

Separated to follow Christ and His people (Quality: Good)

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Date: 07 June 1998

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[0 : 00] dependent entirely upon the Lord for his help I desire attention to the book of Ruth chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 the book of Ruth chapter 1 verses 16 and 17 Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go and where thou lodgest I will lodge thy people shall be my people and thy God my God where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried the Lord do so to me and more or so it ought but death part thee and me one might say as we commence to try to speak from these words that I trust that in the purposes of God these words have abided with us throughout this week that's passed I've been out three nights to preach and still this word has not been preached it's been with me all the week and as those evenings came round something else was given so I trust that according to the purposes of the Lord that there is a cause that these words again should be declared in this chapel my love for the book of Ruth continues it is a beautiful book short but very precious it is you might say a book of that is an account of the path of providence for three people really we should just go aside for a moment and speak of Elimelech and his two sons they were taken out of time into eternity which leaves the Moabitess damsel it leaves Naomi and of course Boaz it is a remarkable book it was written some 1300 years before the day of Christ it follows on the book of Judges very conveniently because it was as we read in the first verse it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that's it is in line with the book of Judges but that which came out of this short book has eternal benefits for the church of Christ to the end of time because Ruth and Boaz were in the line of Christ and it might be said too and my old nature my doubting nature said is there anything new that can be ever said that hasn't been said before from this book or from this text this is as well known as any text in the scriptures but my friends we must wait on the Lord and that he may supply our need and it may please the Lord to show us something old and something new respecting these words the subject of course is also well known

it is often called the providential dealings with these this family of Elimelech and Naomi often enough you've heard it said I'm sure that there is nowhere in this chapter where there is a guiding hand or a directing hand of the Lord there's not a word spoken or written here that would give us some knowledge that they were directed to go to Moab but there is a word that covers this and it covers completely and we don't have to try to drag out of the word of God what's not there we don't have to try and condemn Naomi and Elimelech for running down to Moab when there was famine in the land of Judah we must leave that but we must look to the cause which is the Lord and we must look to the fruit of the pathway in which these characters walked and we must prove as the apostle could say and this is the word really that covers all the dealings of the book of Ruth the apostle said this and he said it in complete assurance and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose and this pathway of providence this leading directing and appearing and establishing in this book that is to be found has proved beyond all doubt that the Lord was in the matter his chasing hands some have said have been upon

Naomi that she lost her husband and her sons whether it was we have to leave but the Lord has purposes to work out and appointments to keep for his dear people and his purposes and his appointments were worked out and there was nothing that happened in this book that wasn't for his own honour and glory though it was a pathway of hard dealings and distress dear Naomi was in darkness and you can feel the darkness that she's in she comes back to the city of Bethlehem where the Lord Jesus Christ was to be born and she comes back and she says call me not Naomi call me Mara for the Lord for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty words my friends which might reflect the bitterness of her spirit but she hadn't come to the blessing she was still in darkness she hadn't come to the time of refreshing from the Lord that was before

Naomi and though she couldn't see a hand in front of her as far as acknowledging the Lord's dealings with her was only but chastening yet there was a time of blessing the apostle speaks of it in the Hebrews and he says no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them which are exercised thereby there was a day to come in Naomi's experience where it will be a day of rejoicing darkness enveloped her her person her walk her pathway the past and the present it was all in darkness but there was light and that was before her and she was to walk in that light and she was to walk in that enjoyment of those blessings and she was to prove like we said the dear apostle said that all things do work together for good to them that love

God we might also rightly say too that divine sovereignty is in this book oh it is so my friends natural affection isn't sufficient wonderful mercy where there's natural affection between people it is good that it is so but it will not my friends be a substitute for grace and grace is found in the heart upon the spirit of Ruth the Moabitess how many times have you heard it said and read yourself what is written in the 14th verse and they lifted up their voice and wept again and all kissed her mother-in-law but Ruth clave unto her that is what will be all sufficient you know my friends between the people of God there's to be a cleaving and nothing can separate that one from the other we shall see as we go down the text if the Lord will so be pleased to shine a light on it that there is to be a wonderful cleaving a cleaving which is beyond all nature far beyond all nature and you might say also before we begin

[9 : 25] Ruth having clave unto Naomi we might say this what was the prospect what was the prospect there's never a counting of the cost my friends when you do something in the fear of God in the fear of God it is to be done and by the fear of God there's never a counting of the cost there's never a consideration of the future pathway or its prosperity or its blessings when one ventures to walk in the ways of the Lord there is a casting on him the present and the future what had Naomi got to offer that would might attract Ruth to return to Bethlehem what was the future what did the future hold she came back with nothing

I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home again empty what was there to be offered my friends divine appointments were to be kept God's ways were to be walked in at the end was indeed better than the beginning but there was to be a walk in and there's something else you know that we we shall start the text in a minute but there's something else that is seen in the heart of Ruth that enabled her to walk with Naomi to Bethlehem and to dwell with her my friends there was venture in faith venture in faith the Lord then was in this matter and it was for not only Ruth prosperity spiritual prosperity and good but it was also for the good of Naomi and it was for the good of the church of Christ now the Lord help us to let go of the history and possibly let go of providence and the

Lord help us to look now at the spiritual content of these verses and how it is how it mirrors because you know what happened to Ruth and Naomi and Boaz in this book it has its spiritual counterpart and that's what we want to look at this morning it's interesting to see and to read of these accounts are good stories to read and they cause understanding to be given but it's not the natural it's not the historical it's not the geographical it's not even the providential although that is of course united to it but it is the spiritual purposes that we must see that lies in especially in these two verses and it shall be traced throughout this book and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee first of all a child of grace must be brought out she must they must he must whoever it is must be under a bringing out you and

I are born into this world we are born in sin and shapen and in iniquity we have an unregenerate nature we have an ungracious heart and as you sung a rebellious spirit that is what we are by nature if in the order of divine providence and under the blessing of grace we are to be found there must be a bringing out and there must be in our hearts too a union felt to God's people we mustn't get too far ahead but because of time my friends we must trace as we can as the Lord will help us what brings this two together a soul that is brought out of nature's darkness brought out of a world of sin and woe brought out it may be from a pathway of complete opposite complete opposite

I drove along the road the A11 this morning and there's a notice board of some sort of convention that's been arranged sometime and somewhere I didn't study the date but on the bottom of that board says with God nothing is impossible or with God all things are possible it's one or two of those things now it is so in the ways of grace when God has a purpose of grace towards his people that people that he has chosen out of lost mankind those people whom upon them has been placed is eternal love it matters not whether they are in the world or in religion it matters not how far from the truth they've walked it matters not who their parents are what their place of nativity was their birth it matters not the Lord's purposes are worked out and God in his time and in his way and by his means separates them brings them out you might say well poor Ruth what a hard life to lose a husband a brother in law and her father in law you might say that about

[15 : 26] Ruth I don't believe that was the cause of grace in Ruth grace is the gift of God it is as faith it is poured out it is applied it is sovereignly given never look to circumstances in themselves as the means that unite to the people of God my friends you might say why didn't it do so in the heart of all power divine sovereignty dictated the sovereign will and purposes of God dictated the appointments of God dictated as one was called the other one was left Jacob have I loved Esau have I hated my friends that line goes down through the scriptures and through the generations that are born and live and die on this earth first of all then entreat me not to leave thee there's a union now felt to God's people that could never be separated or could never be severed there's in the heart of one soul or souls that once were in the world once were satisfied with the world once satisfied even with the bare facts of religion remember

Moab was a place of idolatry she would have been brought up under idolatrous religion my friends and the time came and the means God used determined was the man of hell you read that book that hymn it says goes on to say about an appointed place an appointed way my friends it's a most gracious mercy if there's a separation made and God makes that separation and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee brought her into union with the people of God that is what it is it puts an earnest exercise in the heart of a seeking coming sinner that the blessings that the Lord's people are blessed with they may be blessed with numbered with them may I be now and through eternity there's a sweet union felt which wasn't there and isn't there and cannot be there by nature and that union is the union of love we know the apostle said we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren there is the union my friends it's not attraction it is not means it's not providence it's grace it's love it's faith and it brings to the two together the Lord's people and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee be not against me the margin says her own lips and her own voice in the following chapter would seem to be contrary to that when she was found in the field of

Boaz and Boaz spoke very comfortably to her she said why have I found grace in thy eyes that thou shouldest take knowledge of me seeing I am a stranger and she said let me find favour in thy sight my Lord for that thou hast comforted me and for that thou hast spoken and friendly and to thine handmaid though I be not like one of thine handmaidens you can see then the spirit that is to be found I believe in every vessel of mercy everyone who and that's the spirit of grace whoever it is and by what means the Lord uses to bring them into union with the people of God there is no doubt a natural love my friends there is a spiritual love and that's a bond that nothing can break and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee it was as if she would say in effect in language that we understand there's nothing that could possibly put a separation between thee and me wonderful words you know wonderful words and it reflects grace and it reflects love and it binds people together and they are bound together on one foundation and that's the foundation of grace and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee you can see also in this dear woman grace and that's grace of humility she wasn't in front of

Naomi she would return with Naomi or to return from following after thee what does grace do in the heart my friends it does this it makes them willing to take the lowest place not for them to project their natural abilities or mind or attributes my friends but to be nothing John the Baptist as we said so often was appointed of God as the forerunner of Christ but viewed by John with Christ he had to say he must increase I must decrease my friends when you when you are found if you are in possessions of this grace of humility you will not only desire the lowest place but you will find that even there you are not worthy of it what does Paul say respecting the ministry what does he say respecting his call it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief and then unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ my friends the grace of God has this fruit in it it's the fruit of unworthiness it's the fruit of humility it's the fruit that in this respect that they feel themselves to be nothing that Jesus Christ be all in all or to return from following after thee I said there was no prospect there was no providential prospect and another thing that we must emphasize you know to God's people respecting the Lord's people it's got nothing to do with their standing in life it's got nothing to do with the wonders and goodness of providence you know it's the spiritual pathway that they are to walk and it is this my friends

[22 : 51] Ruth was to be and was to reveal naturally before Boaz at complete poverty and grace in the soul my friends will bring you to this you not only are sinning in your own sight and feel it and mourn over it but you'll say before the Lord you'll know the poverty of being a sinner and you'll plead your poverty before the Lord and it will be your mercy my friends and mine if the Lord is pleased to keep us poor entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee it's a pathway of poor sinners it's a pathway of a precious Christ because that's whom they shall live upon whom they shall rest upon whom they shall be blessed with and that's their spiritual blessings their mercies that shall flow from him there is a river the streams whereof which shall make glad the city of God my friends and that's where you'll get your blessings from if you're a seeking one if you've been separated brought under grace brought into union with the people of God with desire to be with them because that desire is also from grace

Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee my friends it's a grace given desire and it's a desire established in the heart which shall be with a seeking blessed character for the day she's taken to glory because ultimately glory is before them and it is only in glory when the seeking shall be satisfied or to return from following after thee they were to go out from Moab they were entering into Bethlehem there wasn't to be a return my friends a child of God might have many many temptations as regarding returning when Israel travelled these 40 years in the wilderness many there was a rebellious had a rebellious spirit that said let us return to Egypt when

Christ was crucified and died the 11 disciples said let us go fishing there was a returning in their mind to the pathway that they had been brought out of but there's never to be a return to leave the world's deceitful shore to leave to leave the world's deceitful shore to leave it to return no more entreat me not to leave the or to return from following after thee it is often said you know that the journey of life goes one way and so the journey of spiritual life goes one way never to be a return to old habits and old ways and old pathways it cannot be so if you by grace are appointed a way a pathway which leads unto life my friends the Lord will bring you into possession of those blessings which are in life in spiritual life entreat me not to leave the or to return from following after thee it's a word

I suppose we all understand but it's this word identification my friends I believe a seeking one who is not in possession of the blessing but sees the blessing before them and that sees it in the child of grace or the people of God or the church of God but in their hearts they feel not to be in possession of that blessing my friends they desire to be identified with them they want to be found where God's people are you know my beginnings I would I hope I can say was encouraged by that hymn 938 I love to meet among them now and at thy gracious feet to bow though vilest of them all but can I bear the piercing thought what if my name shall be left out when thou for them shalt call and another thing if you read in

John's Gospel chapter 6 of those disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ who were offended by his word and we read of them and this my friends is another rule that you can line against your pathway you know sometimes the scriptures are confirming to the pathway of the Lord's people I don't mean sometimes they are they always are but sometimes the Lord is pleased to come and bring to your remembrance the word of his grace which established you in the way that you are now that's your rule that is your line that is the confirmation that you need my friends and so it is you know when those disciples walked back went back rather and remember what the Holy Spirit recalls of it they went back and walked no more with him and if they don't walk with him they don't walk with his people my friends that is the difference but you know what did Christ say will ye also go away it was as if he tried the faith of the apostles and Peter said to whom else can we go my friends as Christ is precious to a soul there cannot be any separation but there cannot be any separation either from the people of God and from those who are followers of the meek and lowly

[29 : 00] Jesus entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee but then you know I want to speak to very carefully here my friends what this dear soul was to have to confess it's an unknown way you know when the Lord so breaks into the heart of his people and constrains them by love calls them by grace brings them into the ways of grace into the pathway of the people of God it is an unknown way and you say well the word says of the Lord Jesus Christ I am the way the truth and the life he is indeed I'm talking about what is commonly called the pathway of experience it's the unknown way Ruth had no more idea of the path that was before her than what

Naomi did Naomi in her darkness was returning to Bethlehem the land of Judah and before her was completely unknown we might say this my friends your tomorrows are completely unknown oh you know what you're going to do but you must always remember this subject to the Lord's will and Ruth had no more idea what was in her pathway a child of God has no more idea what's in his pathway under this sense of union and under this sense of desire she was she longed to be found in the pathway she didn't want any other pathway but it was an unknown way or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go oh the willingness of this dear one and my friends and God will put a willingness in the heart of every soul that he has blessed with a union to the people of God and to

Christ there will be a willingness to take up the cross and the cross is a daily cross you know what the Lord Jesus said so many times it's been read it's been brought to your hearing what the Lord Jesus Christ said respecting those who are followers of his my friends what are they to do what are they to how are they to walk my friends there is to be a walking of which will prove the pathway as it being right now the pathway my friends is this that those that are followers of Jesus Christ and found in the way where the people of God are found must indeed take up their cross if any man will come after me let him deny himself

I believe you know that's one of the hardest parts of the walk and pathway of God's people let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me deny himself will you carry self with you self is the hindrance to grace and to the gospel self is the hindrance to the blessings that God has to give old rebellious heart old perverse nature old sinful heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked entreat me not to leave the order return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go and there will be something else dear friends that you will you should perceive in God's people now everyone called by grace says now another nature the old nature is not to be followed it's the new nature you read in

Paul's epistle to the Hebrews and you read there concerning what should be followed remember them and this is of course the servants of God remember and the under shepherds remember them which have the rule over you spoken unto you the word of God whose faith follow not their old nature God forbid not their old nature their new nature for whither thou goest I will go it's it's the way of faith that you must walk it's the venturing faith that you must walk my friends with an eye the eye of faith upon the saviour oh let there be no following the arm of flesh or following in the ways my friends of the unregenerate side of life my friends this is to be a following of the person of Christ and in a measure you will walk in the tribulations of Christ and in a measure you will walk in the afflictions of the Lord

[34 : 35] Jesus Christ and in a measure you will walk in the temptations of Jesus Christ entreat me not to leave the order to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go my friends you have this view of the Lord's people though their paths be of tribulation there is a blessing in it for though their cup seems filled with gold as something secret sweetens all and you long for those blessings I sometimes feel looking back in my pathway but it may be that it reflects the view of others also my friends when you see what a blessed mercy it is to be found united with the Lord's people you lose sight of the tribulations that they walk and you lose sight of the trials that they endure you lose sight of the warfares that go on within and you lose sight too my friends of those times of deep distress and darkness that is the lot of

God's people oh it is a time a season a blessing also or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go and it will be as you are led my friends it's not as you will establish your own pathway it's as you are led it's as you are directed it's as you are appointed whither thou goest Jesus Christ thy father son bids you undismayed go on but there will be times of dismay there will be crooks in the lot there will be crosses to carry there will be rough places to walk there will be affliction opposition there will be hindrance there will be Satan there will be your own natural heart whither thou goest I will go and my friends let me repeat what I've done so many times the Lord

Jesus Christ is the way the truth and the life he said when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them the way that they walk is not strange to Christ because he's walked it before it may be strange to them and in a measure you will walk in a measure you will walk as Christ walked in the pathway that he walked will be your walk and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go there is in the pathway of the people of God a pathway of obedience my friends I've never yet proved the Lord dragged his people along the way oh there's an unwilling spirit within the people of God those who are under grace there's the most unwilling spirit oh they shrink from this and shrink from that and would run a mile as we might express it rather than to take up a cross but then when the Lord is pleased to come and there is some flowing into the spirit of a child of God his unchangeable love there's a willingness then to walk there's a pathway of obedience and you'll only obey as love constrains thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest

I will go there is in this dear woman's testimony here a very strong evidence of grace and faith my friends she was not and she could not of course in any way try to limit those expressions they were full expressions real expressions they were the desire of her heart they were the pathway that she wanted to walk perhaps there's something here that we've lost sight of God has in his mercy stamped death on Moab and they've seen it and they don't want any more to do with it you know in that lovely account of the pilgrim's progress Christian had his back to the city of destruction and his face towards the celestial city that is what these people these souls are my friends has never returned they are going forward they're going onwards and the way may seem to be as though contrary to nature but there's a going onwards whither thou goest

I will go having begun in the way there's to be a continuing oh you should say sometimes there's some halting oh indeed there is things my friends but there's to be a going on entreat me not to leave the or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go my friends it means all the way not part of the way there are some blessed seasons you know in the 24th chapter of the book of Genesis we find the remarkable pathway of the servant of Abraham he went to obtain a wife for Isaac and it's very evident that she had not seen Isaac could not have seen Isaac it would have been a total impossibility to see Isaac but having spoken to her father and brothers respecting the way the Lord had led this servant there was to be an asking and they brought

[40 : 58] Rebecca and they said wilt thou go with this man she hadn't seen that man wilt thou go with this man and she said I will go my friends wonderful ways in which the Lord works she ventured upon what has been said she ventured upon the way the servant had been led and what he had spoken concerning those leadings I being in the way the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren my friends what a beautiful example of venturing faith it's most strange you can't lay it straight my friends with the natural mind who would have thought that a person who had never seen her husband would be willing to go to be with her husband but she did and she went and it was all in God's ways and appointments entreat me not to leave you or to return from following after thee for whether thou goest

I will go you ask a child of God my friends what holds him in the pathway and he will tell you or she will tell you the love of Christ and the love for Christ we haven't seen him as we want to see him they'll say but we know he's there and we shall see him and that will be face to face without a cloud between the place where all tears are wiped the way of Christ is the way they walk and it's the way after Christ his tribulations his sorrows his distresses and his trials but that will be the way because Christ is the prize as well as Christ is the path she hadn't even heard of Boaz she didn't even know there was such a person as Boaz my friends that was yet to be walked out but there was a willingness in her heart to go where

Naomi went and so it is with God's people but we must close and Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee for whither thou goest I will go and where thou lodgest I will lodge thy people shall be my people and thy God my God Amen God says this week I as followers God willing ever be a friend on Wednesday evening that pastor he brings next all today now collected in the building pound box the door for May was 228 10 our last hymn is 899 home

O thou with battering ten sets start, reflect and shattered here and there, bewildered on a lethal field, and finding no deliverance near, and Jesus calling with sad thought that Jesus seems to mind enough.

Hymn 800 and 99. O thou with battering ten sets, O thou with battering ten sets, and tempest dust, the flesh of charter, here and there, there were the dawn of the living of God's, and I do not dare ever once live.

[46 : 21] The Hymn 800 and 99. O thou with battering ten sets, But Jesus is the night in your heart.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.