

Destin Church of Christ

May 7, 2023

Lesson 9: Ruth – “The Faith of a Foreign Woman”

Ruth 1 – 4

The Book of Ruth teaches that genuine love at times may require uncompromising sacrifice. Genuine love and kindness will be rewarded. God abundantly blesses those who seek to live obedient lives. Obedient living does not allow for "accidents" in God's plan. God extends mercy to the merciful.

Lesson Breakdown:

- Lost and Found (Ruth 1)
- Making Ends Meet (Ruth 2-3)
- The Kinsman-Redeemer (Ruth 3-4)

Plot Points:

- Though born and raised in a pagan culture, Ruth the Moabite emerges as a shining example of loyalty and faith.
- Against the backdrop of Israel's unfaithfulness, Boaz stands out as a generous and faithful kinsman-redeemer.
- Despite the bitter loss of her husband and sons, Naomi is embraced and safeguarded by an unlikely family.

As you watch the video for Session 9, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ In the Lower Story, all is lost for Naomi.
- ✓ “May the LORD repay you for what you have done.” (Ruth 2:12)
- ✓ Ruth was asking Boaz to be God's wings to her.
- ✓ Boaz knew what it felt like to be an outsider.
- ✓ Naomi means beautiful.
- ✓ In the Upper Story, God redeems their lives and accepts them as his own.

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

Ruth 1:

- The events of Ruth occurred during the latter period of the judges.
(pg. 121) [Ruth 1:1]
- Judah, the land of Milk & Honey, was going through a famine, so Elimelech moved to Moab with his wife Naomi and sons Mahlon and Kilion (Chilion).
(pg. 121) [Ruth 1:1-2]

- Both sons married Moabite women. (pg. 127) [Ruth 4:9-10]
- Elimelech dies, then sometime within a period of 10 years, Naomi's two sons died, leaving behind two daughters-in-law. (pg. 121) [Ruth 1:3-5]
- Naomi heard the famine was over in Judah and decided to return to Bethlehem. (pgs. 121-122) [Ruth 1:6-7, 19]
- Naomi encouraged her two daughters-in-law to return to their own people and find husbands. (pg. 122) [Ruth 1:8-9].

1. Why did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to go home and remarry?

- Ruth stays with Naomi but Orpah leaves and is not heard of again! She slips off the pages of Scripture and history. (pg. 122) [Ruth 1:14]

2. When Ruth stayed with Naomi, what promise did she make to Naomi?
(pg. 122) [Ruth 1:16-17]

3. When they got to Bethlehem, instead of the name "Naomi", which means "Pleasant", what name did she want to be called and why? (pgs. 122) [Ruth 13, 20, 21]

- Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. (pg. 123) [Ruth 1:22]

Ruth 2:

- Ruth goes out to glean for the first time and ends up in a field belonging to Boaz, a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth. (pg. 123) [Ruth 2:1-2]

4. What was "gleaning" in the Book of Ruth?

5. How was Naomi and Boaz related? [Ruth 2:1, 3]

6. Why was he asking about her situation? (pg. 123) [Ruth 2:5]

- Boaz hears about what Ruth had done for Naomi. One day, after mealtime (noontime), Boaz commands the reapers to pull out sheaves for her from the bundles. (pg. 124) [Ruth 2:15-16]
- When Naomi heard what Boaz had done, she asked God to reward Boaz for his kindness to Ruth and herself. She also reminds Ruth that Boaz is "... *our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.*" (pg. 124) [Ruth 2:20]

7. What was a “Guardian-Redeemer” (a.k.a. Kinsman-Redeemer)? [Ruth 2:20]

He was to:

- Redeem the land that a poor relative had sold outside the family (Leviticus 25:25-28)
- Redeem a relative who had been sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47-49)
- Avenge the killing of a relative. (Numbers 35:19-21)
- They were also responsible to practice “Levirate Marriage”.

8. What is a “Levirate Marriage”?

- The purpose was:
 1. Provide an heir for a brother who had died (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)
 2. To protect womanhood.
 3. To protect land rights.
- If the closest relative did not marry the woman, another relative could.
- Ruth gleaned with Boaz’s workers for the rest of the barley harvest and lived with Naomi. (pg. 124) [Ruth 2:23]

Ruth 3:

- Naomi tells Ruth that Boaz will be winnowing at night. Naomi plays matchmaker and tells Ruth to clean up, put on perfume, and change clothes. (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:2-3] Why would this have been important to do?

9. What was the winnowing or threshing process?

- When Ruth went to where Boaz was sleeping, she was to: (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:4]
 - a. Uncover his feet.
 - b. Remove the cloak or blanket covering his feet so that they would be exposed to the cold.
 - c. Lie down there.
- “In the middle of the night”, Boaz wakes up and is startled to find a woman laying at his feet! (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:8]
- “Lying at his feet” possibly meant feet to feet, or her head on his legs.

10. What was significant about Ruth uncovering Boaz’s feet?

11. What was Ruth's request to Boaz? What did it signify? (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:9]

- Boaz says he would do all that she asked. (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:11]
An obstacle prevented Boaz from immediately marrying Ruth.
(pg. 125) [Ruth 3:12]
- Boaz would need to determine who would act as kinsman for Ruth.
(pg. 125) [Ruth 3:13]
- Ruth leaves the threshing floor early before anyone can recognize her.
(pg. 125) [Ruth 3:14]

12. What does Boaz give Ruth before she left the threshing floor? (pg. 125) [Ruth 3:15]

- Naomi asks Ruth how things went, because she wanted to know how Boaz had acted toward her. (pg. 126) [Ruth 3:16]
- Naomi was sure that Boaz would resolve the issue by the end of that same day. (pg. 126) [Ruth 3:18]

Ruth 4:

- Boaz goes to the gate of the city, and the close relative Boaz had spoken about comes by. Boaz tells him to sit down, and he asks ten men of the elders of the city to sit as witnesses. (pg. 126) [Ruth 4:1-2]
- Boaz asks the other kinsman to redeem the parcel of land owned by Elimelech, if he wished, and the kinsman initially says he would.
(pg. 126) [Ruth 4:3-4]
- Boaz then tells him that he would also have to take Ruth in order that Elimelech's name would continue with his inheritance. He reneges and says he cannot redeem it because it would "damage his own inheritance."
(pg. 126) [Ruth 4:5-6]

13. How would this damage his own inheritance? (pg. 126) [Ruth 4:5-6]

14. What did the other kinsman do to show that he agreed Boaz should be the redeemer? (pg. 126) [Ruth 4:8]

15. Who removed his shoe? ... Deuteronomy 25:7-10

16. At the end of Deuteronomy 25:9, what did Spitting in his face indicate?

- Some of the exceptions:
 - ✓ If the brother-in-law is under the age of 13, the widow is forced to wait until he reaches adulthood.
 - ✓ If the brother-in-law is mentally incompetent either because he is insane or is a deaf-mute, the widow is forbidden to marry anyone else.

- Boaz reminded the elders that they had witnessed two agreements:
 1. That Boaz had bought all that was Elimelech's,
 2. That he had acquired Ruth as his wife. [Ruth 4:9-10]

17. What blessing did the elders and the people at the gate desire for Boaz?
(pg. 127) [Ruth 4:11]

18. Why did the women say that Ruth was better for Naomi than seven sons?
(pg. 127) [Ruth 4:15]

- Boaz and Ruth have a son, and they named him Obed. (pg. 127) [Ruth 4:17]

- Not only was Naomi Obed's grandmother, she was also his nurse.
(pg. 127) [Ruth 4:16]

- Verse 22 repeats the information in verse 17 that Obed was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David. [Ruth 4:17, 22]

- Verses 18-22 lists the genealogy of Perez to David.

Better than a movie on the Great American Family channel (Cox Cable #360), in the Book of Ruth, there were no losers. All the main characters are winners.

Ruth lives on in history and in Scripture, and is one of five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus found in the Gospel of Matthew (Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba (the "wife of Uriah"), and Mary).

No matter how hopeless and bitter our Lower Story may seem, if we love God and align our life to his purposes, we will discover that God is working it all out for the good. We must wait patiently and God will unfold his good plan!

Homework: Take time before our next class to read chapter 10 of *The Story*.

1 Samuel 1-4, 8-13, 15