

Then the women said to Naomi,

"Blessed be the Lord,

who has not left you this day without a redeemer,
and may his name be renowned in Israel!"

—RUTH 4:14



coffee conversations





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Written by the
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a loveless marriage

(Genesis 29:16-35)

written by Cheryl Bell

Leah

The Story

From an earthly perspective, Leah's loveless marriage was unpleasant and less desirable. As God cared for her by giving her children, her longing for her husband's love was tempered over time until she simply wished Jacob would be attached to her or be near her.

Her response at the birth of her fourth son, Judah, was different, for she did not mention her husband this time but instead praised the God who had seen her, heard her, and given her a son. Though the desire for her husband's presence never left her (Genesis 30:20), it was ultimately fulfilled in death as Jacob was buried with her (Genesis 49:29-33). In the end, God vindicated her by fulfilling His promise to Abraham through her—for it was through Judah and his descendants that Jesus was born (Luke 3:23-38).

The Lesson

Jacob's perspective on Leah was not God's. When human beings assess value, they examine many factors. They may assess physical appearance—that's how it was with Leah and Rachel. Because of her beauty, Rachel was loved and Leah unloved. Other factors used to assess value may include position, education, likeability, or productivity.

Thankfully, it is God who assesses the true value of every human being, and He does so not on the basis of what is seen but what is unseen. It is the heart of a woman that He sees, and it is her cries He hears. He has the final word over the meaning and purpose of every life.

Questions to Consider

1. What is it I long for? Is it God above all else? Or do other loves compete with Him for my affection?
2. Does my relationship with God change when my circumstances change? Do I love Him when His dealings with me are to my liking? Do I pull away when He allows hard things?
3. What will it take for me to love God supremely?

Drink Deeper

1. As a believer, God instructs us to love Him supremely. After reading the following texts, describe right relationships with God, man and self.
Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 14:27
2. To turn to self or others instead of God is an expression of idolatry. Are you tempted to put anyone in God's place? If so, confess and put off this sin.
Learn more from Proverbs 18:1 and Philippians 2:3-4
3. How has God used hardship to teach you to love Him supremely?



she quietly used her gift and God used her to change a city

(Acts 9:36-43)

written by Peggy Osborne

Dorcas/ Tabitha

The Story

Tabitha, who was also called Dorcas, lived in the seaport city of Joppa. She was a disciple of Christ and was “full of good works and acts of charity” (Acts 9:36). She served with other disciples, some of whom were widows, using her gift of making tunics and other garments. When she became ill and died, the disciples sent for Peter who called her to arise, and her life was restored. When the people in Joppa heard about Tabitha’s death and resurrection, many believed in the Lord.

The Lesson

We often think that to be considered “effective for the Lord” we must be doing big things in our day-to-day life. We look at Christian speakers, Bible study authors, and church staff members and wish that we could have the influence for Christ that they do. The story of Tabitha teaches us that we need to quietly use our gifts in our own neighborhoods. When we are following Him completely, right where we are, He can use our lives to change a city.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the gift that God wants me to use in my community?
2. Do people I see day to day know that I am a disciple of Christ?
3. Am I obedient to what God has called me to do whether it seems to be a “big” calling or a “small” one?
4. Would people describe me as a woman who is “full of good works and acts of charity”?

Drink Deeper

1. What is your gift that God wants you to use in your community?
2. Do people who you see day to day know that you are a disciple?
3. Are you being obedient to what God has called you to do whether it seems to be a “big” calling or a “small” one?
4. Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ completely? Being obedient to whatever He has called you to do?
5. Would people describe you as a woman who is “full of good works and acts of charity”?



surrendered love

(Luke 7:36-50)

written by Monica Rodriguez

A Woman of the City Who was a Sinner

The Story

She is introduced as “a woman of the city, who was a sinner.” She could also be introduced as “uninvited, unwanted, purpose-minded, gift-bearing, and surrendered in love.” She stood behind Jesus, weeping, washing His feet with her tears, wiping them with her hair, kissing and anointing them with the ointment in her beautiful alabaster flask. Instead of gratitude for her offering, the Pharisee questioned within himself Jesus’ authority as a prophet and for not knowing “she is a sinner.” As Jesus turned to the woman at His feet, He pointed out to Simon the Pharisee that in humility and selfless love this woman washed and wiped His feet. Speaking to her, Jesus told her, “Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

The Lesson

When I think of what surrendered in love looks like, I think of this unnamed woman. I think of times I have walked into a gathering and didn’t know anyone there; it can be awkward and feel like an eternity of aloneness. Then suddenly, I will see someone I know, and I begin to relax and ease into enjoying the event. The impact of knowing Jesus is so much more than being put at ease. Assuredly, Jesus knows I am coming, and He is ready to forgive, with the gift of salvation and peace. The unnamed woman gave without measure. Her tears, her hair, her humility, her unceasing kisses of welcome and adoration, her expensive nard, and her display of great honor reveal her heart. She was completely surrendered in love. The world around us will try and stop us from coming to Jesus, especially because of our sins. Jesus demonstrates that He wants us to come to Him because only He can forgive our sins.

Questions to Consider

1. Am I willing to walk through the whispers and thoughts of others to get to Jesus?
2. Am I willing to receive God’s gift of salvation?
3. How am I forgiven?
4. What is the peace of God?

Drink Deeper

1. Will Jesus receive me?
 - a. Read Romans 10:9-13
2. Do I need to work for salvation?
 - a. Read Ephesians 2:8-9
3. Forgiveness.
 - a. Read 1 John 1:9
4. Peace.
 - a. Read Philippians 4:7



seeking love and finding Jesus

(John 8:2-11)

written by Cheryl Bell

An Unnamed Woman

The Story

As Jesus sat teaching His eager listeners, the religious legalists of His day who were sharply attuned to the sins of others and ignorant of their own brought a sinning woman to Him for judgment. They planned to condemn not only the woman but Jesus Himself by His response to the situation. “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act,” they exclaimed, and then they urged Him to apply the law with its prescribed penalty of death by stoning.

Jesus was silent in the face of their accusations and seemed not to hear them. Still, they persisted until His response silenced them completely. “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her.” As each accuser slipped quietly away, Jesus was left alone with the woman. In the stillness that followed, she spoke face to face with her Maker and He became her Savior. He forgave her sin and commanded her to live a new life—one characterized by obedience to Him with its accompanying sexual purity.

The Lesson

As women, and women who have sinned, the forgiveness and salvation that Jesus offers each one of us is a precious gift. Our attempts to find salvation in anyone else will always result in emptiness and a search for something more that is greater and better able to satisfy our souls.

Maybe, like this woman, we are being tempted to believe that a different set of circumstances (even a different husband) will transform our lives and save us from current miseries. These are tempting lies, but lies nonetheless.

Thankfully, this woman found what she was seeking in the person of Jesus Christ, and the solution for our yearnings are no different. By God’s power, we too can be forgiven and live a completely new life.

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Questions to Consider

1. Am I looking for love in human relationships instead of in God?
2. Have I borne the burden of accusations from others against me for the sins I have committed?

Drink Deeper

1. How does Jesus’ offer of forgiveness and salvation give me hope?
2. If you would like to receive forgiveness and salvation, please pray and ask God to do for you what He did for this unnamed woman.



trust in God's promises

(Luke 1)

written by Lori Moody

Elizabeth

The Story

Elizabeth—whose father and husband were priests—had an unfulfilled longing in her heart. Though she and her husband, Zacharias, were both “righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” they had no child.

In Elizabeth’s culture, it was shameful to be childless. Now she was too old to conceive. But while Zacharias was away fulfilling his priestly duties at the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and announced that he and Elizabeth would have a son. That son was to be named John, who would prepare the way for the Messiah.

After returning home, Zacharias and Elizabeth conceived and she secluded herself for five months. During the sixth month, her cousin Mary, who also was pregnant, came to visit for three months. Scripture tells us that the baby leapt in Elizabeth’s womb when she heard the voice of Mary, whom she had called “the mother of my Lord.”

Though vastly different in age, they shared a common experience—both carried a miraculous pregnancy announced by the angel Gabriel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Scripture does not provide a detailed account of the three months they spent together, but it is reasonable to assume Elizabeth and Mary spent much time with each other. The younger Mary likely found safety, growth, and nurture for herself and the unborn Jesus in the company of Elizabeth. Undoubtedly, Elizabeth shared her spiritual wisdom and encouragement with Mary.

The Lesson

You are never too old for God to do a work in and through you. Elizabeth could have been bitter in her old age, but she instead chose to pray and believe God’s promises. God took away her disgrace and showed her great mercy. She believed God, and He moved her from barrenness to blessing.

Elizabeth and Zacharias obeyed God by naming their son John as the angel instructed them. And just as the Lord promised, John grew to become a prophet who preached repentance and prepared the way for the Messiah.

Questions to Consider

1. Is there an area of your life where you feel like God has forsaken you? What are some resources to help you through this season?
2. Name someone that has helped you through a difficult experience.
3. In what ways can your relationship with God and life experiences be used to invest spiritually in others?

Drink Deeper

1. Read Titus 2:3-5 and discuss the character of the older woman.



amazing faith

(Ruth 4:14)

written by Spring Rutland

Naomi & Ruth

The Story

Naomi had followed her husband to a foreign land during a famine. He died soon after, leaving her with her two sons, who married women from the foreign country where they were living. Years later, her sons died as well. As a woman, she basically had no hope of a future. She packed everything and headed back home. She wasn't just upset and in deep grief for all she had lost, she was bitter. She was bitter by her own admission. What had happened? She lost everything she valued and was left hopeless. But Ruth followed her, and Naomi was able to push back all her feelings. She was able to push back the enormity of her grief and help guide Ruth through the doors that God was opening to provide for them. Through her continued faith, even in the darkest of days, God provided in a miraculous way. Because of her faith, Ruth stayed with Naomi, and God provided a Redeemer who would redeem all that was lost.

The Lesson

Life can seem cruel. It can be hard and full of pain. It can be difficult and full of suffering. Understanding how a loving and good God can allow such difficult circumstances is hard. But if we choose to follow the Lord, we are not alone. We are not left alone to walk in the darkness with no hope or direction. God is there, guiding our every step. He will be our Redeemer if we let Him. He will redeem all that has been lost. He will give life where there is none. He will give us hope and a future. We can push past the pain, heartache, suffering, and deep grief that this world offers and choose to trust the Lord. He already paid the price for our redemption on the cross. This is amazing faith.

Questions to Consider

1. What hard times am I going through in this season of my life?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus wants to be your redeemer?

Drink Deeper

1. Who can I ask to stand and walk with me in prayer and encouragement as I stand in faith?
2. How can I see God at work through my difficult circumstances?



choosing to obey, even when you don't understand

(Genesis 7:7)

written by Chao Tsuma

The Wife of Noah and His Sons' Wives

The Story

When God chose to destroy the earth because of the wickedness He saw in people, He spoke to Noah and commanded him to build an ark and take his family in it with him. His wife and the wives of his three sons also went into the ark with him. Scriptures do not give us the wives' names, but their actions show their strong faith in God. We do not read that they heard from God, but they chose to trust in what God spoke to Noah. Noah walked with God, and he had found favor with Him. Noah's wife and Noah's sons' wives chose to submit themselves to Noah's calling. This would have been the place for the women to question Noah's move, but Scripture tells us they obeyed what Noah commanded them to do and went into the ark "to escape the waters of the flood" (Genesis 7:7). Their obedience saved them from the destruction that fell upon all who were not in the ark, and God used them to repopulate the earth after the floods.

The Lesson

There are times in our lives when we do not hear directly from God, but we choose to obey and submit ourselves to the leadership of our husbands. We choose to trust in the calling that God has placed on our husbands. We choose to trust in God for our own future and the future of our family. Obedience is catalytic to the blessings God has in store for us. We obey, not because we fully understand what tomorrow holds, but because we trust in the One who holds our tomorrow and that He speaks to us through our husbands.

Questions to Consider

1. As a Christian, is there an area in my life I have not fully surrendered to God because I do not fully understand? According to 1 John 1:9, I can ask for God's forgiveness and have a fresh beginning.
2. How can I strengthen my faith, not in people, but in the God who is trustworthy? Do I need to ask an older woman to mentor me in this area (Titus 2:3-5)?

Drink Deeper

1. What is the one thing I must do to surrender and obey even when I do not have all the answers?
2. Obeying God comes before obeying my husband. Romans 10:9-10 shows where to begin the journey of obeying him. Have I made this decision? If not, I can do it now.



in moments of emergency

(Exodus 4:19-26)

written by Rhonda Tidmore

Zipporah, Wife of Moses

The Story

Zipporah, the first wife of Moses, displayed a quick and accurate response in the midst of an emergency. God called Moses to leave Midian and return to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian captivity. Moses journeyed back to Egypt with his wife and his sons and at “a lodging place on the way, the LORD met with Moses and was about to kill him. But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son’s foreskin, and touched Moses’ feet with it.” Zipporah acted quickly in an emergency situation. She knew God’s requirement for circumcision for the Israelites, who Moses had been called to lead out of Egypt.

The Lesson

God used Zipporah, who acted in quick obedience, to save him. Zipporah understood the seriousness of obedience to God. When we walk with God, know His Word, and hear His voice regularly in prayer, we are more likely to respond in obedience to Him in an emergency. As a family, we have made it a practice to pray when we hear an ambulance or fire truck siren. We ask God to protect those involved and for salvation for anyone involved who doesn’t know Him as their Lord and Savior.

Questions to Consider

1. When tragedy comes. Where do you go?
2. Is God a source of strength and refuge for you personally?
3. Has there been a specific point in your life where you prayed to receive Christ as your savior?

Drink Deeper

1. How can I develop a sensitivity to the Spirit so that my reflexes may be in line with His will?
2. Zipporah interceded for her husband, and his life was spared. What are some practical ways I can position myself to intercede for those around me?
3. How can I help others around me develop sensitivity to the Spirit of God?





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