

closer to his king it actually took him further away to the point where he died outside of his kings kingdom. Now to me, that's a huge warning.

This is a call to repentance. I'm wonderfully called and equipped to love my brothers and sisters in Jesus. The famine we experience is a famine of God's love because at times I get sucked into building barriers. Jesus is in the business of smashing those barriers so that we might truly live joyfully in 'The Son'. Please forgive me, I'm not perfect either.

For me Ruth is a call to come closer to the Father. A call to closer intimacy with the Father, so that his love for me

and you will flood our lives. So that the living water of the Holy Spirit will produce an abundant harvest of; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, to the Father's glory, honour and praise.

Let's not run off to the 'Land of Incest', putting up brighter lights, trying to be more sexy and appealing. Look we too can have fun, come and join us. Let's not go to the 'Land of Incest' as this time of famine, but let's go to our king drawing on his strength, wisdom and love that we might be growing intimacy with the Father, loving ourselves and

each other as the Father's loved children in whom he delights.

By the way, did you know the word Ruth means 'Friend'. Naomi returns in her misery supported by a 'Friend'. I thank God he doesn't give me what I deserve, but in Jesus I have a friend who says; "Don't ask me to leave you, I will go wherever you go, live where ever you live." Jesus my friend, my brother gives me the love, strength and wisdom I need. In him I can feast in the Father's 'House of Bread' and grow in a wonderful intimacy of love which is the Father.

4 November 2012
ALL SAINTS DAY
Ruth 1:1-18



Today's Old Testament reading was from the book of Ruth. At first reading the introduction to this piece of history seems rather banal. We have a guy and his wife moving to find a safer life in the face of a famine. Nothing dramatic here!

Then I started looking at the meaning of the names in this section. We have a famine and the town they are leaving is; 'Bethlehem'. What does 'Bethlehem' mean? 'House of Bread'. Now isn't that interesting, they are leaving the 'House of Bread' because of a famine. Why would you chose to leave God's house of bread?

The man's name is; Elimelech, which means: My God is King. Now that's a strong name. My God is King, suggests a reliance on God. God's

the king the one who rules his people. The king is the one to turn to, rely on, find security in. And what do we find this guy, 'My God is King' doing?

We find 'My God is King' leaving God's 'House of Bread' to go where? Moab. What do you know about Moab, other than it obviously isn't part of the Promised Land. The nation of Moab had their roots in Lot's incestuous relationship with his older daughter. This nation to which 'My God is King' it now looking to for salvation was birthed incestuously, they also threatened the Children of Israel on their way to the Promised Land and they also invaded the Promised Land and imposed their rule. And it is to this place that 'My God is King' is going seeking help. Does

anyone detect something's wrong here?

Maybe this introduction isn't so uneventful after all. If I relied on God and he was my King where would you expect me to look? To my king is what I'd expect, not some other bloke who has a dubious character.

'My God is King' is running away from his God with his wife Naomi. Naomi means; pleasant. 'My God is King' has been blessed with a pleasant wife. God has been good to him. Not only does he have a pleasant wife but two sons; Maholn and Chilion. He's got an heir and a spare. God's been good to 'My God is King'.

But I don't think he appreciates what he has. When I discovered the meaning of his son's names it doesn't reflect a

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

person who is happy with life. His first son; Maholn means 'Sickly'. The second son Chilion means 'Failing'. Not names I'd pick for my kids. They reflect to me someone who's not all that happy about life. What would get you to name your kids; Sickly and Failing?

I used the meaning of these names when reading these opening verses to see what it sounded like. "The man's name

was 'God is my king', his wife's name was 'Pleasant' and the names of his two sons where 'Sickly' and 'Failing'. They were Ephrathites from 'the House of Bread', in Judah – the Promised Land. And they went to 'The Land of Incest' and lived there."

They're exchanging living in the 'Promised Land' for 'The Land of Incest'. He's leaving bitter, at least upset, why else would you name your kids; 'Sickly' and 'Failing'? And maybe he's not even happy with

his wife, after all she's just 'Pleasant'. He's leaving in a time of famine, looking for something better. The grass looks greener on the other side of the fence.

Then it struck me that this story was too close to home. I've been like this guy, or at least tempted to be like this

'God is My King' Where do you live?

guy. I've definitely been tempted to think that the grass on the other side of the fence is greener. I've been tempted to look outside of my King's Kingdom expecting to find a better life.

But outside of Jesus' Kingdom what surrounds me? A land of incest, a land of compromise, a land lived out of fear. That's why Lot's daughter got him drunk and then had sex with him. She feared not having children. She feared being left alone

with no one to look after her, so she took control. I'm surrounded by a land where people are taking control to get what they want, to meet their needs their way. I'm surrounded by people cramming their living full of activity because they're afraid; afraid of missing out, afraid of being insignificant, afraid of what might happen.

I claim that God is my king, that Jesus is my king. That's me. And Jesus has blessed me with a wonderful wife and two children. Am I grateful or am I dissatisfied, looking over the fence wanting what everyone else has?

I claim that Jesus is my king and I live in 'the house of bread'. I live in Jesus' house where he feeds me, where he loves me. The name 'house of bread' had me think of communion. Where in, with and under the bread of communion Jesus feeds me, unites himself with me. I don't want to be anywhere else. Jesus

is life. Jesus is love. Without him there is nothing.

Yet I'm daily tempted by my TV to look over the fence and believe that the land of incest has more to offer. It glitters, seeking to make my life look like a famine. I'm daily presented with the good life, not the pleasant. I'm daily given images of beauty and strength, images of success and I'm invited to come over and try some. After all just once can't hurt. Just one bit can't hurt.

Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion die in the land of incest. This is the way one commentary put it; "At the end of that decade of disobedience, all that remained were three lonely widows and three Jewish graves in a heathen land. Everything else was gone!"

Did you notice they only were doing for a while, but they end up there a decade and die there. They flee death only to be engulfed by it, in a

place that offers no hope.

Why was there a famine in the Promised Land? Because God was seeking to call his loved children back to himself so that he might love them. Famine was always a call to repentance, not to leave God figuring there's got to be something better.

Bethlehem, the 'House of Bread'

That's the devil's lie, and lies only bring death.

Listening to people I sometimes get the impression that they feel there is a famine in the church, in God's 'House of Bread'. As a community we are numerically in decline, and our young people are leaving in the droves for the 'Land of Incest' attracted by the glittering lights and the hope of fun in the sun.

The church, God's loved children, are in a time of famine. There's no doubt about our decline in Australia. There's no doubt that we confess that 'God is our King'. The big question is have we headed off to the 'Land of Incest' or are we repenting?

I know I'm tempted to complain about how we could be doing a lot better. Am I labelling God's children; 'Sickly', 'Failing'? I'd never do that to my own, but am I tempted to do it to God's children! Am I thankful for the family of faith God has placed me in, or do I whinge about the music, the colour of the carpet, the quality of the sound, what's our next project. Am I tempted to whinge, groan, moan and complain because the church isn't perfect? Unfortunately I'd have answer, Yes!

When I look at 'God is my king' I notice that this attitude really didn't do him any good. Instead of drawing him