

SURELY THERE IS A FUTURE

The promise for this month is:

“For surely there is a future, and your hope will not be cut off.”

Proverbs 23:18

The Bible says there is a future for sure. For surely there is goodness, a blessing, a future, and the day of fulfilling these is very near. Your hope will not be cut off. Most of us are worried about what had happened but surely there is a future for everything. We need to have expectations when there are continuous disappointments. The enemy breaks our faith and belief on God when there are continuous disappointments, downfalls and problems. We stop having expectations and faith. This year has been filled with a lot of disappointments and shut doors. We all are in the same boat experiencing difficult times. We have lost hope, not knowing what is going to happen within our families, to our job or business, to our health, for nothing seems to change. It looks like everything has come to an end. But God promises that for sure there is a future for us and our hope will not be cut off.

Psalm 146:5

5 — Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God.

People who put their trust in God will be blessed. The reason why we end up with or face a lot of problems is that we put our trust on a lot of things around. But the Word says, we need to put our trust on the God of Jacob and in doing so, we will not lack anything or have problems.

Let’s look into the story of Ruth. Naomi, along with her husband and two sons, moved to Moab because of the severe famine in Bethlehem. In Moab, Naomi’s husband died and after some time, her sons died as well. She lost everything and her life was full of sorrows and disappointments. It had an end at the beginning itself. A widow had no means of survival in those days. There was nothing for them to expect, for everything was over for them.

Ruth 1:8 and 11-13

8 — Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and me.

11 — But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands?

12 — Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—

13 — would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you because the Lord’s hand has turned against me!”

Naomi asks her daughters-in-law to go back to their families and people, for she felt that the Lord's hand was against her. Most of us, heads of the family say the same — God has abandoned me and my family. Things, on which I had hope, have gone. Everything is over. When we think so, the Word of the Lord (promise for this month) says you have a future. It will not end like this.

We need to learn a few things from the life of Ruth, especially during this time, on how God is going to change our sorrows into joy.

1. REPLACE SYMPATHY WITH GRATITUDE

Ruth teaches us to replace sympathy with gratitude, complaining with gratitude, murmuring with gratitude. She teaches us to take away the self-pity from us, to stop complaining and to thank God. The reply that Ruth gave when Naomi asked her to go back was:

Ruth 1:16-18

16 — But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to 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.

17 — Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

18 — When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Ruth was not worried and sad because she had become a widow, rather she wanted to see what the future held for her. She did not know what would be in store for her if she went with her mother-in-law, for both had lost everything, but yet she did not want to leave her mother-in-law. Amid all losses, disappointments and closed doors, just replace your complaints and self-pity with a heart of gratitude. Stop complaining about what you do not have and thank the Lord for the opportunity He has given you.

Story:

Marla Runyan — she completed the New York Marathon in two hours, she has got her masters in her education and has written a book. But little do people know about her running. She lost her eyesight when she was nine years old. Even though she lost her eyesight, she did not lose hope. In fact, she started running more after she lost her eyesight, to study and write more. In 1996 Paralympics, she ran the marathon and won the medal. She had lost her eyesight, and everything was over but she rose and stood to say "No, I have a future." Today, many look up to her for the faith she has in God. She goes on to thank God saying, "I was able to do all of these with great determination only because the Lord had allowed these things in my life."

Like Ruth, start thanking God for your life and look forward to your future, and do not complain.

2. AVOID CRYING FOR THINGS THAT ARE NOT IN CONTROL

Ruth realised that there are many things in our lives which are not in control and no point in crying over those things — Corona, the locusts' invasion, fear of war between countries etc. Many a time, our life faces disasters that are not in our control.

Ruth 1:19-21:

19 — So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

20 — “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.

21 — I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

Naomi continues to fret over that. If you fret about what has happened or happening in your life, you are closing the door to what is going to happen in your life. You are closing the doors because of your grumbling. Things have happened — lost your job, problems in your family, concerns about your children. All of these have happened already. Don’t keep grumbling or complaining about what has happened. Start to look forward, for there is a future for sure. Don’t bring up the things of the past, again and again. Look forward.

3. RESIST THE URGE TO DWELL ON THE PAST

Many of us like to live the same old life though God opens a new door. The Israelites were grumbling and speaking about the life they had in Egypt even before they entered the land of Canaan. Don’t bring the past when you correct your children, don’t keep thinking about your past, which has no value. Stop saying how you were and start saying how you are going to be.

4. EMBRACE THE CHANGE

If you want to have a great future, you need to accept the change. Ruth and Naomi went back to Bethlehem and they didn’t have any source. Ruth told Naomi that she would go to the fields and bring back whatever she gets. They didn’t have any source for their living. They did not waste time with idle talks. Start moving and doing something. Ruth said, “Let me go into the fields”. Ruth went and started working in Boaz’s field.

Ruth 2:10-12

10 — At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

11 — Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.

12 — May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

According to your work, you will be rewarded. It does not speak about her past. Ruth did not murmur or complain about the new place she was in nor did she leave her mother-in-law nor was hesitant to work in an unknown place. Boaz told Ruth that she will be richly rewarded. Most importantly, you need to look ahead to the future for whatever has happened till this very second, has gone into the past. Don't keep dwelling on the past. Embrace the change and move.

We keep talking about what happened (the negative things — the job or the money that we have lost) in our lives. We need to accept these changes in our lives and believe that God has kept something good and has a good future in my life. Ruth believed in that and Boaz said that she would be richly rewarded according to her work. If you need to have a good future, you need to change your thinking.

Don't be like a Naomi but be like a Ruth — the woman with faith, who looked forward, who took the risk, who did not look at herself with pity but thanked God, who did not dwell in her past. She believed she had got a future. She came there as a servant, a normal person but became a mistress and eventually the great grandmother of David. For a person who did not have any future and hope, God gave her a future. She wouldn't have been in history had she gone back to her people.

Conclusion:

People who stand amid persecutions, failures and disappointments, will stand out in history. Don't dwell on the past. Surely, the Lord has a future for us. It doesn't matter what has not happened and all the things that happen against us, surely there is a future for us — a new life, victory, healing. God will bless us and make His face shine upon us. Amen!