



Pastor's Comments

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Northampton Assembly of God

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The Bitter Woman

How often does it happen that the *circumstances of life turn a “pleasant” woman into a “bitter” woman?* One such woman in the Bible was named Naomi (meaning *“pleasant”*). There was no foretelling that after her marriage and the birth of two sons she and her husband would leave their homeland because of a famine. Or, that there *her husband would die, as well as both sons* who married, but fathered no children. Widowed and childless, Naomi prepared to return to her own country. One daughter-in-law, Ruth, begged to go with her. After protesting, Naomi finally relented and the two women returned to Bethlehem. Upon their arrival, friends and family rushed to welcome the woman they had said good-bye to many years earlier. Naomi bared her soul, explaining that although she had *“gone out full,” having plenty*, now *she was coming home with nothing – no husband, no children, just one daughter-in-law*. Her words were, *“Call me not (by my name) Naomi, call me ‘Mara’ ” (meaning bitter)*.

What a further humbling, to realize she was dependent on her daughter-in-law to glean in the fields in order to eat. But one day *Naomi began to refocus her attention from her own sorrow and losses to Ruth's need for a husband*. Upon realizing that the field in which Ruth gleaned was owned by her deceased husband's rich relative, Naomi wisely advised her daughter-in-law on how to gain Boaz's romantic interest. So it was that Ruth and Boaz married and had a son. Naomi was so smitten with a love for the infant that she was allowed to become the child's nurse causing people to say, *“there is a son born to Naomi.”* The child became famous in Israel as Obed, the grandfather to David, Israel's most beloved king.

Often it is when we look beyond our own disappointments and help another, we reclaim our own happiness. –Submitted by pastor's sister-in-law, Grace Lundmark