NAOMI & RUTH: GOD’S NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY
By Paul R. Blake

Text: Ruth 1:1-18

Introduction:
A. Leadership is not limited to government officials, elders, educators, and employers.
   1. Leaders and heroes are found among parents, grandparents, older Christians, big
      brothers and sisters, etc.
   2. They are leaders for the simple reason that someone else is following.
   3. Leadership involves responsibility.
      a. Impossible to abdicate without harmful influence.
   4. Leadership results in both persons going in the same direction and arriving at the
      same destination.
   5. Since one is a follower, the other must therefore be the leader.
      a. Even if de facto, he is accountable for his leadership.
      b. James 3:1
B. Ruth 1:18 - "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left
speakling unto her."
   1. Sometimes a family is not structured in the traditional manner.
      a. Through no fault of their own.
      b. One parent families through death or lawful divorce.
      c. Children taken in by relatives, older siblings raising younger, etc.
      d. No sin or stigma is attached, but it is necessary to follow God’s family rules.

I. NAOMI FELT INADEQUATE TO LEAD THE FAMILY
A. Vs 8 - "Go back to your mother's house."
   1. Vs 11-13 - Physical inadequacy.
   2. Vs 19-21 - Emotional inadequacy.
B. None of this removed responsibility from Naomi.
   1. If God did not think we were physically up to the tasks before us, would He have
      given us stewardship of our abilities?
   2. We may not fell able to handle the pressure, but I know of no one who can be
      entirely objective about himself. Those who follow us have confidence in us.
   3. Can't just chuck it; make the best of it; lead your follower to heaven; strengthen your
      hands for this work.

II. RUTH HAD CONFIDENCE IN NAOMI
A. All that Naomi would do, Ruth would do.
   1. Her trust was based on something --- trustworthiness.
   2. Ruth was not afraid to trust Naomi; but Naomi was afraid of being trusted.
   3. Ruth 1:16-17
      a. Not afraid to go where she leads.
      b. Not afraid to live as she would live.
      c. Not afraid to follow her lead in religion.
B. What if Naomi had been wrong?
   1. Matt. 15:14; 1John 4:1-3
   2. Ruth would have paid for her carelessness if her trust had been misplaced; and
      Naomi would have paid for betraying it.
C. Ruth's determination to follow Naomi was not something that could not easily be laid aside
   or passed on to another.
D. As a result of Naomi's leadership, Ruth the Moabitess became a part of the lineage of
   David and an ancestor of Jesus of Nazareth.
1. Ruth 4:16-17; Matt. 1:1-17

III. RUTH’S TRUST WAS NOT MISPLACED IN NAOMI
   A. Her reputation remained virtuous.
      1. Foreign women developed bad reputations in strange lands; but Ruth was known for her virtue.
      2. Ruth 2:11-12
      3. Ruth followed Naomi’s lead in protocols and proper behavior in potentially damaging situations and came out for the best.
      4. Ruth 3:8-13
      5. She trusted and did not question or presume to do it her way.
   B. She trusted Naomi with the customs and law.

C. Naomi was praised for her leadership.
   1. Ruth 4:14-17

IV. WHY DIDN'T I USE A GREAT MAN TO TEACH ON LEADING A FAMILY?
   A. That anyone can find himself/herself in a position of leadership unsought.
   B. That one does not have to be great in man's eyes in order to lead.
   C. The "Great" do not always make the best leaders.
      1. Job 32:7-9

V. HOW TO PREPARE TO BE THE LEADER OF A NON-TRADITIONAL FAMILY
   A. Set the right example - Matt. 5:13-16
   B. Set your heart on serving God - Joshua 24:14-15
   C. Trust God that you will succeed - 1Cor. 10:13
   D. Pray - Phil. 4:6-7

Conclusion:
   A. Consider your own leadership over the ones following you.
      1. You are being looked to for an example. Set a worthy one.
      2. Take responsibility for your failures ("that's his fault for following").
         a. Ever wonder why children turn off to some adults?
         b. The adult acted selfishly or callously, abdicating his leadership.
      3. Be humble enough to point out when praised that you are simply following another – Jesus Christ.
   B. Matt. 5:13-16
   C. When circumstances beyond your control change your family structure, you can still have a happy, healthy home and lead a fulfilling life together.
   D. John and Lynne Hager forgiving the boy who driving the car that took their daughter’s life; an echo of God forgiving us for sending Jesus to the cross.