

Ruth 1:6-17 – The hope of companionship

Written by Rachel Friesen, GC sophomore

⁶Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me." ⁹The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me." ¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"

Throughout my life, I have always felt a personal connection to the story of Ruth, traveling to a foreign land and making a new start among strangers. Having moved a few times and traveled quite a bit with my own family, I am familiar with the feeling of being unfamiliar. Being stared at, questioned, lost, judged, excluded from things of which I'd like to be a part, included in things of which I'd rather not be a part... it comes with the territory, literally. These experiences of loneliness and insecurity can be tremendous opportunities for learning and growth, but more importantly in my life, they have allowed me to experience God's personal attention and provision.

In all of my moves and travels, I can't think of one single time that I was left completely alone. Just like God led Ruth to be a companion for Naomi, God provided companionship for me, sometimes when I least expected it. Occasionally it was in momentous ways, such as my first day at a new school in first grade—a little girl appeared at my side during our restroom break and said, "Will you be my best friend?" (I said yes, of course, and the rest was history.) Or other times, in much more subtle ways—while flying alone last summer, a sympathetic smile from a stranger regarding the unwanted attentions of the passenger next to me. In both of these situations and many others, God took care of my needs before I even knew what to ask. How wonderful it is that we have such an attentive God, who both cares for us when we are strangers and allows us to be companions for the strangers we come across in our lives.