

Your Telescope Into the Land of Promise

Remember Naomi? Her bittersweet life story unfolds in the eighth book of the Bible, Ruth.

Her home? A town whose very name spoke of its abundance—Bethlehem—house of bread. Her husband? A good man whose name spoke of his relationship to the Lord—Elimelech—my God is king. Her name? Descriptive of appearance and temperament—Naomi—pleasant, lovely, delightful.

Tough Times

But the house of bread became the place of famine. Hardship forced the family into migration. The husband died. Her two sons likewise—each leaving a widow with no children. Spiritually and emotionally depleted from over 10 years as an alien in sorrow, she returns home.

“Don’t call me pleasant anymore,” she tells her old friends. “Just call me bitter.” That was the new name she gave herself—Mara—bitter.

Like many of us, Naomi was too hard on herself. A bitter woman does not win the love of a daughter-in-law like Ruth, nor influence her to serve the same Lord.

Naomi ended well. In the final scene of her life, we see her contented, holding her grandson Obed, who in turn later became the grandfather of the man who wrote Psalm 65—her great-great-grandson David.

This psalm resonates with contentment. Like his ancestor Naomi, David also knew something about the long trail of tears. But here there is no sign of weeping, need, hunger or want.

Fullness

Repose and calm mark the atmosphere. No mention is made of enemies, conspirators or foes. There are no cries of desperation, feelings of abandonment, dark defiles of pain or a sense of being at the ends of the earth.

If you are passing through a difficult experience, you may wonder: *“Are there really moments in life such as those described in this psalm? Times when turbulence is absent?”* The answer, of course, is yes.

The setting for this psalm is harvest-time (v. 9–13). All has gone well. The scene diametrically contrasts with the failure of harvest experienced by Naomi. Now the threshing floors are filled with grain. In such a time, “praise awaits you, O God, in Zion” (v. 1).

God has come through. It is time to pay our vows (v. 1), to keep the promises we made to Him in our time of trouble.

Before contemplating the bounty of harvest, David celebrates the God who beautifies and makes fruitful our inner life.

Sin once overwhelmed us, but now our transgressions are forgiven (v. 3). We went into a far country (Luke 15:13), but now we live in His courts, filled with good things (Ps. 65:4).

This God of our personal lives (v. 3-4), and God over the harvest (v. 9–13) is also the awesome Creator who formed mountains and stills the turmoil of the nations, even as He stills the roaring of the seas (v. 5–7).

If He can exercise control over nature and nations, can He not rule over the difficult circumstances in your own life? If He has the whole world in His hands, can He not hold you also?

At dawn and sunset, will you express praise to Him with songs of joy (v. 8)? How different such a perspective is than the

groan as you drag yourself out of bed, or than the dread of sleeplessness as the dark of night deepens.

The final verses of this psalm celebrate the time of harvest (vv. 9–13). Notice the words of fullness: enrich, abundantly, drench, soften, bless, crown, bounty, overflow, abundance, clothed, gladness and covered.

There is no poverty when God is done with His blessing.

In Every Situation

If Naomi had known the outcome of her life during those difficult years of relocation, death, grief and feelings of emptiness, she would have welcomed this psalm to charge the batteries of her own faith. But she didn't have it because David was not yet born.

Unlike Naomi, you have David and the entire Bible with all God's rich promises. You know that Jesus is risen from the dead; that God, along with Him, will "graciously give us all things" (Rom. 8:32); and that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Rom. 8:28).

Just as there are psalms expressing heartfelt need because "famine" is a part of our life experience, so there are also psalms of fullness, such as this one.

There is a time for everything. If all circumstances are well with you today, if you enjoy a time of harvest and bounty, of rich yield on the investments of love and care you have made—then express your praise in the words of this psalm.

If you, like Naomi, live in difficult and harsh circumstances, let this psalm be a faith telescope through which you look into the land of promise God has yet for you.