The Old Testament book of *Ruth* is the moving, touching, and inspirational true story of a Moabite woman whose name was Ruth who forsook her pagan heritage in favor of being associated with the people and the God of Israel.

Some of you know the story well. Naomi, the wife of Elimelech, a Bethlehemite, lost both her husband and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, by death. Upon their death Naomi determined to return to her home in Judah and, understandably, encouraged her two daughters-in-law to return to their own mother’s home in Moab to find themselves a new husband. One daughter-in-law, Orpah, did as Naomi encouraged. The other, Ruth, “clung to her” says the Bible and said to her:

"Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."

These words are well-known and often are read at marriage ceremonies. They are fitting for such ceremonies. But they are also fitting to be read when God’s saints gather at the Table of our Lord.

We live in a time when all kinds of things are changing – and changing rapidly. It seems as if everything is changing, including the church. Some changes are not necessarily wrong. But, there are movements and trends that would modernize the church in such a way that she would no longer be recognizable as the church that Jesus built – that church made known to us in the eternal, everlasting, and unchanging Word of God. One change that is becoming more and more acceptable is the manner in which we commune with our Lord. In some places the day on which it is observed has changed. In other places that which is placed upon the Table has changed. And still in other places those who preside at the Table have changed. Certainly the importance on the Table has diminished over the many years since our Lord instituted His supper.

But for some of us believers nothing about it will ever change. The time that it is observed will not change. That which is eaten and drunk will not change. Those who preside at it will not change. And certainly its importance will not change. We will not change what the church has done for years and centuries in order to accommodate cultural trends. Like Ruth who refused to leave her mother-in-law to go back from whence she came, we will not leave our Lord and His Table to go back from whence we came before our conversion for the sake of being with
other people, even our own people, and their gods even if that is the popular thing to do. No, like Ruth, we will not go back from following our Lord only to be with our own people and others who have their own gods.

In John 6:66 it is written that "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." Then in verse 67 "Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' "But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'" And that is the question that confronts each of us at this Table. "Do you also want to go away?" – away from the Table, away from the Word of God, away from the church, away from salvation, forgiveness, mercy and grace that only Christ is able to give? Do you want to go away? We can, you know. We do have free will. No one will force us to come to this Table. No one can force us to come to this Table. So why do we come? Why are we here? We come because as Ruth loved Naomi we love God even more. We love Him because He has shown us that He loves us. And to prove our love for Him – to demonstrate our love outwardly to Him whose Table it is – and even to the world – we once again meet Him here at His Table to commune with Him. Lord willing, we will do this next Lord’s Day and the next Lord’s Day and the next Lord’s Day until we die or until He comes again.

No, we will not go back to a world that has nothing of any lasting, spiritual significance to offer us. As Ruth remained with and followed Naomi, we will continue to stay with our Lord and follow Him. It is written in Ruth 1:18 that "When [Naomi] saw that she [i.e., Ruth] was determined to go with her, she [Naomi] stopped speaking to her." We can only pray that as our Lord looks from His heavenly throne upon our hearts that He too sees our determination to follow Him unto our death because of His death on our behalf. By God’s grace, no, we will not go back.

Prayer

Our Father who is in heaven, we thank you for this time that you are allowing us to have to commune with our Lord Jesus, the Christ, and with His church. Help us not to waste this time but to properly redeem it by examining ourselves. Lord, we want to be as attached and as devoted to you as was Ruth to Naomi. But you know better than we that our will is sometimes weak and sometimes our flesh wins the spiritual battle in which we are engaged. So we come to this sacred Table of your perfect Son and our loving Lord as your children who have won some battles and lost others in this past week. We are reminded again that except for your grace and that of Jesus, our Savior, and of the Holy Spirit, the gift you have given us, we would be without hope. As we commune we ask that you bless the loaf and that you receive our thanks for the cup each of which reminds us of the incomprehensible sacrifice that was made for us. We pray that you will accept this meager prayer that is offered in the name of Jesus Christ, the One Who we remember at this time and at this Table. Amen.