

The Joy of Responsibility
And so this is a series on the joy of responsibility


Love
Honour
Barley


our story begins...



Hunger — Famine — Moab

1 In the days when the judges ruled in
Israel, a severe famine came upon the
land. So a man from Bethlehem in
Judah left his home and went to live in
the country of Moab, taking his wife
and two sons with him. 2 The man's
name was Elimelech, and his wife was
Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon
and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from
Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And
when they reached Moab, they settled
there.

(photo based on:
mantast hesthaven
reynoldmainse.com)



3 Then Elimelech died, and Naomi
was left with her two sons. 4 The two
sons married Moabite women. One
married a woman named Orpah, and
the other a woman named Ruth. But
about ten years later, 5 both Mahlon
and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone,
without her two sons or her husband.

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6 Then Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. 7 With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.

10 “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”
11 But Naomi replied, “Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands? 12 No, my daughters, return to your parents’ homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what? 13 Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! **Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me.”**



8 But on the way, Naomi said to her
two daughters-in-law, “Go back to
your mothers’ homes. **And may the
Lord reward you for your kindness to
your husbands and to me. 9 May the
Lord bless you with the security of
another marriage.”** Then she kissed
them good-bye, and they all broke
down and wept.



14 And again they wept together, and
Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-
bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi.
15 “Look,” Naomi said to her, “your
sister-in-law has gone back to her
people and to her gods. You should
do the same.”

16 But Ruth replied,* “Don’t ask me to
leave you and turn back. Wherever
you go, I will go; wherever you live, I
will live. Your people will be my
people, and your God will be my
God. Wherever you die, I will die, and
there I will be buried. May the Lord
punish me severely if I allow anything
but death to separate us!”

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was
determined to go with her, she said
nothing more.



19 So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked.
20 “Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. **“Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. 21 I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”**

22 So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

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Daniel Lehrman, unsplash.com



And so that's where we stop and think about our own life's journey.
Int his beginning of Ruth, we start seeing Naomi, looking back with regret, looking ahead with bleakness, thinking about her life choices …



in the same way we an look at our past in good ways and bad ways… and i



We do this thing where we look at future with a negative outlook, or we remember our future in a positive way.
rose coloured glasses.
seeing it with what we want.

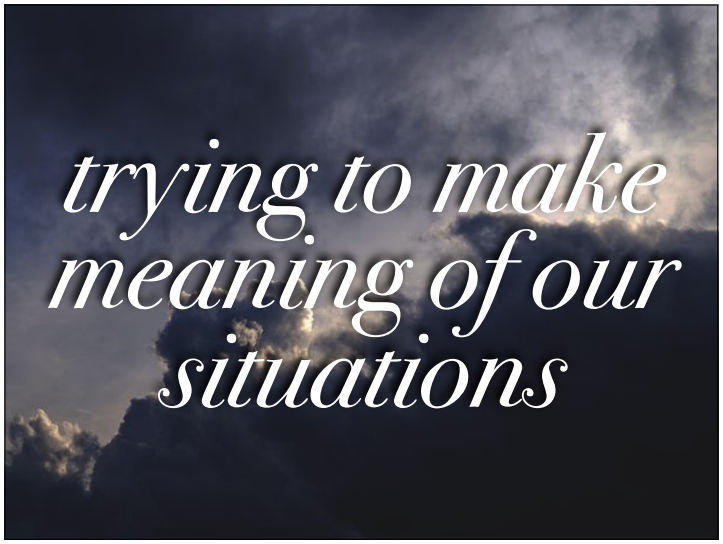
uncertainty affects our decisions, making it hard to know what to do, who we are how to make sense of the situations that we are in.

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Daniel Lehrman, unsplash.com



eternal winter
bleak outlook

photo credit
Sebastian Molina fotografía
unsplash.com


trying to make
meaning of our
situations



How does Naomi make sense of her situation .. How does she view God, and how does that affect her decisions here.

Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. 4 The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, 5 both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

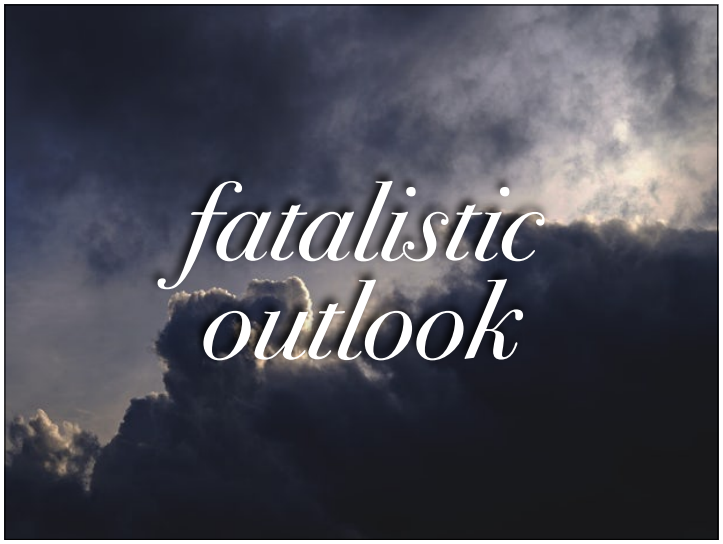
God is punishing me.
I am cursed.
Blessing and curses.

Fatalism

And may the Lord reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. 9 May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage.”

13 Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! ****Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me.”****

****“Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. 21 I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”****



It’s destiny, or an outside force, that has doomed me to this way. There’s no hope. There’s no way to change it. It is what it is.

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God has raise his fist against her.
The deaths are somehow God's punishment against her.
It's some sort of curse

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It's easier to blame God, than take responsibility for her own decisions. They decided to move to Moab. We don't know the circumstances around the death, but there's a difference between how the author writes about the death of the husbands, and Naomi's response.

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Her perspective on God.

“Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

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Jonatan Pie
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not a faith that God will make everything okay —
but a faith that says, God is worth following no matter what.

She's not looking for blessing.
She's not even thinking it's the better choice.

It's the only choice.

And how do we know it's God that she's following, not just Naomi — because if Naomi was cursed, then why would she go with her, because the prospects of two widows, one elderly surviving?
Because she would be a foreigner,

The difference between her and Naomi, is that Naomi is fatalistic, about God's role in her life. And Ruth, instead offering her life up to God. It's not a question about God' generic destiny for Naomi— but it is Ruth, even as a foreigner saying, your God, that's the God I follow. And I will stay with you.

Her life is in God's hands.

There's this overwhelming.



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is he a God that curses you and brings hardship to you for now reason. That somehow God's hand has turned bitter against you and is punishing you?

When we look at someone else life, and we think the grass is greener on the other side…
Or things aren't turning out the way we've planned..
we have a tendency to become fatalistic…

When things don't turn out how we had hoped, we can just easily blame God.



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Joshua 24:15
But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.