

BITTER FAITH

INTRODUCTION

The White-Wing Bird:

“Even the White-Wing flapped its wings away from the hinterland...”

The Return of the White-Wing Bird:

“Lightnings are flashing for three nights in the North
And the White-Wing hearing the rumbling of thunders
Has flapped its wings and returned to my hinterland
Yay, yay, I’m going home, I’m taking care of my plantation”

In **Ruth 1:6–22**, we will see 4 expressions of faith in the life of Naomi by which we can evaluate our faith in times of trial.

1. Faith Revived Fidelity (6–7)
2. Faith Shaken by Uncertainty (8–14)
3. Faith Ashamed by Loyalty (15–18)
4. Faith Embittered by Calamity (19–22)

1) FAITH REVIVED FIDELITY (6–7)

“the Lord had visited His people” (v. 6)

Gen 50:24
Ex 3:16
Ps 65:9
Jer 29:10

2) FAITH SHAKEN BY UNCERTAINTY (8–14)

Naomi’s intention to leave alone:

Singular verbs: “arose...return...heard...departed” (vv. 6–7)
Daughters-in-law presented as associates (“with”) not main agents
Confirmation (v. 8)

Naomi's possible motivations for sending them back:

Stigma of foreign women
Greater difficulty to find a willing redeemer

Desire to preserve them from a life of uncertainty

Naomi's arguments:

Possibility of marriage in Moab
Impossibility of marriage in Israel
God's curse on Naomi

3) FAITH ASHAMED BY LOYALTY (15–18)

Naomi's faltering faith vs Ruth's firm faith

God's grace overcomes the deficiencies of Naomi's faith and produced in Ruth a resolute faith.

4) FAITH EMBITTERED BY CALAMITY (19–22)

Pleasant Naomi vs Bitter Mara

Naomi's theological problem: An unbalanced view of the relationship between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility.

Bitterness results from a sinful reaction to trials and distorts our view of God in the midsts of trials.

CONCLUSION

Remember God's faithfulness in the past
Don't despise his provisions in the present
Don't underestimate the wisdom of God's plans
Don't think that your pain is aimless

God is working, He is faithful, He is wise, He is gracious, and He is in control. Repent, believe and submit to Him.