

Skegness Community Church - Weekly Bible Study 2025

52 passages of Scripture that every believer should know

Week 35 - A NEW BEGINNING: Ruth 1:16

“Don’t urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God”.

God is always the God of newness. The Bible continually refers to the fact that it is never too late for a new beginning. To Isaiah the Lord said, “See, I am doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19). To Ezekiel He said, “I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them” (Ezekiel 11:19). Paul talks of “a new and living way” (Hebrews 10:20). And in Revelation John tells us, “He who was seated the throne said, “I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5). The words of our text today have become immortal. When famine came to Bethlehem, Naomi, her husband, and their two sons fled and settled in Moab. In due time, her sons married Moabite women. The Moabites were a race that was born in incest and a people who observed a false religion that was the antithesis to their Jewish heritage. Later Naomi’s husband died, as did her sons. Left with her two daughters-in-law, Naomi, upon hearing that there was now bread in Bethlehem, set her face like a flint to return to the will of God for her life. She encouraged the two women to go back to their people and to their gods. Orpah kissed Naomi and went back. The other, Ruth, clung to Naomi, saying “Don’t urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God”. These now familiar words constitute the formula for us when new things come and we cling to Christ in such a manner. When personal renewal comes to our own heart, it brings several new things.

PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DETERMINATION

When Ruth said, “Don’t urge me to leave you,” she was declaring that even though her sister-in-law, Orpah, had turned back, she, with a new determination. Would cling to Naomi. Her mother-in-law had made sure Ruth knew the way would be hard. Back in Bethlehem, Ruth’s past and future would be against her. Yet Ruth was determined to do the right thing and follow Naomi. When new things come to us, they can bring a new determination. We say to our Lord what Ruth said to Naomi, “Don’t urge me to leave you or turn back from you.”

PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DIRECTION

Ruth continued, “Where you go I will go.” In other words, she was saying, “This will be my life’s direction.” She had never been that way before. A new direction is always a telltale sign of genuine renewal. We begin to become interested in the things in which Jesus was interested. As Ruth was to Naomi, so shall we be to Christ when personal renewal fills our heart. This kind of relationship brings a new determination and a new direction. Christ becomes the way we follow. Yes He makes all things new as we say to Him, “Where you go I will go.”

PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DEPENDENCE

Next, Ruth declared, “where you stay I will stay.” Ruth was declaring that she would trust Naomi to meet her basic needs. Ruth had no place to lay her head at night. However, her determination instilled in Naomi a new dependence on God. Ruth would instil this dependence in her children and grandchildren. Later, in Bethlehem, she would meet and marry Boaz, the Lord of the harvest. They would have a son named Obed, who would have a son named Jesse, who would have a son named David - the shepherd, the psalmist, the king. Ruth knew that home was in the middle of God’s will. When personal renewal comes, it is accompanied by a new degree of trusting the Lord to meet our basic needs.

PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DESIRE

“Your people will be my people” was Ruth’s next declaration. Following Naomi brought a new desire in Ruth to embrace Naomi’s people as her own. She was saying in essence, “There will be nothing between us.” Ruth realised that if she took the God of the Bible to be her God, she would have to separate herself from the godless crowd of Moab among whom she had lived. It is impossible to fellowship with God and refuse to fellowship with His people. To love the Lord is to love His people and to find fellowship among them. Among all the new things He brings at the point of our salvation is a new desire to say to Him, “Your people will be my people.”

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PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DEDICATION

Then Ruth confessed to Naomi, "your God (shall be) my God." She was saying, "I'm not only taking your people as my people, but your God as my God." If you wish to see an Old Testament conversion, it is here. And what a decision it was! Ruth's past was against her. She was raised in a heathen family who worshipped false, immoral gods. Her present was against her. No wonder Naomi pleaded with Ruth to go back to her own people. Her future was against her. In Bethlehem she would be an exile from all she had ever known. Ruth was giving up all she knew to follow Naomi's God, yet all Ruth knew from this God was suffering and sorrow. But Ruth also knew Naomi, and when she watched Naomi repent and set her face as a flint towards the right path, Ruth found not only a new direction and desire, but also a new devotion. Personal renewal brings a new devotion to our lives.

PERSONAL RENEWAL BRINGS A NEW DEDICATION

The next verse continues: "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried" (Ruth 1:17). Ruth was saying not even death would separate Naomi and her. Ruth was not going back, even if things did not turn out as she thought they should.

We need the same dedication in following Christ. It costs us our life. Ruth would eventually die, as we all do. But first she would marry Boaz, and today she lives on in heaven as an example for us all. Ruth went home with Naomi. She became the bride of the wealthy landowner Boaz. She lived a beautiful existence, totally separated from her old life. The whole course of her life was determined by another person! What a wonderful picture of you and me when we truly say to Christ what Ruth said to Naomi: **"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."** Yes indeed He has a way of "making everything new" (Revelation 21:5).

As you memorise this verse, meditate on the wonder of how many things
Christ has made new in you.