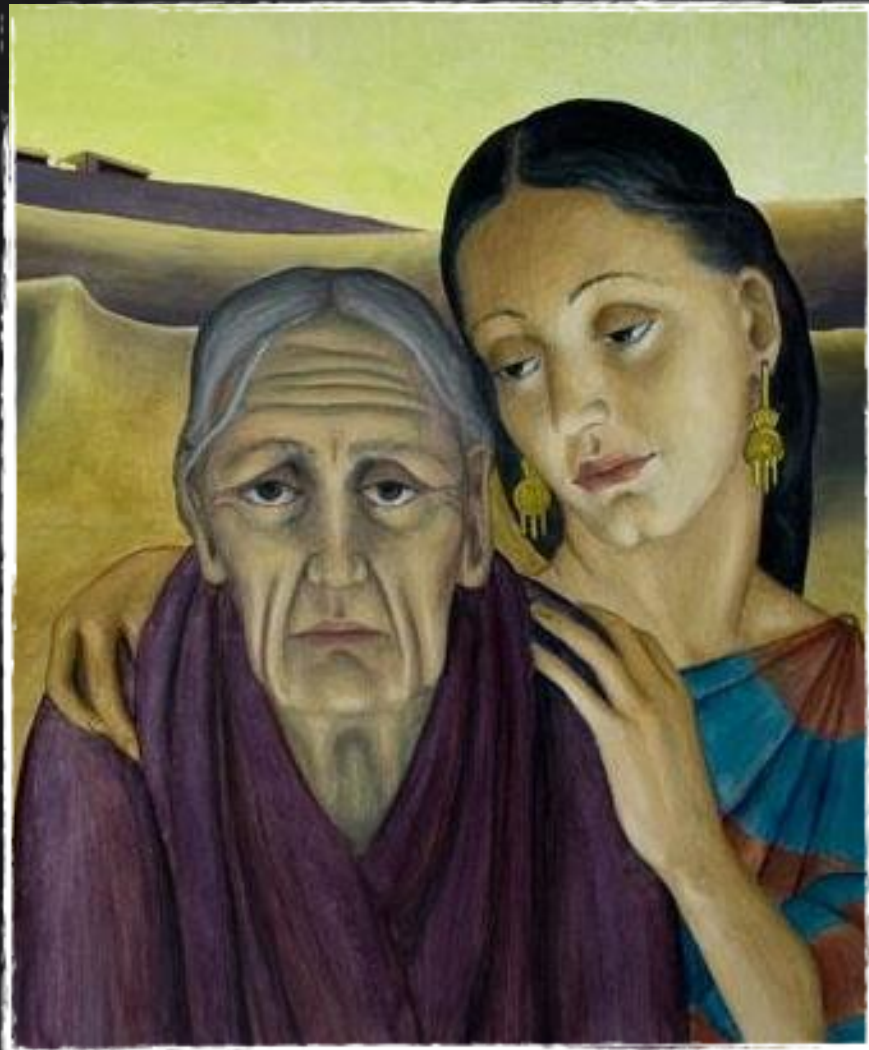


A woman wearing a dark hijab is shown in profile, looking down, standing in a field of tall, golden-brown grass. The background is a bright, hazy sunset or sunrise, creating a warm, golden glow. The word "Rutba" is written in a white, cursive script across the center of the image.

Rutba



ACT 3

“Bitterness and
Her Daughter
Arrive in
Bethlehem”

Ruth 1:19 - 2:2

“Go, return each of you to her mother’s house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!” (Ruth 1:8-9)

Ruth 1:19

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

Ruth 1:20-21

20 She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

Ruth 1:22

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Naomi offers us a model of utter
honesty with God.

Real relationship is built through
honest dialogue and raw
authenticity.

“Naomi’s words point to the mysterious and often (from a human perspective) unjust workings of God. But one must realize that Naomi’s outburst in fact assumes a positive view of God, namely, that he controls the universe, normally with justice. Her case is an exception—though not a rare one—but such is the mystery of God.” (Hubbard)

Wrestling things out with God often
exposes the narratives under which
we are living — whether false or true.

Naomi's Narratives

- “God is against me. He has brought calamity to my door.”

Naomi's Narratives

- “God is against me. He has brought calamity to my door.”
- “I am a sinking ship. I am doomed.”

Naomi's Narratives

- “God is against me. He has brought calamity to my door.”
- “I am a sinking ship. I am doomed.”
- “The Lord has brought me back empty.”

Naomi's Narratives

- “I am Mara. Bitterness is my experience, identity, and destiny.”

Naomi's Narratives

- “My God is an active and attentive God, a God of justice and rewarder of those who demonstrate his kindness and character in the world. He is always at work—even when he doesn't appear to be.”

A real conversation allows us as well as God to speak. While God may not speak audibly with words, he is certainly not silent.

Cultivate trust rather than clarity in
your journey with God.



“No, I will not pray that you have clarity. Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of. I have never had clarity. What I have always had is trust. So that is what I will pray for. I will pray that you trust God.”

*“Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters,
when you meet trials of various kinds, for
you know that the testing of your faith
produces steadfastness. And let
steadfastness have its full effect, that you
may be perfect and complete, lacking in
nothing.” (James 1:2-4)*

Ruth 2:1

1 Now Naomi had a friend through her husband's, a wealthy, influential person, from the same clan as Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

Ruth 2:2

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”

Ruth offers us a model of active faith
that presses forward into the
extraordinary.

“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent... [shining] as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life.”

(Philippians 2:12-16)