



# CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

## EXHORTATION

Date: 21st June 2020

### SECTION LEADER:

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Readings: Ruth 3, 4, Isaiah 45, Revelation 1, 2

### “Under whose wings thou art come to trust”

The book of Ruth is a wonderful story, a timeless story, containing in shadow, details of The Lord God’s purpose which began in Eden. It is a story about redemption, about a gentile bride being prepared for her husband.

Those words, spoken by the destitute and distraught Moabite maiden to her newly found mother-in-law Naomi, have echoed down the centuries. In her abject misery and poverty, Ruth was certain that there was nowhere else in the world she should go. Security and true happiness could only be found in Israel and with their God, and her determination was to accompany Naomi wherever she went, for with Naomi she would be safe and sure:-

*“Intreat 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 I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part me and thee.” (Ruth 1:16 AV).*

Here was Ruth’s profession of faith, a statement of intent and resolution. It is a declaration of faith made by every brother and sister whose determination and resolve is to serve the Lord. It should be our statement of faith and commitment.

No matter what lay ahead for this gentile, this Moabitish woman, she was prepared to put up with the consequences, the accusations, derision, taunts and abuse. No doubt the incident and consequences of Beth Peor, (**Numbers 25:1**) was indelibly imprinted in the minds of those in Israel, and a deep resentment lingered. Her seeming tenacity was like that of Jacob who wrestled with the angel who said: *“...I will not let thee go except thou bless me!”* (**Genesis 32:26**).

I am sure you know the narrative well. It is one of those sections in scripture emerging from the uncertain periods in the book of the Judges. The book of Ruth is important as it reveals part of God’s plan and purpose, for from Ruth sprang Obed, from Obed, Jesse, and then David the king (**Ruth 4:21, 22**).

And so it was that a bridegroom saw a pretty young bride, focussed and working with a will, following the reapers in his field. When he inquired: *“Whose damsel is this?”* the reply was: *“It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi”* (**Ruth 2:5, 6**). A gentile, outside the covenants of promise, a foreigner! She had requested to glean in a certain field which belonged to Boaz. Ruth had worked tirelessly and diligently from dawn till dusk, gathering all that had remained, as the law of Moses had mercifully prescribed (**Lev. 19:9**). She was a witness to all those who were there working in his field. Ruth then took the gleanings home and beat it out (**Ruth 2:17**), no doubt a process to make bread.

Like Ruth we should diligently work in our Lord’s field, to glean the precious seed of the gospel found in His word, from morning until our nightfall. We should then meditate and ponder on the word of God so that it becomes our staple food, our staff of life so that when our bridegroom, the Lord of the Harvest comes in the day of His power, we will be waiting and willing.

Boaz knew his workers intimately. He had already said to them: *“...The Lord be with you”* and they answered: *“The Lord bless thee...”* (**Ruth 2:4**). He then makes diligent inquiry as to this other one, an

unknown woman, a stranger, who was gleaning in his field, and a full report is given to him. God willing, a good report will be given about us when the Lord of the harvest makes diligent inquiry of our lives.

In **Ruth 2** we are left in no doubt as to the character of Ruth. She was full of humility and grace in the sight of her Lord. She had captivated his heart. She fell on her face before him and bowed herself to the ground we read.

Such should be our manner and behaviour when we approach the throne of God in prayer, as we do this day through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is with reverential fear that we come to remember our Lord, recognising that we are totally dependent on Him for our very lives, and it is a privilege to work in His field, it is He who gives us this grain, this bread of life.

May those words apply to us which fell from His lips: *"It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thy husband ... thou hast left ...the land of thy nativity ... a full reward be given thee from the Lord God of Israel ...Abide here fast"*. (**Ruth 2:11,12,8**).

It is from **Ruth 2:12** that we draw our exhortation for today. The full quote reads: *"The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust "*. Notice Ruth's immediate petition: *"Let me find grace in thy sight"* (**v13**). And she does find grace, for she eats and drinks at the table of her Lord, as even we shall at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb when our Lord returns (**Revelation 19:7, 9**).

Several times in his Psalms, David uses the metaphor *"under the shadow of His wings"* referring to the protection and security that God provides. **Psalm 17:8**: *"Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings"* and **Psalm 63:7**: *"Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I trust"*. Israel on their wilderness journey were told by the Lord God: *"Ye have seen what I have done unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you unto myself"* (**Exodus 19:4**).

Likewise, in Ruth's wilderness journey, she learnt to understand and believe that she was under the protection of Israel's God. In that darkness of the night before dawn, after the threshing was done in that threshing floor, she asked Boaz to: *"spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaiden"* (**Ruth 3:9**). Her request was for Boaz to cover her with the wings of his skirt which had the fringes of blue; to remind Israel of God's commandments (**Numbers 15:38**). Boaz agrees and so Ruth gains a blessing and the eternal promises for her are secure.

May the same happen to us after our wilderness journey. Perhaps we have experienced misery associated with the difficulties of mortality. But when the loneliness has been borne, and the harvest is done and we are in that threshing floor of the Lord, may He come to cover us with the skirts of his garments and enfold us in his arms of love. Surely that won't be long now.

**Psalm 91** is a wonderful Psalm which to my mind concludes the whole story of Ruth and her journey. It also concludes the story of your life and mine in the truth, if we hold fast to the end: *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of The Most High, shall abide under the shadow of The Almighty"* (**Psalm 91:1**).

So let us now eat bread and drink wine as our Lord has asked us to do. To remember what he has done for us on an individual basis, for we have worked in his field, and he is fully aware that we too have left the land of our nativity and are special in His sight.

**Brother Mick Willey: Seaton UK 21.06.20**