

HOW TO GET  
THROUGH  
WHAT YOU'RE GOING  
THROUGH

**How do you get through tough  
and tragic times?**

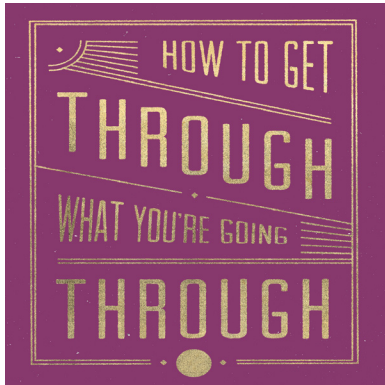
In this 4-part series we will honestly face the struggle of suffering and move forward in the truth that God loves us and is with us.

*This weekend: **Getting Through Life's Losses***

*March 30 - The Path to Peace*

*April 5/6 - Transformed by Trouble*

*April 12/13 - Never Waste Your Pain*



### Ruth 1:1-18; 20, 21 NLTSE

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. 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.

Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a

woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

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. 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.

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. May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage." Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept. "No," they said. "We want to go with you to your people."

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? 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? 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."

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

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!" When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.... "Don't call me Naomi," she responded. "Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. 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?"

## Getting Through Life's Losses - March 22/23, 2014

### Loss is unavoidable

- ♦ **Naomi's Story** (vv. 1, 3-5)
- ♦ **Your Story** (what loss has affected you?)

### Grieving is a choice

- ♦ **Naomi's song of Lament** (vv. 20-21)
- ♦ **Your song of Lament**
  - Thoughtfully list your losses
  - Passionately express your pain to God

### God is determined to go with you

- ♦ **Naomi's story**
  - The presence of Ruth (vv.16-18)
- ♦ **Your Story**
  - Healing is found in community (Gal 6:2)
  - Invite Jesus to heal our broken heart (Lk 4:18)

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### Study Questions:

1. We often refuse to grieve after we suffer a loss, even though the process of grieving is a healthy choice. When we read John 11:33-37, what do we learn about grief?
2. Sadness is not weakness. Many of our problems result from not allowing ourselves to grieve. If you've suffered a loss in the past, have you grieved? If not why not? If yes, what are some things that helped start that journey of grief?
3. We cannot grieve loss when avoiding to acknowledge that loss exists. How did Naomi acknowledge her losses? Laments are often hard left unsolved. Does Naomi's lament feel uncomfortable? Why do we want to 'fix' people's sadness instead of allowing them time to grieve?
4. We often think we are alone in our struggles, but what does the Lord promise in Psalm 34:18? How can we accept and experience God's grace and presence in the midst of loss? How has a loss you have suffered help you get closer to God?
5. Jesus says you will be comforted when you mourn (Matt 5:4). Is it difficult to look to Jesus for comfort? How was Naomi comforted by Ruth? How does Ruth demonstrate the determined love of Jesus?
6. How does Ruth help us understand an excellent response to someone who is experiencing loss? Who around you is experiencing loss? How can you be a 'Ruth' to them and so show them the love of Jesus?