

## Bible Readings for Sunday 31 October, 2021

### Ruth 1:1-18

**1** 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. **2** 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.

**3** Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons.

**4** The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, **5** both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

**6** 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. **7** 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.

**8** 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. **9** May the Lord bless you with the security of another marriage." Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

**10** "No," they said. "We want to go with you to your people."

**11** 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? **12** 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? **13** 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.”

**14** And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi. **15** “Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.”

**16** 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.

**17** 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!” **18** When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

#### Hebrews 9:11-14

**11** So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. **12** With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever.

**13** Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer could cleanse people’s bodies from ceremonial impurity. **14** Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.

## Mark 12:28-34

**28** One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realised that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

**29** Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.

**30** And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ **31** The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

**32** The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. **33** And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbour as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”

**34** Realising how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.