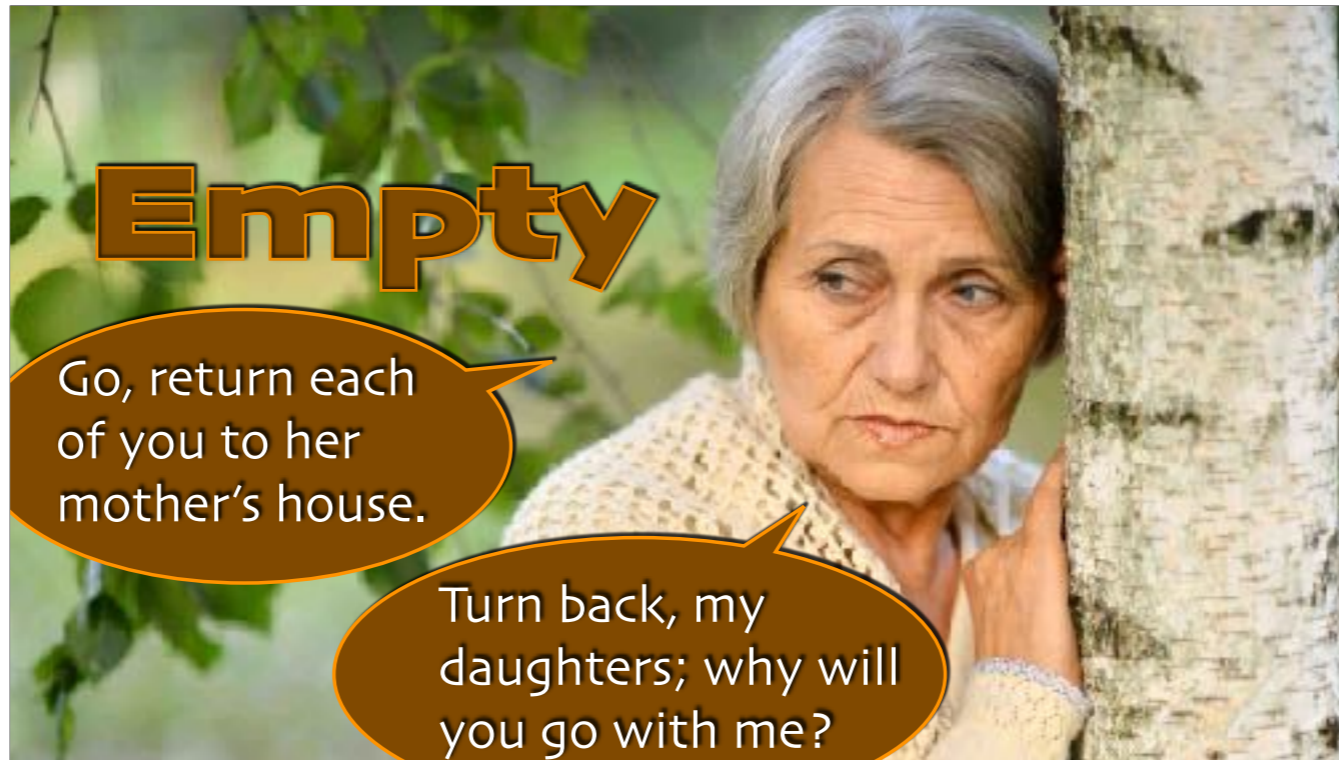
- Was the idolatry of Israel worse than the idolatry of Moab?
- Husband, two sons
 - She had said she left Bethlehem full
 - Not about an abundance of food, or things
 - But family
 - Does full = blessed?
 - Note how women see having children
 - Hannah
 - 1 Samuel 1:20 And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."



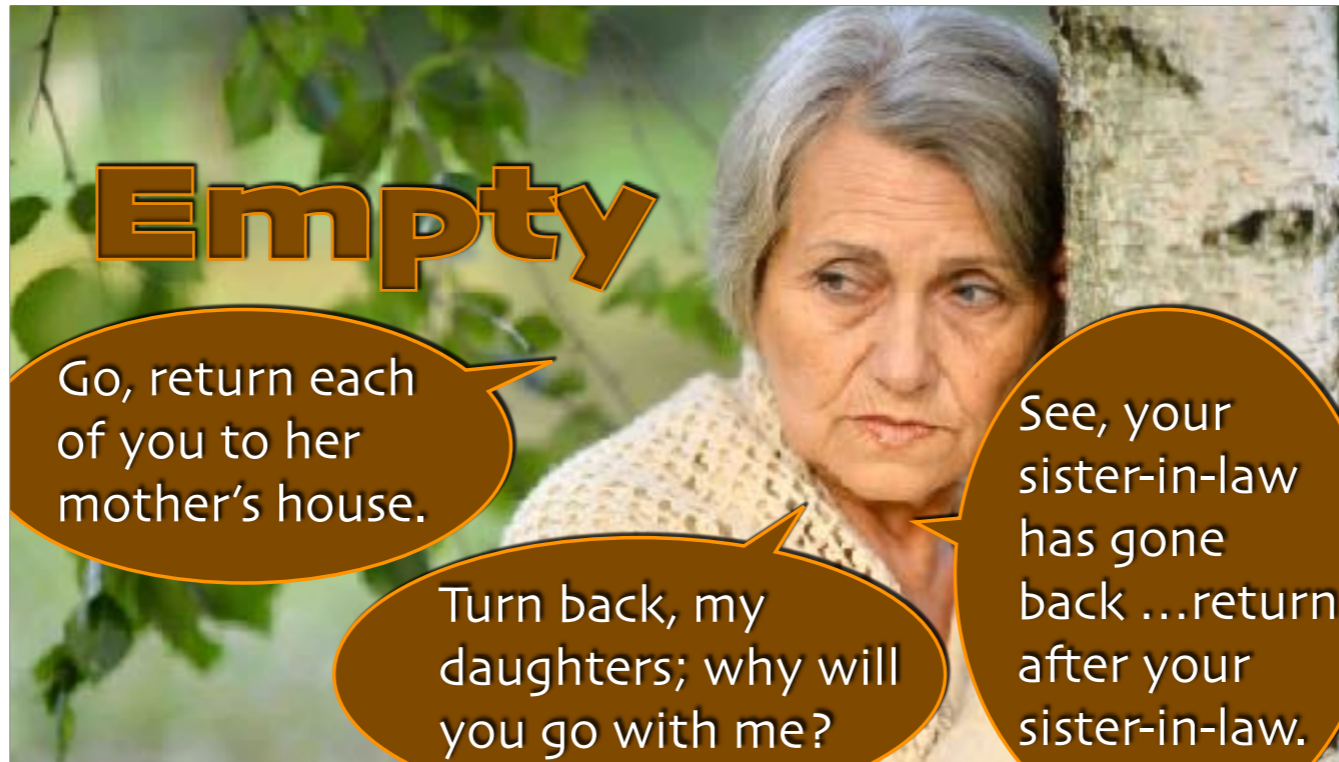
- Empty — 10 Years
 - Famine
 - Leave home
 - Moab
 - Death of husband
 - Marriage of sons (but to Moabite women ... so?)
 - Death of sons



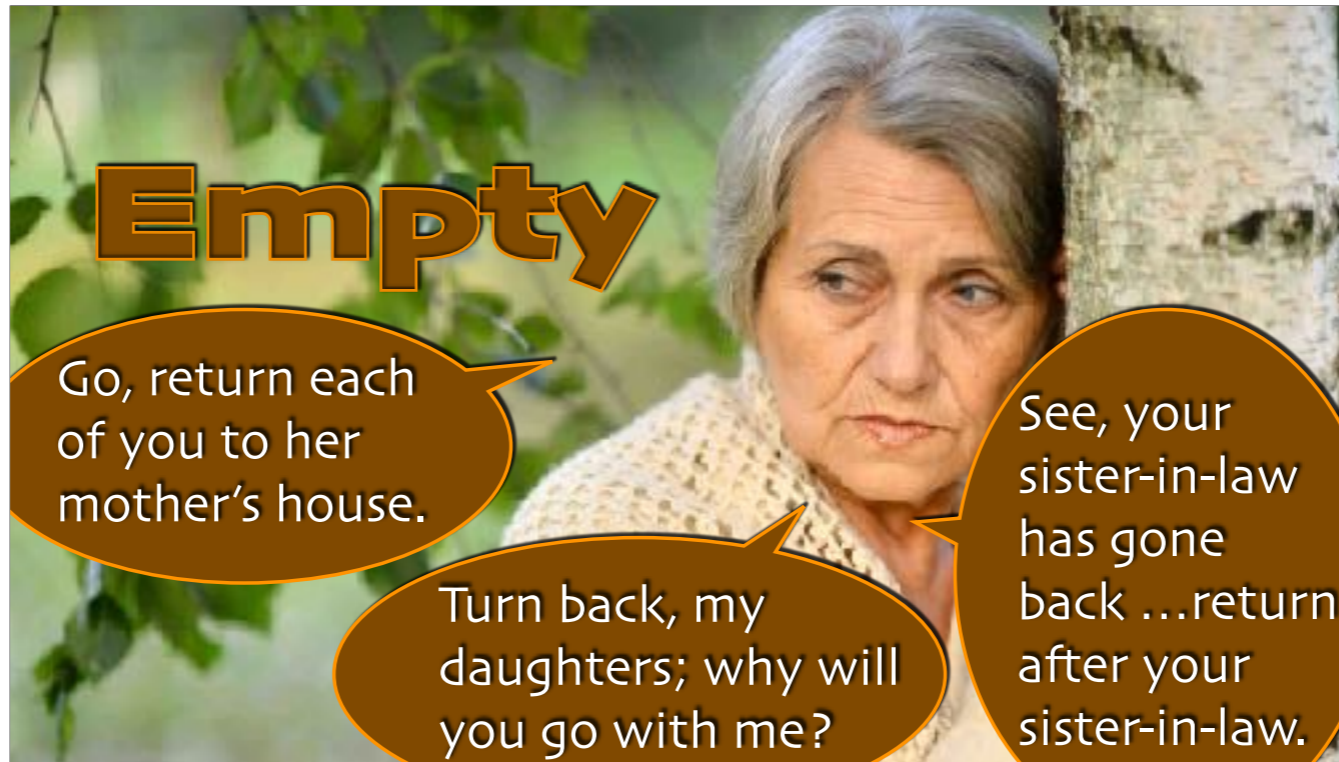
- How does Naomi see her self and her life
 - Widowed, alone
 - But she has her Daughter in laws: Ruth 1:8-18
 - 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,
 - "Go, return each of you to her mother's house.
 - May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!"
 - Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.
 - 10 And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."



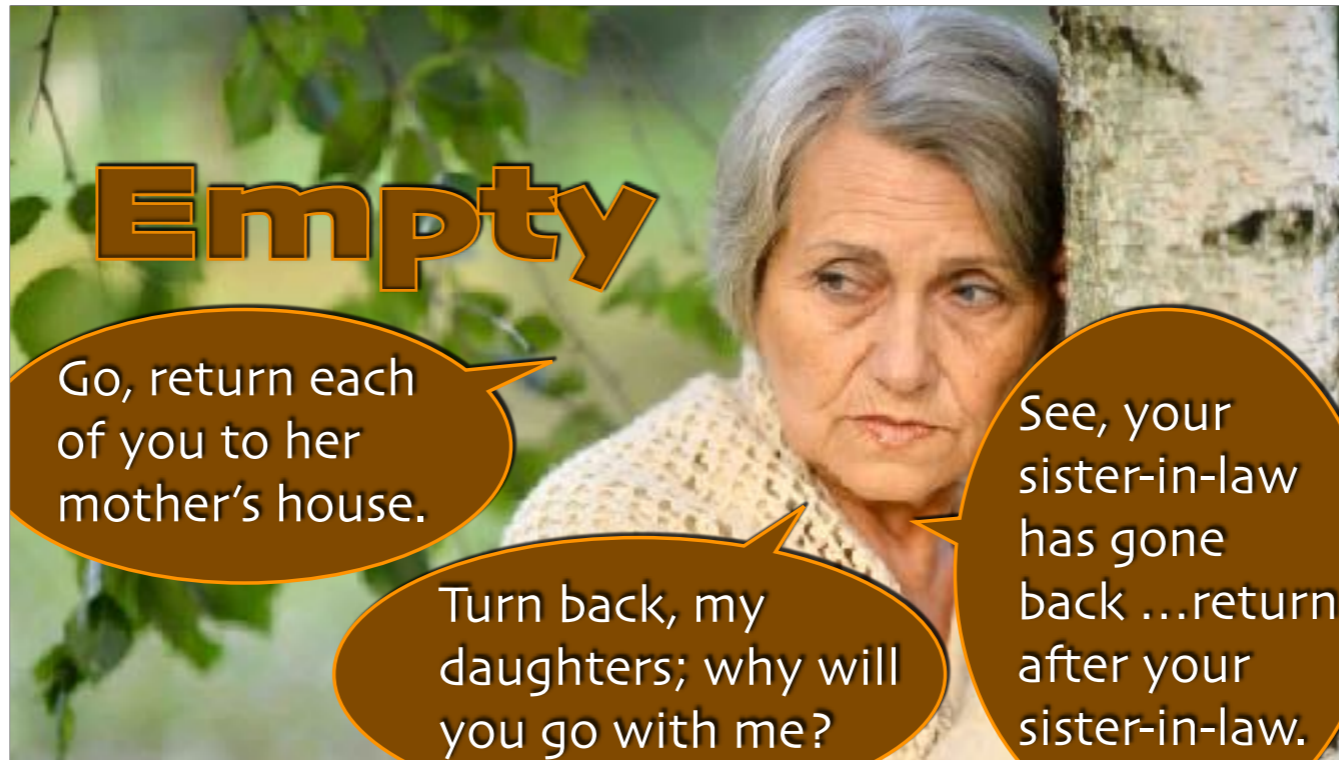
- 11 But Naomi said,
 - “Turn back, my daughters; **why will you go with me?**
 - Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?
 - 12 Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband.
 - If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait till they were grown?
 - Would you therefore refrain from marrying?
 - No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”



- 14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again.
- And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
- 15 And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."



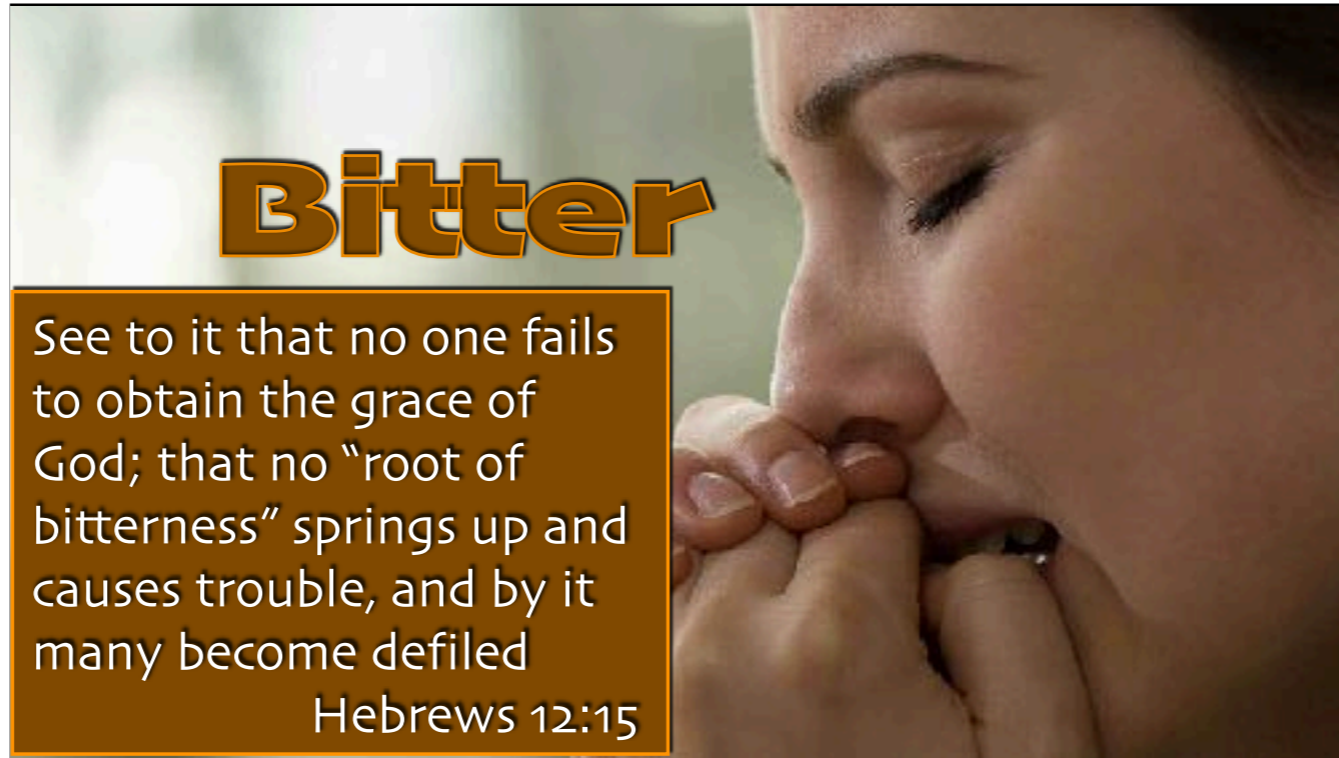
- 16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."
- 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.



- Do you have compassion for Naomi?
 - Or do you struggle with her bitterness?
 - Grief from loss of husband and sons is real and powerful
 - No grandchildren?
 - Time in Moab was a failure.



- Can one be bitter and still have faith in Jehovah, the Almighty?
- We expect that God will bless us
 - And if we feel that we aren't blessed, it's easy to blame God
 - Or be bitter in the sense of being angry at God, accusing
 - Unrealized expectations often lead to frustration, disappointment, eventually anger
 - What did Naomi and her family expect in Moab?



- The Danger of Being Bitter

- Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;



Bitter

Let all bitterness and
wrath and anger and
clamor and slander be
put away from you,
along with all malice.
Ephesians 4:31

- Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.



- Is Naomi's bitterness a lament or a complaint against Jehovah?
 - Honestly, it's hard to tell. We don't know.
 - Seeing it as a complaint is easy ... and consequences are dire.
 - Resentment and dissatisfaction with Jehovah
 - Talks negatively about Jehovah, only one perspective



- But lament is more difficult, and maybe more accurate because of statements Naomi make that reveal her faith in the Almighty. (We'll see later)
 - A lament recognizes what happened, and expresses grief, sadness, pain
 - Talks with Jehovah, seeks understanding



- How do we help someone who is bitter?
 - Sometimes we think that we should pump them up with positivity
 - Walk on the sunny side of the street.
 - Count your blessings
 - There's a time to grieve, but you need to move on
 - We miss the old you.
 - But that often fails because they are struggling to see any blessings, and it's raining.
 - What blessings they know don't compare to the struggles they face.



- Ruth helps with this.

- Ruth 1:16-18 — 16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.



- Often use as a romantic sentiment for weddings, so we miss what Ruth is doing here
- Sometimes we speak of it as loyalty, or devotion, or steadfast love: all true
- More basic: I'm not going to leave you alone.
 - You may feel alone and abandoned.
 - But I'm going to be here with you no matter what.



- Hebrews 12:12-13 —
 - Therefore lift your drooping hands and
 - strengthen your weak knees,
 - and make straight paths for your feet,
 - so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.
- Ruth was constantly doing this for Naomi



- Indications of Naomi's faith
 - Ruth 1:8 — May the LORD deal kindly with you
 - Ruth 1:9 — The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!
 - Ruth 1:11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?"
 - Ruth 2:20
 - And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!"
 - Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."
 - Ruth 4:14-15 — 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD,
 - who has not left you this day without a redeemer,
 - and may his name be renowned in Israel!
 - 15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and
 - a nourisher of your old age,
 - for your daughter-in-law who loves you,
 - who is more to you than seven sons,
 - has given birth to him."
- Naomi was bitter ... but she did not abandon her God
- Faith
 - How do I have faith in Jehovah in the midst of various struggles
 - How do I cope with the emotions that struggles engender.

- Consider David's Instruction in Psalm 40
 - David's Struggle
 - 2: pit of destruction; miry bog
 - 12: evils encompassed beyond number
 - 12: iniquities overtaken
 - 12: heart fails me
 - 14: those who delight in my hurt
 - 17: poor and needy
 - David's Actions
 - 1: waited patiently
 - 1: my cry
 - 13: be pleased to deliver me
 - 13: make haste to help me
 - 17: do not delay
 - 4: makes Jehovah his trust
 - 8: I delight to do your will, your law is within my heart
 - 16: seek you
 - Jehovah
 - 5: multiplied wondrous deeds
 - 5: your thoughts toward us
 - 6: open ear
 - 9: deliverance — to congregation
 - 10: deliverance — within my heart
 - 10: faithfulness (2X); 11: faithfulness
 - 10: salvation
 - 10, 11: steadfast love
 - 11: mercy
 - 11: preserve
 - 17: my help
 - 17: my deliverer
 - 17: my God
- Hope: Lamentations 3:19-27 (ESV)
 - 19 Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!
 - 20 My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me.
 - 21 But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:
 - 22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;
 - 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
 - 24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."
 - 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.
 - 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

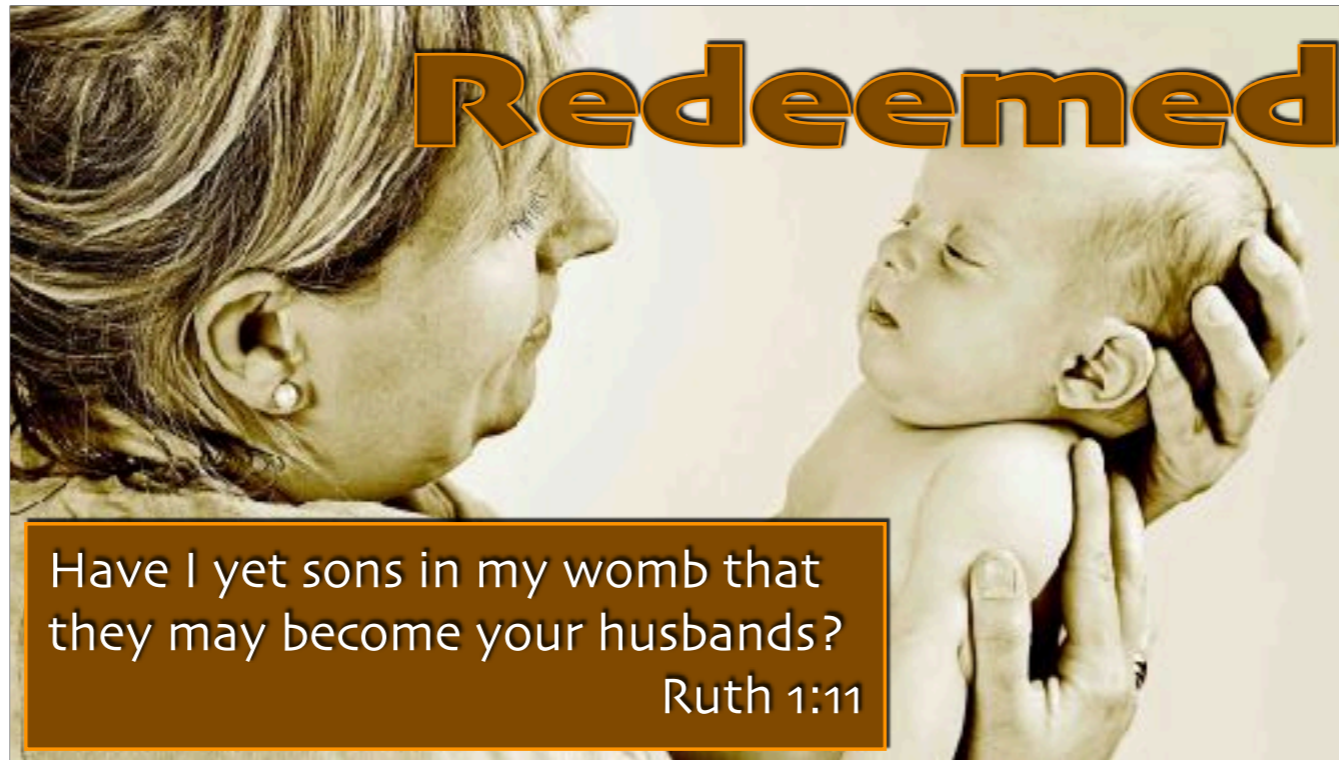
- 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.



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- Ruth 2:20

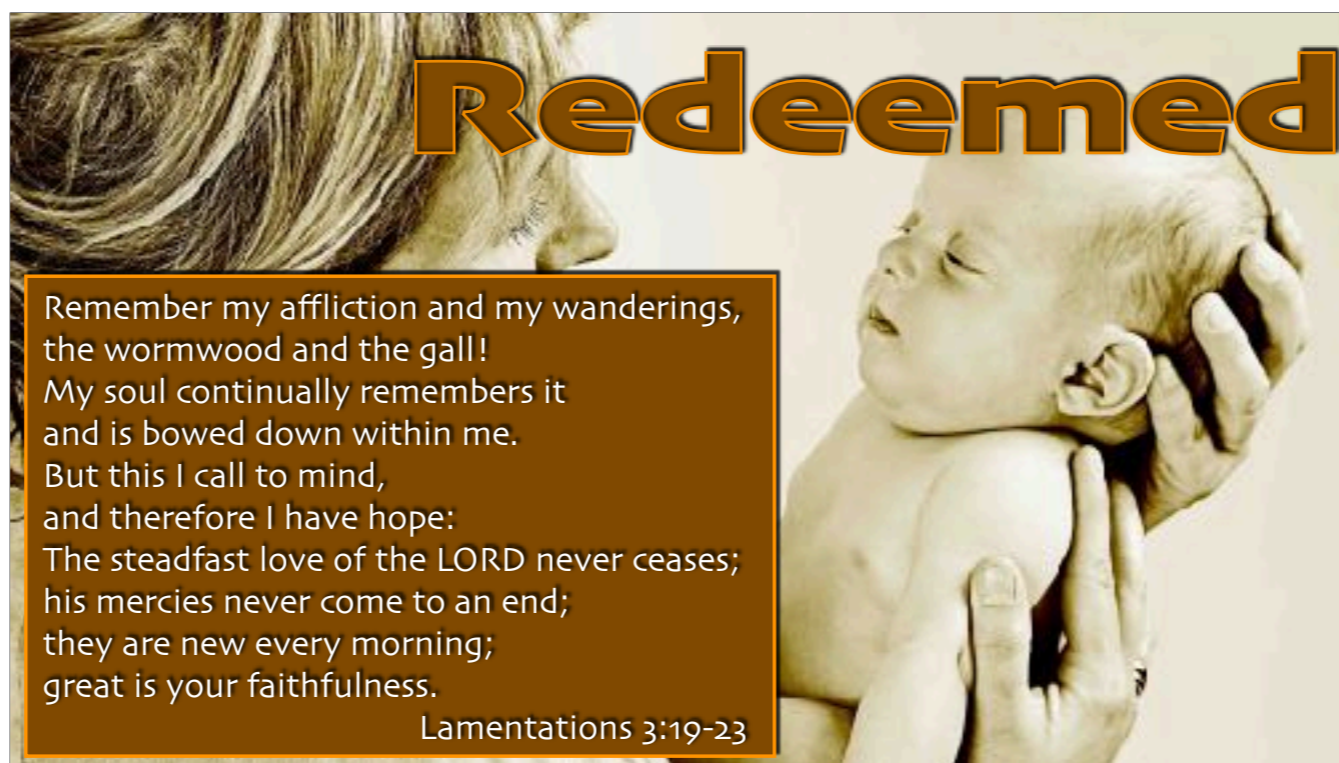
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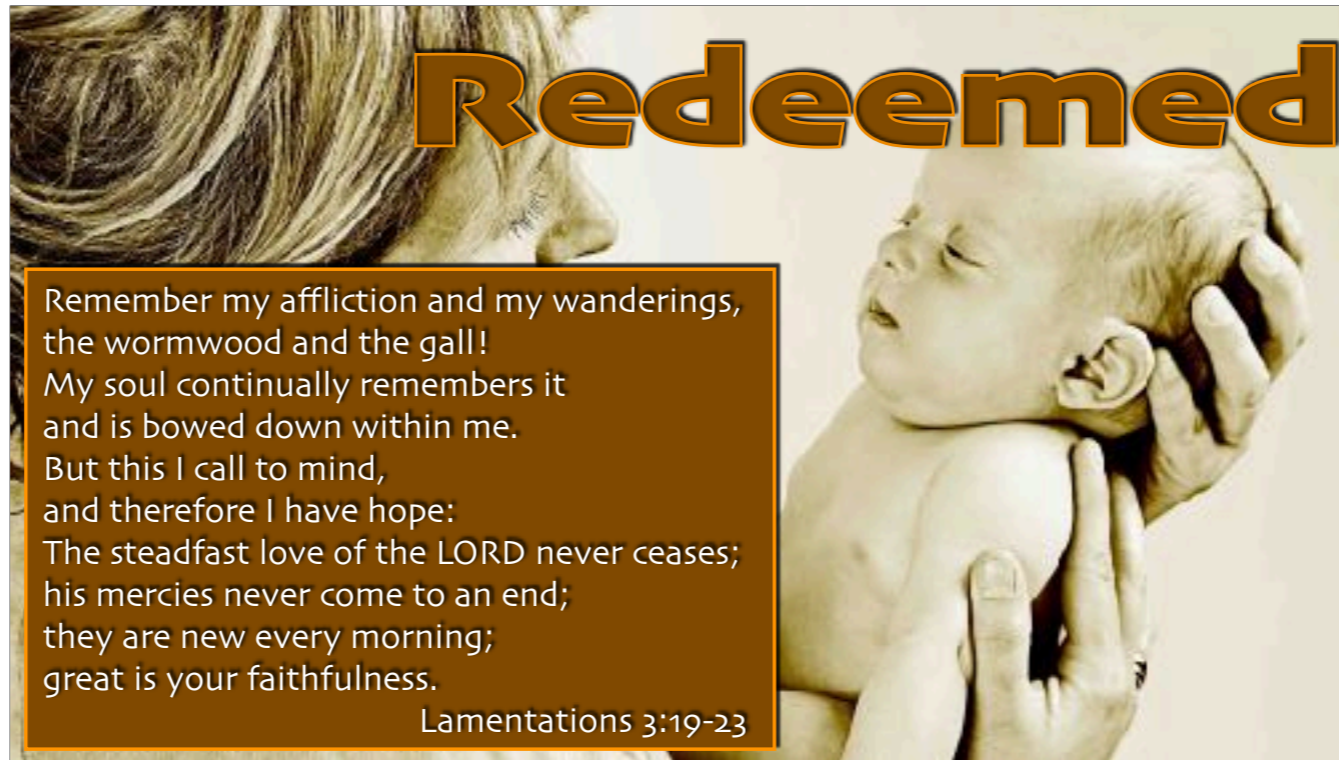
- Ruth 2:20: Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.”



- Naomi was bitter ... but she did not abandon her God
 - She blessed others through him.
 - She saw his kindness
 - She followed his law
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- 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.



- What does Naomi teach us?
- Sometimes our lives are very difficult.
- We must beware of bitterness that turns us away from God
 - There may be times when we think Jehovah is against us



- But we must always be willing to see the reality of our situation and talk with Jehovah about it.
- And when we are hurting, grieving, heart has failed: cry out to Jehovah
 - You are not alone
 - Jehovah
 - Brethren
 - Someone like Ruth
- Trust in God and Wait for Him — Hope



- Naomi was the great great grand mother of David
- And through David eventually comes Jesus
- And through Jesus we all have hope
 - Sin separates us from our God
 - Jesus is the way to the Father.
 - Do you believe?

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

Call to Action

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Calamity: Naomi/Mara

Ruth 1:21

Synopsis: Naomi who described herself as bitter. Her grief was great, but she did not abandon her faith in Jehovah. Naomi reminds us that even in our struggles we can still see the kindness of Jehovah and hope in him. Ultimately, that hope is in Jesus who redeems us from our sins and returns us to our relationship with our God.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”