

The True Meaning of Marriage - 1983

Ruth 1 vs 1-19

Ruth 1 vs. 16+17

⊗ It was no pronouncement
of a Jewish priest or of the
religious layman

This is one of the most beautiful and moving passages in the whole of Scripture - both Old & New Testament. ~~It~~ It has no direct bearing on marriage or on love between sexes. ~~It~~ It forms the record of an expression of an incredible love and commitment of a ^{so-called he} young ^{Hebrew} woman for her mother-in-law. And yet it says everything there needs to be said in the relationship of ^{man and} love between ^{woman} husband and wife. Why do I say this? Because it portrays all the elements which form the foundation upon which a truly happy, lasting marriage is built:

1. Total commitment in love: Ruth gives expression to her love by referring to every important aspect of human relationships as it was seen and ~~experienced~~ ^{experienced} during her life-time. It includes her personal commitment to Naomi (where - - - -)

it includes her identification with the culture and nationhood of Naomi (your people ---), it includes her identification with the religious beliefs of Naomi (your God ---) and it ^{culminates} ~~ends~~ in a commitment of a life-long love and friendship (nothing but death shall divide us) ^{her love to Naomi}

Taken together ^{her love to Naomi} ~~it~~ is so complete, all-inclusive and so ~~almost~~ perfect so ~~ideal~~ that it is almost awesome and overwhelming in its entirety

- Fully aware that almost perfect ideal is unattainable for most human beings. ~~the~~ Even though we wish to do so we are going to fail in one or more respects. But it serves as a challenge, a criteria to inspire, a guidance to guide us on our way. And this is true especially as far as marriage is concerned.

Danger of setting such high & unattainable standards that one reacts to the other side - not even striving to attain!

2. Matter of formal legal or moral obligation.

State ~~is not~~ has laid down extensive
legal obligations on marriage, care
of children, rights of spouses, divorce
etc. -

Church has tried to interpret in its
church law or pronouncements on mar-
riage the understanding of moral
obligation

- Both needed for man in his
social state, Society in order to
maintain stability & ^{security} requires
such rules & obligations.

But in the final instance it
is the presence and mutual obedience in love
which constitutes and guarantees
a lasting true marriage. And where
^{such love} disappears or wanes there mar-
riage becomes nothing more than a
formal legal contract devoid of joy
and warmth & mutual enrichment.