

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Proper 23 - Ruth 1:1-19a

October 13, 2019

Avoid mindless living!

Live in Yahweh's stunning faithful love and care.

- Ruth - seems *made for a movie*. The setting, the journey, 3 women and their circumstances, their dialog and bond forged in life & tragedy
- A healthy tension between the text and the unspoken lives lived
 - ♦ *Only the text* ignores the real layers of their shared experiences
 - it's shallow, just facts, lacks empathy - their life vs. my life
 - ♦ *Unbridled speculation*: interesting, extrabiblical can become unbiblical
 - ♦ The text reveals Yahweh's work in the lives of these 3 women.
 - ♦ Wonder *how* just enough to see real life - his work in our daily lives.
 - avoid remote, mindless, detached view of this account
 - It's clear. Naomi wants Orpah & Ruth to avoid mindless living.

Avoid mindless living!

Live in Yahweh's stunning faithful love and care.

- ❖ Consider the background and setting leading us to this dialogue.
 - Elimelek's conflict: leaving his inheritance vs. feeding his family
 - ♦ *temporary* - hints: expects Yahweh's grace to return
 - Mahlon and Kilion - marriage to Moabite women
 - ♦ Would Elimelek approve? Did Naomi approve or even encourage?
 - ♦ Did they act wisely or impetuously? Considering God's word?
 - ♦ Had they let their light shine, drawing Orpah & Ruth to their family?
 - Were these women drawn to Naomi, family dynamics, or Yahweh?
 - ♦ Realize: the god of Moab: Chemosh - *destroyer, subdoer*
 - Known for his wrath, bloodthirsty demand of human sacrifices
 - Women and children given low value in this culture.
 - 10 years of family dynamics among 5 people - real people - real lives
- ❖ *Orpah and Naomi, avoid mindless living. Carefully consider your future.*
 - Elimelek and Naomi made a choice to live in a strange culture.
 - Naomi didn't want Orpah and Ruth to mindlessly follow her:
 - ♦ Out of obligation or guilt
 - ♦ Putting their trust in Naomi. How could she protect and provide?
 - Selflessly releases them from taking care of her - character born of faith

- *Carefully consider your future.*
 - ♦ Reply: *We will go back with you to your people.* A strange community
 - Marriage melds 2 family cultures. Now add a foreign culture...
 - *Go back, each of you, to your mother's home.* Familiar community
 - ♦ *Be realistic*: A life as a widow vs. the hope to have a family
 - ♦ What is your community - your identity - what's your view of life?
 - *Look, your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods.*
 - Orpah chose a life under Chemosh with the hope of a family - this life
 - Did Naomi sense the difference in Ruth? Ruth was a Moabite too.
 - Avoid a mindless choice! Consider before choosing and confessing.
 - Ruth's choice: *Don't make me go back to Moab to live a life under Chemosh and that culture. Yahweh is my hope and my witness.*
- ❖ Daily consider living in Yahweh's stunning faithful love and care.
 - It's all in the name Yahweh: the living God of faithful saving love & care
 - ♦ ***The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. ... Ex. 34:6,7***
 - Your God is your life.
 - ♦ If your God is *only your religion*, **life** becomes **your god**.
 - You live for life your way - using your "god" to give it to you.
 - ♦ When the Living God, Yahweh, is your God:
 - You know his pledge to claim you as his own through forgiveness
 - Release from the guilt of your sin & sin's rebellious ways
 - You know his pledge to care for you with mercy
 - To provide, discipline - to rescue from sinful self, giving you life.
 - Knowing his wisdom & full love - we trust our lives into his hands
 - Our trust in Yahweh is not blind. We see his history of love!
 - His faithful love and care is **stunning**.
 - Daily stand before his **stunning love**. Consider, why leave?
 - We can only follow Orpah if we want to take our lives in our hands
 - The gospel daily affirms - my life is in his faithful loving hands.

Socrates is quoted as saying, *The unexamined life is not worth living*. Mindlessly following the crowd wastes life only to run off the cliff into death. Sadly Socrates didn't have the key matter to consider - the **stunning faithful love and care of Yahweh**. You do.

Avoid mindless living!

Live in Yahweh's stunning faithful love and care.