

Bethlehem Bound: Bitter and Broken

Book of Ruth
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Let's take our Bibles and look once again in Ruth 1. I'll be reading from verse 19 down to verse 22. I have entitled this message "Bethlehem Bound: Bitter and Broken." You've seen these cars or vans when you're driving along highway; they kind of let you know where they're headed. It could be Orlando bound, it could be San Francisco bound and they are letting everybody know. Well here, this is Bethlehem bound but bitter and broken.

It says here in verse 19,

19 So they two [the Lord had whittled it down to just two, a remnant] went until they came to Bethlehem [Bethlehem means "house of bread," known for that place where our Lord Jesus Christ was born according to God, the Father's purpose. A little town.] And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, [notice that name didn't drop. It's like Rahab, the harlot. Ruth, the Moabitess. You might as well say Ruth, the condemned one because that's what Moab was by God's law and yet here was an object of his grace yet to be manifest but the Lord drawing all along.] So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Now, to read this story to this point and looking at these 2 that are now trudging their way back to Bethlehem as the world looks on, the world might say as they do today and some author a number of years ago wrote a book with this title, "How could such bad things happen to such good people?" That's how the world reasons. I don't care whether it's a tsunami, whether it's a plague, it could be ebola, it could be anything. The way the world looks on these things is: how could so much bad happen to such good people? But when we who are the Lord's consider who we are by nature, the Lord having shown us

that we're nothing but rebellious, wretched sinners, the better question and this is one that the Lord brings each of his own to confess is: why does anything good happen to such wretched sinners as we are? I don't know if the Lord has given you that spirit but I trust so because if the Lord is gracious and merciful to any one of us, that's because he is good, not because we're good. And if he exercises in any way his sovereign hand to chasten or afflict or even bring any sinner into condemnation like we read in Job 1, may we not charge God foolishly or say as the wicked say, "Why has God done so? Why has he exercised his hand so?"

So that's the thought here. When we talk about Bethlehem bound, bitter and broken, it's full circle because the chapter began with a famine in the land and this family moving down into Moab. It's all in decline, everything: isolation, death. And then in time now as we saw last time, Naomi in verse 6, hearing that the Lord had visited his people and given them bread, there is a hearing. The Lord doesn't leave any one of his own in condemnation but in his time draws them out if they are the Lord's. If he has purposed to save them and has saved them through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in time, the Spirit is going to call each one. But here's the difference that I see in Scripture: 1. But also by my own experience as I recall how the Lord first began to deal graciously in my heart and I like to describe it even as Paul described it to the Philippians, "He that hath begun a good work in you." There is no good in us but, "He that hath begun a good work in you." The good work is his grace. It's outside of ourselves but done for us and in us, "shall perform it," he shall perform it "until the day of Jesus Christ," and that could be the day when he opened your eyes to bring you to Christ in the heart, as it says of Lydia, "Her heart was opened," but the day of Jesus Christ when that day comes and we'll stand fully glorified before God the Father in Christ. But it's all God's work.

So here are some points that I draw from this particular portion that we've read here in Ruth 1 verses 19 to 22. The first is this: none are innocent. I know that that is a term that the world uses. How could it be that so many innocent people died? Well, there has never been an innocent person that has died other than the Lord Jesus Christ and even more than innocent, righteous. But the reason he died was not for any sin in him because the wages of sin is death. He died as a judgment, the wages of sin being upon him. That's important. It wasn't sin in him. Isaiah in Isaiah 53 said that, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He didn't infuse it in him as some would say that he had to become what we are so we become what he is. No, he identified with such wretched sinners as we are bearing that sin in righteousness and justice. He died the just one for the unjust. But apart from the Lord Jesus Christ having paid that sin debt, there isn't a human being that has ever walked the face of this earth where it could be said that they died in innocence. So this is where the Scriptures part, or I should say men part from the Scriptures today because all throughout we find that any one of us if we're living, breathing, walking this earth, we are tainted, infected by and condemned with a sin nature.

Now, I'm not going to take you through all the Scriptures that I could but there is one here in Ecclesiastes 7. Normally people like to run over to Romans 3 and start talking about, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and certainly we could

dwell there but look here in Ecclesiastes. Right after Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. This was a Scripture that the Lord brought home to my heart early on and I had never read it before as it is. You know how it is when you're blind and you can't see, you tend to read Scriptures based upon prejudices or how men have interpreted it but listen to how it's written here in Ecclesiastes 7:20. It says, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Now, how is that normally interpreted? Well, people will quickly go over to Romans 3 and say, "There is none righteous, no, not one," and they like to quote that about people in their sin but read it for what it says. "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." You see, the punctuation was put in here by the editors. There shouldn't be any punctuation between "just man that doeth good," and "sinneth not." What it's saying is that even the good that a just man might esteem as being good, is still sin. In the goodness. You see, that's where the Lord began to bring this home to me and then you connect this with what Isaiah said where he declared even our righteousnesses are filthy rags. You see, everybody out here is talking about this sin and that and how bad it is and yet they consider themselves good because they are going to a place of worship, they are reading the Bible, they are praying, they're singing, they're fellow shipping, they're getting along and there is a lot of whoopeddo. Then you read God's assessment even of that, that whatever good man esteems himself before God, it is even sin in considering it good.

Now, the reason I say that is because there are a lot of preachers that are going to go through even the book of Ruth and try to point out the good character of Ruth. I remember preaching through this after the Lord began to work in my heart and it was in a home congregation that had originally sent me out to Africa and when I came back with the light of Christ and endeavored to preach Christ to that congregation that had originally sent me out, they became offended. They didn't like the thought that they had sent out a lost preacher who had back there in the jungle of Africa, the Lord had dealt with his heart and now when he came back, all he was doing was going through Scripture and preaching Christ. I remember going through the book of Ruth and the other pastor's wife saying to me, "There is so much that you are missing in your preaching in the book of Ruth. We have a lot of women here in this congregation that could benefit from looking at her good character." I said, "We must not be reading the same Bible," and not even Ruth would have attested to any sort of good character. She was a Moabitess, condemned by the law. It wasn't in pride and head lifted high that she followed Naomi back to Bethlehem, it was in humility, knowing her placed before the Lord.

And I believe that's a clear evidence of the Lord's work of grace and even Naomi, when you consider as she came back to Bethlehem and the whole city was moved about them, this was a community that everybody knew everybody. Even though 10 years had passed, you don't forget those that have left and now she comes back and her very presence, just the physical presence but demeanor, everything about her, she describes in verse 21 as being from the hand of the Lord because she said, "The LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me." You see, here again is where the world differs with the testimony of God because if something bad happens, what do they say? "Oh, that wouldn't be God. He loves us too much for that to happen." Now you've got problems because you've got some sort of evil on the loose here that God somehow has no control

over. If I believed that, I couldn't sleep at night. How could I shut my eyes knowing that there is evil that could befall me simply because I'm not watchful, I'm not waking? But if evil does befall me and I know that nothing lives or moves or has its being, even Satan, we read it here in Job 1, he couldn't lift a finger against Job but what God gave him the authority to do so. You know, people kind of lessen the blow and they say, "Well, God allows these things. He's got his way by which he decrees and then he's got his..." They've got God's will all sliced and diced, laying out on the counter. He's got one will, the God of the Bible, and it doesn't matter whether it comprises in our minds good or evil. When David wrote there in Psalm 23 declaring that, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for," what? "Thou art with me." If we truly believe God in his testimony, I don't care if it's the worst illness or tragedy or whatever, if we are the Lord's, we don't see that as an evil because we see God's hand directing it. You say, "Why don't I see that?" Well, when you're going through it, no chastening, no affliction is pleasant in and of itself. I don't mean to say that every time the Lord deals in the same manner with any one of us that we just kind of smile and like people say, you know, "Smile, God loves you." No, there is a real bearing of this affliction as we see here in Naomi. But we see in this is that it was a work of grace. It was all of this, was purposed by God not because she was innocent. When she uses this word in verse 21, "seeing the LORD hath testified against me," you know what a testimony is, it's a court of law. "The judge himself stood up and spoke and acted against me and he's right." You know, when the judge speaks and says this is the declaration and this is the sentence, we don't find Naomi saying this in any kind of contrary or opposing way. She testifies.

And the word "Naomi" means "pleasant," so that's what she's saying. "I went out pleasant." She said, "why then call ye me Naomi," in verse 21. Up in verse 20, "Call me not Naomi, call me not pleasant." You know how people try to comfort you, "Oh, do you know what? You're a good person. I sure don't understand why you're going through these things or you're going through some bad luck," is the way the world talks about bad luck, "But I want you to know, you're a good person." Have you ever had anybody tell you that? Then, boy, you come right back and say, "Don't call me good. Don't call me pleasant. Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara," Mara means bitter. And it doesn't mean a bitter attitude but, "The Lord has taken everything that I ever considered sweet before and shown me it's just a bitter taste."

That's a grace when the Lord can cause you to look at yourself and anything about yourself and brings you low because if the Lord is doing this, it's not just to hold your head underwater and make you cry "uncle" and scream. That's not his purpose. But if he's going to draw us to Christ, even as here in this story he's drawing Ruth and Naomi to Boaz, the ultimate end then how does he draw sinners but stripped of any thought of good in themselves. And I'll tell you, even based on my own experience in reading through the Scriptures, it's not a one time thing. Today in religion you've got somebody saying, "Well, take your stand with Jesus and walk the aisle." They make faith to be a performance. Faith isn't a performance. Faith, God-given faith, is a persuasion. Like Paul said, "I am persuaded that that which I have committed unto him," and you stop and think, "Well, what did Paul commit unto the Lord?" His rags. Everything that he was. He thought at one point he was blameless but he, himself, said that all that he was before

Christ, before Christ was revealed in him, all that righteousness. When he says, "I count not those things which are behind but press forward toward the prize, the high calling of God." When he says, "I count not those things which are behind," he's talking about good things. He's not talking about a life of debauchery and drunkenness. He was an upright in his own eyes, blameless before the law type man. He says that. Until the Lord brought him low, stripped him of everything, struck him with blindness, laid him low those 3 days before Ananias came and ministered unto him and his eyes were opened and he is saying, "I count all of that as," what? "Dung." Think of a whole yard full of manure and the stench and the stink. That's what he calls it, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

That's what I see here but this isn't something that's unusual to Naomi and Ruth. I truly believe that any of us that are the Lord's, if we'll look back over our path and sometimes, the path may be a little rougher for one than the other but that's all according to God's purpose. That path that the Lord has drawn and by which he has drawn every one of us, it begins, that initial work of grace begins in showing us there is nothing good in me and it continues that way. You notice here they came all the way to Bethlehem in this state. Naomi wasn't even of a thought of saying, "You know, I'm a little ashamed to go back to Bethlehem. Let's see if we can't just settle down here and maybe find something to eat and got our appearance a little better. Let's get a bath. Let's get a shower. Let's wash up. Let's fix ourselves up so that when we come into Bethlehem, no one is going to be saying, ah-ha." She didn't even wait for that. She went right back there and she herself said, "Everything that has happened to us, it's been the Lord himself that has done it."

Religion encourages people to try to fix themselves up and therefore it becomes a charade because that's what's expected. The one thing about the Gospel that I love is the fact that the Lord sees me just as I am. I don't have to prove anything to anybody else and anything that anybody points out about me, I have to say that I'm thankful the half has not been told to you because people, they'll get mean. If they figure out one little thing that you've done wrong and fallen and all this, they're coming after you. They're waiting. Especially if it's somebody that has rested in and believed in God's grace alone. They hate grace so they love it when they can pull a story on somebody that's the Lord's, "Did you hear? Did you see? Did you know So-and-so how they fell? Can you believe it?" You know, even in ourselves, I don't care how obnoxious or how unbelievable a story is. Someone was telling me a story this week and they were just shocked. They said, "I can't believe that person could ever do something like that." I said, "You don't know yourself. I pray daily that the Lord keep me because 'but for the grace of God there go I.'" I don't care if it's the worst Texas chainsaw murderer, "but for the grace of God, there go I."

So she was not aware, Naomi or Ruth, in coming back, of anybody else, how good they looked, how she looked. Her one desire was to get back to Bethlehem, the house of bread and in that we see a picture of the Lord drawing his own to Christ. So none are innocent but number 2. We see in this story that God is not only all-knowing and all-wise, people can say that, "Well, God sees it all and he's watching over you." No, he's directing. He's not only all-knowing, all-wise but he is directing even in the chastenings of his children. They may not seem pleasant for the moment but if we're the Lord's, then every

chastening just like here, is a mercy. It's a mercy. A preacher said, "There is no wrath, there is not even an ounce of wrath in God's chastenings when it concerns his children." How do I know that? Well, either Christ paid the debt or he didn't. You see, it all comes back to the cross. Before the cross, God was forbearing with these such as Naomi and Ruth. He did not put their sin to their charge. He was forbearing. He withheld his hand from condemning them with the rest. You stop and think Moab, why Ruth? Of these in Israel, why Naomi? Well, that was the Lord's hand of mercy.

But this chastening was not out of wrath but out of love. I remember when Mary was so ill, there was a preacher and we spent some time trying to figure out what was wrong but I remember this preacher saying to me, "God must love you," because there was a lot of uncertainty, a lot of tears trying to weigh his will and what was his purpose in all of this. You know, sometimes you think, "Well, okay, Lord, it's been a week. It's been 2 weeks. Okay, now it's been a month. Alright Lord, now it's been 6 months. Now it's been a year." There are some afflictions that the Lord for some of his own, it's their lifetime. There is a dear lady from England, I've never met her but she sends out such encouraging emails. She tries to do it weekly. This week I wrote her in response to an email that she had sent and she emailed back and she just said, "Pray for me. I'm 81 years old and I'm an invalid." She said, "I can't even get out of bed and it's all the strength I can do just to send out." She said, "I pray that the Lord strengthen me to send this out daily," because she's got friends and she wants them to hear the Gospel. I've never met her but that's her lot in which the Lord has put her. But I'll tell you what: she wouldn't exchange it for anything because through that the Lord has taught her and humbled her.

So that's what I want you to see here. A lot of people raise their fists and we're talking about natural minded people, raise their fist in the face of God, "How is it that God could do this to me or to an acquaintance of mine?" They don't know God. What God is doing through that is bringing out all the more that rebellious nature which justifies him in doing what he's doing. It's like Job said, "If I open my mouth to defend myself, my very words would condemn me." You say, "Why didn't Job charge God foolishly?" Well, God had already revealed himself in who he was in his sovereignty and that's why Job was able to say there in Job 13:15, "Though he slay me." That's an acknowledgment that everything he was going through was coming from the hand of God even though we read in Job 1 that it was Satan that was doing these things. But Job didn't attribute it to Satan. He said, "Though he," God, "slay me, yet will I trust him."

And he also said as we read there in Job 1:21, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away." There it is again, "blessed be the name of the Lord." You watch, next time there is a disaster and we see it almost daily on the news but then they'll grab some religious leader somewhere and they'll put a microphone in front of him and they'll ask that religious leader, "Well, what do you think about what has just happened?" And the religious leader will say, "We know God is good and he's love but God didn't do this." How many times do you hear that? Maybe their God didn't because it's a little god and he's in a panic. That's why they do what they do. They run around, they have prayer services, "We've got to call some people. We've got to get a prayer chain going." That's why you'll get emails from people sometimes saying, "We need to be praying round-the-

clock." When you go into Scripture and look at that kind of panic, it's a false god. Like Elijah on Mount Carmel with the false prophets of Baal. They were dancing around the altar. They were crying out. They were cutting themselves. They were trying to get their god to answer but a god that doesn't exist doesn't answer, can't answer. He's dumb. He doesn't have a mouth to speak. That's what God said, "I am God and there is none other."

That's our confidence even with regard to the matters of God's chastening, they're not in wrath but in love. If you look at the progression even with Job and I'm going to bring you over here now to Job 9, for example. We read Job 1 before the message but here in Job 9:33, notice what he says, "Neither is there any daysman betwixt us," an umpire. Job is being brought by God here to see his need and that's what I want us to understand. Ruth and Naomi would never have known their need of Boaz had not God stripped them of everything to where when they came back they had nothing. So if you wonder why it is that God exercises his chastenings upon us, it's because this flesh is so prideful in its fallen state, it will not bow and so the Lord graciously keeps removing the props. You stop and think about when you feel or sense your need the most of the Lord Jesus Christ, I'm talking about truly sensing it, isn't it when you fall? Isn't it when he brings you low through some affliction to where you can hardly breathe? You can't turn right or left? It feels like if the Lord kept his hand heavy upon you, you would suffocate and die? But all of that, what does it do? Your cries start turning unto the Lord. That's what Job is saying here. He said, this situation is such, "Neither is there any daysman," any umpire, "betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both." You stop and think about God's holiness and who he is. "I need a mediator to put his hand on him, on God? I certainly can't touch him but I also need a merciful God to put his hand on me before I die."

It says there in verse 34, "Let him take his rod away from me," but in justice. You see, this is the thing: to be just, God can't just overlook our sin. There has to be a way for him to take his rod away from me. Well, how did he do that? That rod fell on his Son, there is a substitute. So Job is already thinking in the right way. Why? Because of the Spirit of God. You're talking about a man who had everything and now the Lord takes it away. He's sitting on a garbage pile scratching himself with potsherds, with sores all over his body to such a degree that when his friends initially saw him, just like Naomi here, they were speechless the Scripture says. They sat there in silence. There were no words to describe. "Can this be Job?" Just like with Naomi, "Isn't this Naomi?"

But he says, "Let not his fear terrify me." That's the point: if God were to deal with us like David said, "If God should mark iniquity, who should stand?" Even now, us sitting here, if we are the Lord's, we know that he has shown grace to us but if God were to ever look upon us outside of his Son, he'd have to cast us into hell with the worst of them. That's where Job says, "Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me. I'm not the one to speak. I'm not the one to defend myself." It's like Naomi said, "The Lord has testified against me." You know, it's one thing for a human judge to pronounce a sentence and then there's all kinds of...but when the Lord speaks, there is no answer.

So this is what the Lord brought Job to but, you know, it wasn't to leave him there. Job has many chapters. I love the progression of Job as you go through because the light gets

brighter. Just like Naomi, the closer they got to Bethlehem, the closer they were to that hope, even though they hadn't seen it yet, didn't know. That's why over here in Job 19. As you know, we were just in 9 but look in Job 19:25, I love this. He says in verse 23, "Oh that my words were now written!" Well, they are. I don't believe that these that wrote the Scriptures were conscious of the fact that what they were writing was necessarily the inspired word of God. I know that may shock some but people have this idea that somehow all of these went into a trance. They were writing their thoughts as the Spirit directed but it wasn't that they were inspired, it's the word that's inspired. That's why it's perfect. It's not the men, it's not the instrument, it's not the pen. Even here, "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!" Who was directing him even to write that? It was the Spirit of God. "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" And look at here, "For I know," you see, this is what the Lord brings his own to, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." Now, we're talking about pre-Christ, pre-cross. How could Job speak in such terms and language? Most people even though Job is here toward the middle of our Bible, but you read what is written in the context, he was older than Abraham. He was older than Moses. He was among the initial sons of Adam, if you will, of the line of Seth that the Lord would have chosen out. I say that but he was from that area; he was from the East. He just like Abraham was called from the East. He was called from Uz and brought into the land of Canaan. But Job was there even before him but he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth," and here it is, "and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." When he says "Stand on the earth," he's not talking about his second coming, he's talking about his first coming. The latter day. In these last days. The latter day was initiated when Christ came the first time and he says, "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." His hope was in the resurrection that this one who had come, lived, died and rose again and is sitting on high, that he would be in him and thereby carried into glory. Where did he learn that? This is in the midst of the affliction. This isn't afterward. This isn't armchair quarterbacking on Monday after, this is in the middle of it. The one thing that he had to confess is that, "My hope is in the Lord, in the Redeemer." That word is used there, Redeemer. Just like Naomi and Ruth needed a redeemer, a ransom, someone to pay ransom.

But you'll see ultimately here in Job 42 and we'll have to come back here because there is a lot more that I want us to see but Job 42, the last chapter. And if you haven't read the entire book of Job in a while, I'd encourage you to go back and read it. I started reading through it in preparation for this and didn't know where to stop. When you see the progression of what God is doing here and then you read this last chapter, "Then Job answered the LORD," you see, back here he said, "I dare not even open my mouth." Now, "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." He's acknowledging God's hand in everything that took place. "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." I will tell you, to hear some preachers even preaching on God's sovereignty, you would think they had it all nailed down tight. You know, they've got an answer for everything. That's not what Job is saying here and I will tell you, the more God teaches you of himself through the word but also in experience, the less you know. If you're the Lord's,

he's going to bring you low. I've often said, "Let's not get our heads too far out of the foxhole because there's some live fire out there." It doesn't take much. It doesn't take anything for the Lord to change even one chemical in our brains and we'd be blithering idiots and yet we walk around like we've got a hold on life. God is going to prove himself sovereign. That's what Job said, "I've uttered things I understood not." If God could be understood then one of 2 things: either God is not God or man is not man. Somehow they reverse roles.

But he says here "things too wonderful for me." People use that word flippantly, "Ah, wonderful. Wasn't that a wonderful meal? Wasn't that a wonderful trip?" Wonderful in Scripture is attributed to one person alone and that's God and the Lord Jesus Christ, wonderful counselor. You know, his name is wonderful and that's too wonderful for me. How do you enter into the depths, the infinite grace of God? His mercy and all that Christ accomplished? I'll tell you: you could study Christ and the cross your whole lifetime and through eternity he's going to be the subject and never even plummet the depths. Grace, grace, God's grace, infinite grace. He says, "which I knew not."

Verse 4 says, "Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak," now, this is still Job addressing this prayer unto the Lord. "Here I pray thee and I do speak," is what he's saying here. "I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me." When the word "demand" is used there, it's not in the sense of name it, claim it like so many do today but it's the word "ask; demand." In French it's demander and so I don't know why, maybe this old English word it was more that sense. It's not "I demand," but you go back and look at the old English and "demand" meant "to supplicate." He was saying here, "I will supplicate you, God, even now. In my ignorance, in my lack of understanding and you being higher than I could ever imagine. Here I come now as a humble, broken sinner and I will ask of thee." That's important. Who is this addressed to but this sovereign God? I had a man say, "So you're saying to me that if I don't believe in God being sovereign that you're saying I'm not saved?" Well, you certainly haven't had your eyes opened yet. If the Lord saved you back there at the cross, he's going to draw you but if you continue to deny him his glory in every way, then he'll split hell wide open.

That's what Job was saying here, that things too wonderful. But when he says here "and declare thou unto me," in the original it is simply "cause thou me to know." Know my place, know who I am but know your glory. Then he says "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear," and that's the physical. Let's be aware of that ourselves. I mean, we have the privilege of opening this word and reading it and preaching it but that it not be just a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. "I have heard of thee but now mine eye seeth thee." And what was the result? I repent in sackcloth and ashes just like Naomi. That's how they were brought back repentant. Now, when she says "bitter," it just means "how I perceive myself." But repentant and she testifies in saying, "The LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me," she's saying, "He's right in doing so." That's really what confessing the Lord is. It's taking sides with God against yourself and until you've laid down your arms, whatever that weapon is, you've not bowed, you're still a rebel but I know the Lord brings his own to bow and he does it in grace and mercy.