
The Book of Ruth

Loss

Equipping U - Week 1

June 9, 2021

Ruth: Faithfulness in the ordinary opens the door for God to move in extraordinary ways

Course Introduction

Ruth is one of only two books in the Bible named for women. The other is the Book of Esther. Both Books are a part of the narrative genre. A narrative records the events that are happening in the form of a story. Ruth is one of five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, and she is also of Hamitic descent which means she was African. Over the next four weeks, we will examine the life of Ruth as she encounters seasons of loss, loyalty, love, and legacy. Ruth is a survivor, and not only has she survived her trials, but she is also thriving during her difficult seasons. Ruth is a woman of Resilience and Faith.

Author

The author of the Book of Ruth is unknown, but Jewish tradition attributes the book to Samuel. In recent years, some biblical scholars have questioned the historical authenticity of biblical stories like those found in the Book of Ruth. Some have gone as far to assert that this story might even be fictional. Nevertheless, the biblical record refutes all such claims. We can be certain that this story is real because the genealogical details for King David provide evidence that this is an accurate historical account of the family of King David which leads us to the ultimate kinsman redeemer, Jesus.

Historical Background

The Story of Ruth takes place during the period of the Judges around 1100 B.C. which was marked by weak faith and irresponsible conduct. Ruth's story began at a very dark time in Israel's history. God's people had become disobedient by worshiping idols and engaging in all sorts of violence. There was a famine in Bethlehem that caused Elimelech, Ruth's father-in-law, to move to Moab with his wife Naomi and their two sons. As a result of this move, Ruth met and married one of Elimelech's sons. The culture of Ruth's day was one that opposed God and glorified sin. Yet, in one of the most difficult times in her life, Ruth chose God.

Ruth was a Moabite. We must return to Genesis 19 to discover their origin. The Moabites were born out of an incestual relationship between Lot and his two daughters who allowed fear to get the best of them. After

God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, Lot's daughters became afraid that they would not have a future because God had killed a lot of men, so they got their father drunk and slept with him. The fruits of this union were two sons, one named Moab and the other Ben-Ammi who became the founders of the Moabites and the Ammonites. As you can see, Ruth's decision to follow God went against the tradition of her people.

Message and Purpose

The Book of Ruth opens with Ruth leaving her hometown of Moab to follow her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem because the famine in Bethlehem has ended. This story of ordinary life and the unexpected circumstances that show up along the way reveal the intentionality of our extraordinary God in the details of everyday life. Faith in God requires a willingness to take risks. While miracles are a great demonstration of the awesome power of God, he is often most active in accomplishing his purposes and plans through the ordinary activities or ordinary people. God demonstrates that He is trustworthy, can heal, restore, and position us to receive His very best even in our darkest hours.

Outline

- I. Loss (1:1-22)
 - a. A famine occurs (1:1)
 - b. The decision to leave (1:1-2)
 - c. Tragedy strikes (1:3-5)
 - d. The long road home (1:6-22)
- II. Loyalty and devotion (1:8-22)
 - a. A selfless choice (1:14-18)
 - b. Welcome home (1:19-22)
- III. God's divine provision (2:1-23)
 - a. Divine connection (2:1-3)
 - b. Divine appointment (2:4-10)
 - c. Divine revelation (2:11-13)
 - d. Divine provision (2:14-23)
- IV. A loving redemption (3:1-18)
 - a. A plan for redemption (3:1-5)
 - b. A flawless execution (3:6-9)
 - c. A pledge of redemption (3:10-15)
 - d. A patient wait for redemption (3:16-18)
- V. A lasting legacy (4:1-22)
 - a. Redemption refused (4:1-8)
 - b. Redemption accepted (4:9-12)

- c. Redemption rewarded (4:13)
- d. Redemption rejoiced (4:14-17)
- e. Redemption foreshadowed (4:18-22)

Course Objectives

- To study an entire Book of the Bible using the art of observation, the science of interpretation, the clarity of correlation, and the reality of application.
- To learn what it means to be faithful in everyday life and how it equips us to stand during crises
- To celebrate the faithfulness of God in all seasons of life
- To encourage us to develop the faith that is necessary to take risks for God

Class Schedule

Week 1 – June 9, 2021	Loss	Ruth Chapter 1:1-7
Week 2 - June 16, 2021	Loyalty	Ruth Chapter 1:14-22, 2:1-23
Week 3 - June 23, 2021	Love	Ruth Chapter 3:1-18
Week 4- June 30, 2021	Legacy	Ruth Chapter 4:1-22

Observation

Let's look at Ruth, Chapter 1:1-7 (The Paragraph) – New International Version

¹In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ²The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

³Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. ⁶When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

Let's examine the 6W's of the text:

1. Who: People
 - a. Elimelek/Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, Kilion, Ruth, Orpah, and the Lord
2. What: Truths, Events, Subjects, Sequences

- a. Famine in Bethlehem which was a small town in the hill country of northern Judah
 - b. Famines in this area were usually caused by drought
 - c. Left Bethlehem to go to Moab
 - d. Death of Elimelek, the patriarch
 - e. Mahlon and Kilion marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth
 - f. Kilion married Orpah and Mahlon married Ruth
 - g. Mahlon and Kilion Die
 - h. Lord ends famine in Bethlehem
 - i. The women, Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah, all widows with no children, make plans to go back to Bethlehem
3. When: Days, Years, Reign, Era
 - a. 1100 B.C. during the reign of the Judges
 4. Where: locations, territories, geography, regions
 - a. Bethlehem in Judah and Moab
 5. Why: the reason something is occurring
 - a. The famine caused them to leave their home
 - b. The death of their husbands caused them to return to Naomi's home in Bethlehem
 6. Wherefore: The underlying "why" or motive in the text
 - a. The text depicts devastating emotional loss as well as the loss of economic support. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah were left with no husband, no heirs, and in essence no hope for the future of their family, BUT GOD!
 - b. V.6 says that "the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them" which caused Naomi to return home to Bethlehem which in Hebrew literally means the "House of Bread"
 - c. Stop and think for a minute. God allowed a famine to come to the "House of Bread," and it was only "God" that could end the famine and provide food for them.
 - d. Bethlehem is also significant because as we continue through the book of Ruth, you will see that Ruth and Boaz's son Obed is born in Bethlehem (Ruth 4:18-21, Obed's grandson King David is born in Bethlehem (I Sam 17:58), and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ is born in the Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7). The "Bread of Life (John 6:35)" is born in the "House of Bread."
 - e. God often used famines as judgment for the sinful behavior of his people. We see this several years later in the Book of I Kings during Elijah's day when the people of Israel started to worship Baal. Baal was a Canaanite god who the people believed to be the owner of the land with the ability to control its fertility. God reminded the people of Israel that He was the only true and living God and that He had divine control over the crops and the land.
 - f. God demonstrates His ability to provide good things to His children.
 - g. "The Lord" is translated as *Yahweh* which is the name of God that speaks of His essential nature as a present active force in the lives of his covenant people.

The story of Ruth is a story about loss. Loss of love, loss of dreams, loss of food, loss of shelter, loss of opportunity, loss of protection, and loss of covering. No doubt, each of the women in the text had dreamed of the life that they would have with their husbands and with their children. They had not even considered that their dreams would not come true. They had no idea that it would all be taken away. What do you do

when your dreams do not come true? What do you do when you lose everything? How do you respond to loss? The first lesson Ruth teaches us is the lesson of Resilience in losing and leaving.

Application

1: Resilience in losing and leaving

Pain. No one enjoys it. In fact, the normal human response is to avoid it at all costs. **Craig Groeschel of LifeChurch in Oklahoma says “Pain teaches us to depend on God. It purifies our motives. It keeps us humble and moves us to pray. Pain is a part of growth. If I avoid all pain, I’m avoiding growth.”**

Everyone responds to loss differently. Some give up, some blame God, and yet there are some who amaze us with their resilience.

Ruth had lost a lot. Ruth lost her husband, her brother-in-law, her father-in-law, and her rights in an instant. She was faced with the decision to leave or stay. Ruth decided to leave the land that she had called home. Her loss was forcing her to leave. If we stop and look at our lives, and especially in this season of the pandemic, we can see loss all around us. We all have lost something in this season, and we all have been required to leave something behind as we enter this “new normal.” But despite the loss, we see around us, we see people who demonstrate amazing resilience in the face of unspeakable loss. What is resilience? Resilience is the capacity “to recover quickly from difficulties;” it is “toughness.” Ruth teaches us how to be resilient when we face loss and must leave the familiar to travail the unknown.

2: Do not overstay your time in grief

Ecclesiastes 3:1, says “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heaven:”, v. 4 “A time to weep and a time to laugh, and a time to mourn and a time to dance.” God’s word tells us that it is normal to grieve the death of a loved one. It is healthy to grieve the loss of a relationship, and it is normal to grieve the loss of a job, or any other loss in your life. However, grief is a passage, not a place to stay.

Ruth shows us how to pick up the pieces and move forward. She could have stayed back in Moab and cried woe is me, but she chose to move forward in her grief. Resilience is the ability to move forward and take the next step when your knees are trembling, and you feel like you will fall. Nelson Mandela said it this way, **“I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”** Ruth did not overstay her time in grief.

Homework: I encourage you to spend time this week reflecting on the following questions.

1. Is there something that has happened in my life that I have not taken the time to grieve?
2. Is there something in my life that I am still grieving that I need to move on from?
3. Read Psalm 34:18, 147:3, Matthew 5:4, Romans 8:28, Revelation 21:4 and write down the promises that God makes to those who experience loss.

The Book of Ruth

Loyalty

Equipping U - Week 2

June 16, 2021

Ruth: Faithfulness in the ordinary opens the door for God to move in extraordinary ways

Introduction

In the days of Ruth, there was almost nothing worse than being a widow because widows were often pushed to the margins of society to be ignored and isolated. Often, widows lived in poverty, which is why God's law provided that the nearest relative of the dead husband should care for the widow. Ruth and Naomi found themselves with a status that they did not choose. Ruth was much younger, and could have found comfort in the arms of another man in her own country, but she made the decision to place the needs of Naomi above her own. She clung to Naomi and demonstrated remarkable loyalty. Ruth gave up the possibility of security with another man and children to serve Naomi during one of the most vulnerable times in both of their lives. God rewards Ruth's loyalty through divine connection, divine appointment, divine revelation, and divine provision.

Outline

- I. Loyalty and devotion (1:8-22)
 - a. A selfless choice (1:14-18)
 - b. Welcome home (1:19-22)
- II. God's divine provision (2:1-23)
 - a. Divine connection (2:1-3)
 - b. Divine appointment (2:4-10)
 - c. Divine revelation (2:11-13)
 - d. Divine provision (2:14-23)

Class Schedule

Week 1 – June 9, 2021	Loss	Ruth Chapter 1:1-7
Week 2 - June 16, 2021	Loyalty	Ruth Chapter 1:8-18, 2:1-23
Week 3 - June 23, 2021	Love	Ruth Chapter 3:1-18
Week 4- June 30, 2021	Legacy	Ruth Chapter 4:1-22

Let's look at Ruth, Chapter 1: 8-18 – New International Version

⁸Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹²Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— ¹³would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has turned against me!"¹⁴ At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.¹⁵ "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." ¹⁶But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." ¹⁸When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Observation-What does it say?

Let's examine the 6 W's of the text:

1. Who: People
 - h. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah, the Lord
2. What: Truths, Events, Subjects, Sequences
 - a. The journey back to Bethlehem
 - b. Naomi urges her daughters to leave her and go back to Moab
 - c. Ruth and Orpah contemplate the decision to go back to Moab or to go to Bethlehem
 - d. Orpah leaves Naomi and Ruth to go back to Moab
 - e. Ruth stays with Naomi and continues to Bethlehem
3. When: Days, Years, Reign, Era
 - a. 1100 B.C. during the reign of the Judges
4. Where: Locations, Territories, Geography, Regions
 - a. On the road to Bethlehem in Judah (Israel)
5. Why: The reason something is occurring
 - a. The famine has lifted in Bethlehem
 - b. Naomi makes the decision to return home to Bethlehem after the loss she has experienced

6. Wherefore: The underlying “why” or motive in the text
 - a. The text depicts undying loyalty and selflessness
 - b. The fact that Naomi encouraged Ruth and Orpah to leave her was a selfless act because she knew their prospects of marriage in Israel would be slight because they were Moabite women.
 - c. The fact that Ruth refused to leave Naomi was also a selfless act and demonstrated loyalty
 - d. V.8 Naomi blesses Ruth and Orpah and ask that God reward them for the “kindness” they have shown to her and their dead husbands. The Hebrew word for “kindness” in the text is *hesed* which speaks of God’s covenant of loyalty to his people. This loyalty is demonstrated when God extends grace even when it is not deserved. This Hebrew word *hesed* shows up two more times in the Book of Ruth in Chapter 2, verse 20 and Chapter 3, verse 10 to illustrate loyalty.

Interpretation-What does it mean?

Let’s look at Chapter 2 to apply the Science of Interpretation to determine the meanings of the verses we find in Chapter 2 which ultimately demonstrates how God rewards Ruth’s loyalty. We will apply some key elements of interpretation.

Context refers to that which goes before and that which follows after

- **Literary Context**-Chapter 2 is one long paragraph in the Book of Ruth, and it opens with Ruth taking the initiative to secure food for Naomi and herself. Remember, they were both widows without children. Therefore, Ruth, as the younger widow went out to the fields to pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes she found favor (v.2). The Book of Ruth can be best described as a literary tragedy that evolves into a romantic story culminating in a book that can be seen as the beginning of a long series comprised of drama, action, adventure, and prophecy.
- **Historical Context**-Takes place after the period of the Judges, at a time when God’s chosen people, the Israelites were being disobedient to God. The last verse in the Book of Judges, Judges 21:25, records that “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” It is against this backdrop that God provides an example through Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz, of people who are living responsibly and exhibiting faith in God during a very dark time. They are light in a very dark culture.
- **Cultural Context**-Chapter 2 describes two customs that were present during the time of this passage of scripture. The first custom is the custom of the poor to gather grain in a field after the harvesters had passed through (v. 2-3). The corners of the field were left for the poor to gather (Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22) The second custom was that of the kinsman redeemer, in which Boaz is introduced as a possible kinsman redeemer for Ruth, because he was from the clan of

Elimelech/Elimelek, Ruth's deceased father-in-law (v. 3, 20). This custom provided that a widow could be redeemed by a relative of her husband to continue his lineage through marriage (Deut. 25:5-6, Ruth 4:9-17). You will see later that Boaz was not the immediate relative, which further demonstrates his character and this wonderful act of grace toward Ruth.

- **Consultation**-The Bible Knowledge Commentary and the Life Application Study Bible shed light on this theme of loyalty. Ruth was not just pledging loyalty to Naomi, she was also expressing her allegiance to Naomi's people, the people of Israel; and Naomi's God, the God of Israel (v. 16.). The depth of this promise is further illustrated by Ruth's words that death would not even separate she and Naomi (v. 17), and she invoked God's judgment upon herself should she fail to fulfill her promise to Naomi.
- **Theological Context**-What does this text teach me about God? There are four things this text teaches us about God. God can provide a divine connection, a divine appointment, a divine revelation, and a divine provision.
 - We see God's divine provision throughout Chapter 2, and it is a reward for Ruth's and Naomi's faithfulness and obedience. Ruth left her ancestors who worshipped idols for an opportunity to know the one, true, and living God. There were no promises made to Ruth. In fact, Naomi did everything she could to discourage Ruth from following her back home to Bethlehem, but Ruth responded in faith and placed herself under the authority of God as illustrated in Ruth 1:17. Although Naomi had lashed out in anger toward God because of her grief, we can still see in verses 8, 9, and 2:20 that Naomi was keenly aware of God's involvement in the everyday activities of their lives. Naomi knew that God was still in control.
 - Divine connection (2:1-3)
 - Divine appointment (2:4-10)
 - Divine revelation (2:11-13)
 - Divine provision (2:14-23)
 - Additionally, this text teaches us that God can handle our anger. Naomi was angry with God (v. 13(b)) as illustrated by her comments that "The Lord has turned against me," and in 1:20-21. God responded to Naomi's anger with His unfailing love.
 - The writer of the Book of Ruth also used several names of God throughout the book. The most common one is Lord which is used 17 times and it is translated as *Yahweh* which speaks to God's active presence in the lives of His people. God is intimately and actively involved in the lives of His people. The writer also uses God which is translated as *Elohim* which means the God of Israel (1:16, 2:12) and Almighty which is translated as *Sadday or Shaddai* (1:20-21) which refers to God's ability to control all things in the universe at all times.

Application-How does it apply?

1: Serve others by placing their needs above your own.

Ruth placed the needs of another above her own. Notice that Ruth chose to stay with Naomi while Orpah chose to go back to their homeland. We really cannot judge Orpah because Naomi painted a very bleak picture for them. Naomi encouraged Ruth and Orpah to go back to their mothers because she would not be able to provide husbands for them. Remember, women only had rights through their husbands and sons. In addition, Ruth and Orpah were both young and neither one of them had any children.

I want to comment specifically to single women whose sole life pursuit is to be married and have children. Ruth shows us how to thrive in our singleness. Ruth did not go back to Moab to find a husband, but rather she chose to stay with Naomi and serve her! While Ruth had lost a lot, Naomi had lost even more with losing her husband and her two sons. Therefore, Ruth decided to place Naomi's needs above her own and she chose to stay with Naomi instead of "placing herself back on the market." This is a remarkable sacrifice. The key here is that in the middle of her own pain and loss, Ruth chose to focus on someone other than herself.

If we are not careful, we can allow the issues in our lives to consume us which prevents us from serving those God has called us to serve. God was positioning Ruth for her blessing. I suggest that it was easier for Ruth to make the transition from single back to married life because she had experience in placing the needs of others above her own. Relationships provide the opportunity for us to serve others. Who are you serving? Who are you making sacrifices for? Ruth served others by the placing their needs above her own.

2: Love through high quality relationships is the greatest blessing of all.

I Corinthians 13 reminds us of the value of love. **V. 3 says, "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. And verse ¹³ goes on to say And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."** You and I were created for relationship. Relationships that will keep us humble in good times and keep us lifted in challenging times.

The relationship between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi was one characterized by kindness, selflessness, loyalty, faithfulness, and love. I realize that for many women, Ruth's story is the exception rather than the norm. Whether you are a mother-in-law or daughter-in-law, you must answer the question: Are you treating the other person in the relationship like you would want to be treated? God wants to get the glory out of all relationships. Every single one. The text does not give us any information about Ruth's family, but what we do know is that she left her family to be with her mother-in-law and her mother-in-law was the woman of wisdom in her life when she needed advice and wisdom. The fact that Ruth told Naomi in

verses 16 and 17 **“Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me,”** shows the level of love and respect she had for her mother-in-law.

Love is the greatest gift of all. Think about all the blessings Ruth would have missed had she stayed in Moab mourning. God is the only one who can birth miracles out of mourning! It was God who turned Ruth’s devastation into a divine appointment to serve Him and to serve others. God did not just bless her with material things, He blessed her with people in her life who wanted the best for her. Chapter 2 demonstrates that Naomi and Boaz wanted the best for Ruth. The greatest blessing God gives us is relationships with people who love us enough to want the very best for us! **The loyalty Ruth expressed to God and her mother-in-law was rewarded through God’s faithful provision in every aspect of her life.**

Homework: I encourage you to spend time this week reflecting on the following questions.

1. Who is God calling me to serve in this season, and how is He calling me to serve them?
2. Take some time to list out the love you have experienced through high quality relationships. Ask yourself, are you giving the love you have experienced? If not, create an action plan. If so, praise God!
3. Read John 15:13, Deuteronomy 7:9, Matthew 6:24, Acts 5:29 and write down what these scriptures say about loyalty. Meditate on these scriptures and what you have written down over the next week.

The Book of Ruth

Loyalty

Equipping U - Week 3

June 23, 2021

Ruth: Faithfulness in the ordinary opens the door for God to move in extraordinary ways

Introduction

Ruth has made her home in Bethlehem, and she has found favor in the fields of Boaz. Boaz is an older man of impeccable character. Although Ruth is a Moabitess, and not an Israelite, Boaz treats her with dignity and respect. He takes notice of her because she is busy fulfilling her assignment. She was not waiting around to be rescued. Ruth was on a mission to provide for Naomi and herself. Naomi was on a mission as a matchmaker. By choosing to stay with Naomi, Ruth willingly gave up any possibility of marrying again and having children. But God! I believe that Naomi recognized the sacrifice that Ruth made to remain with her, and as a result, she wanted to return the favor by helping Ruth find security and love through marrying a *good* man.

Naomi was not acting out of character because arranged marriages were customary in Hebrew culture. In fact, Hebrew parents were often very involved in arranging the marriages of their children (Gen. 24, Judges 14:1-10). Naomi knew that Boaz was a relative of theirs through her husband and that he could be a kinsman (guardian) redeemer for Ruth.

This divine love connection demonstrates Ruth's willingness to listen to her mother-in-law, a woman of wisdom, rather than choosing to make this decision alone. It also depicts a man who takes the initiative to do what is necessary to secure a future with Ruth. Ruth informed Boaz that she was interested, and the pursuit was his, not hers. The story of Ruth's redemption extends beyond Boaz, to all believers. As believers, we have been redeemed by the ultimate Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ, himself, who pursues us with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

Outline

- I. A loving redemption (3:1-18)
 - e. A plan for redemption (3:1-5)
 - f. A flawless execution (3:6-9)
 - g. A pledge of redemption (3:10-15)
 - h. A patient wait for redemption (3:16-18)

Class Schedule

Week 1 – June 9, 2021	Loss	Ruth Chapter 1:1-7
Week 2 - June 16, 2021	Loyalty	Ruth Chapter 1:8-18, 2:1-23
Week 3 - June 23, 2021	Love	Ruth Chapter 3:1-18
Week 4- June 30, 2021	Legacy	Ruth Chapter 4:1-22

Let's look at Ruth, Chapter 3: 1-18, New International Version

³ One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. ² Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³ Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

⁵ "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. ⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

⁷ When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet! ⁹ "Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

¹⁰ "The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. ¹³ Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, "No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor."

¹⁵ He also said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out." When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and placed the bundle on her. Then he went back to town.

¹⁶ When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?" Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her ¹⁷ and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go

back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.”¹⁸ Then Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”

Observation-What does it say?

Let's look at some key terms in Chapter 3:

4. V. 1 – the term “home” in this verse means “find rest” in Hebrew. This term is also used in Ruth 1:9. To find a home literally means to “find rest,” to be safe and established in a home with a husband.
5. V. 2-3 – the term “threshing floor” describes a hard, flat surface made of stone or hardened earth in which the farmer would spread bundles of grain and beat them to separate the grain from the straw.
6. V. 2 – the term “winnowing” refers to the act of throwing the grain in the air to using a wooden fork or shovel causing the wind to take away the lighter straw and chaff, resulting the heavier grain falling to the floor. This grain was then collected to be sold or stored. It was customary for the farmer to sleep near his grain to protect it from theft.
7. V.9 – the term “guardian-redeemer” also referred to as kinsman redeemer was a legal term used to describe the person who is legally obligated to redeem a relative who is facing difficult circumstances (Lev. 25:35-38). The Hebrew word is *go'el* which is translated as “nearest relative (Num. 27:11)

Let's examine the 6 W's of the text:

1. Who: People
 - a. Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, the Lord
2. What: Truths, Events, Subjects, Sequences
 - a. Naomi develops a plan for redemption (3:1-5)
 - b. Ruth follows Naomi's instructions resulting in a flawless execution (3:6-9)
 - c. Boaz makes a pledge to redeem Ruth (3:10-15)
 - d. Ruth waits patiently for her redemption (3:16-18)
3. When: Days, Years, Reign, Era
 - a. 1100 B.C. during the reign of the Judges
4. Where: Locations, Territories, Geography, Regions
 - a. In Bethlehem in Judah (Israel)

5. Why: The reason something is occurring
 - a. Naomi makes the decision to secure a future for Ruth.
 - b. Ruth makes the decision to follow Naomi's advice.
 - c. Boaz accepts the invitation to redeem Ruth.

6. Wherefore: The underlying "why" or motive in the text
 - a. The text depicts Love for God as the driving force behind the decision to redeem.
 - b. Boaz was a man of noble character who wanted to please God and follow the laws of God by ensuring that he did not infringe upon another's right to redeem.
 - c. Ruth was a woman of "noble character (v. 11), and she showed respect for the man of God (v. 9). Ruth had placed herself under the wings of the Lord, Yahweh, the Almighty God (2:11), and now she was seeking to place herself under the "wings" of Boaz. The Hebrew word used in v.9 for "corner" is "kanap" which means "wing." In verse 9, Ruth's request for Boaz to "spread the *corner*" of his garment over her is translated as her asking him to spread his "wing" over her. Please take notice of the order. Ruth took shelter under God first, then Boaz. We need the covering of our heavenly Father before we can seek covering from an earthly suitor.
 - d. Remember the blessing Boaz spoke over Ruth in Chapter 2, verse 12, "May you be richly rewarded by the Lord." Ruth gave Boaz an opportunity to be a part of God's blessing for her life.

Correlation-Where does it fit?

Let's look at Chapter 3 to apply the Clarity of Correlation to determine the link between the culture and historical times of the writer of the text and our present-day reality. We will apply the steps of correlation to extract biblical principles that we can apply to our lives. We asked and answered the six interrogative questions of (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and Wherefore) during our observation. Now, it is time to record the truths, great and small in the text.

Truths from the text:

- There was a biblical law that provided for Ruth's redemption (3:2)
- God provides heavenly and earthly shelter for His people (2:12, 3:8-9)
- This concept of "guardian redeemer" illustrates God's command to love our neighbor as ourselves (Lev. 19:13, 16, 18, Matt 22:39-40) by acting with love and compassion toward others.
- The love story of Boaz and Ruth is an Old Testament illustration of The New Testament "guardian redeemer" Jesus, who became the perfect lamb acting with love and compassion to redeem the believer from sin (Matt. 20:28, Rom. 3:24-25, Eph. 1:7). In essence, Boaz became the Old Testament "forerunner" of Jesus Christ.

- The biblical role of the man in a romantic relationship is to pursue the woman (3:11-13, 18).
- It was appropriate for Ruth to let Boaz know that she was interested in a relationship with him because he was aware that she had other options (3: 9-10, 12). He refers to her as “my daughter” 2:8 and 3:11 which indicates that there was a substantial age difference.
- Ruth’s decision to choose Boaz demonstrates her obedience to God’s law which provided that a widow should seek to make a home with a close relative of her deceased husband (Mahlon) to carry on the family name (Deut. 25:5-6). In this case, the name of her father-in-law Elimelech/Elimelek, Naomi’s deceased husband.
- A Godly man readily commits and provides reassurance to the woman in his life (3:11-13).

Application-How does it apply?

1: We need to listen to the wisdom of others as it relates to our relationships.

Ruth listened to Naomi, and she did everything Naomi told her to do (v. 5). She did not trust in her emotions, her relationship experience, or the ways of the culture. She understood the value of Godly wisdom. I believe Ruth understood that the choice for a mate was the type of decision that should not be made solo. Who a person chooses to marry is the second most important relationship decision that they will ever make. The first being, their decision to choose Christ. Ruth recognized that she was new to the faith, in a new land, and that she needed guidance from a mature woman of God. The Bible speaks on several occasions about the wisdom that can be found in the counsel of others (Prov. 11:14, 12:15, 15:22, 19:20-21, 24:6).

2: Following God’s design for relationships results in blessing.

Ruth confirmed her interest in Boaz and then she stepped back for him to pursue. At first glance, it appears that Ruth made the first move because she went to the threshing floor to see Boaz. We, however, cannot read too fast. We must slow down and evaluate the facts. We must go back to Chapter 2 to get the full picture. At the beginning of Chapter 2, Ruth is on assignment, she is busy working (v. 3), and Boaz ask, “who does she belong to (v.5)?” Move 1. After learning who she is, Boaz tells Ruth to stay in his field because he has told the men “not to lay a hand on her (v.9).” Move 2. Boaz continues by telling Ruth that he has water to quench her thirst (v. 9). Move 3. Ruth responds by asking “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner (v.10)?” Boaz responds by sharing the good things he has heard about Ruth and blesses her (v.11-12). Move 4. He then invites her to lunch (v. 14). Move 5. Following lunch, Boaz gave orders to his men to let Ruth gather among the large bundles, rather than just at the corners, to leave extra for her, and basically to stand down and let Ruth have her way in the field. Move 6.

I hope you can see that Boaz, as the man and leader, made several moves before Ruth showed up at the threshing floor. God's design is for men to pursue. Regardless of the culture, your personality, his personality, God created men to pursue and women to be pursued. It was and is appropriate for a woman to express her interest in a man, however, once she has made her interest known, it is up to the man to pursue. Notice what happens after Ruth shows up at the threshing floor.

Boaz reassures Ruth that he will take the necessary action to redeem her (v. 11-14), and she is not left wondering about how he feels about her. Boaz's actions leave Ruth feeling desirable, secure, and protected. Don't miss how Boaz made sure that Ruth's reputation along with his was still intact after their meeting at the threshing floor (v. 11, 14). A Godly man cares about your character and reputation just as much as he cares about his.

Homework: I encourage you to spend time this week reflecting on the following questions.

1. Do I seek the advice of others when it comes to my relationship decisions? Why or why not?
2. Why is it important to seek Godly wisdom from others when it comes to relationships?
3. Am I following God's design for relationships or am I taking matters into my own hands?
4. God positioned Ruth at the right time, the right place, and with the right person. Read I John 3:20, Prov. 16:9, Eccl. 3:1, Jer. 29:11-12, Lam. 3:25-26, and Prov. 3:5-6. Write down the encouragement you receive from these scriptures.

The Book of Ruth

Loyalty

Equipping U - Week 4

June 30, 2021

Ruth: Faithfulness in the ordinary opens the door for God to move in extraordinary ways

Introduction

Ruth made her interest known after Boaz made several moves to show his interest in her. The final chapter of this book opens with Boaz in hot pursuit of Ruth's hand in marriage. Being a noble man, Boaz did not want to disobey God's order by stepping a head of someone in Elimelech's family line that was closer than he was to redeem Ruth. He, however, did not sit idly by with a "wait and see" approach, but rather he tracked the relative down to inquire about his intentions for Ruth.

You will see that Boaz did not go alone, but rather he took ten elders with him to witness the conversation with another potential guardian redeemer. Boaz was serious because this conversation took place at the town gate of Bethlehem where the personal business and civic affairs of the people were transacted. Boaz meant business. He was not playing with Ruth. This was a legal matter that would have eternal consequences. The cadence of this chapter depicts redemption refused, redemption accepted, redemption rewarded, redemption rejoiced, and redemption foreshadowed.

The parallels between Boaz's actions to redeem Ruth and God's action to redeem us through Jesus Christ cannot be ignored. Boaz's willingness to take responsibility for Ruth and Naomi is a perfect illustration of what Jesus has done for the believer. Jesus took on the sins of the world to make things right before God the Father for all who accept, believe, and confess the Lord Jesus Christ!

Outline

- I. A lasting legacy (4:1-22)
 - a. Redemption refused (4:1-8)
 - b. Redemption accepted (4:9-12)
 - c. Redemption rewarded (4:13)
 - d. Redemption rejoiced (4:14-17)
 - e. Redemption foreshadowed (4:18-22)

Class Schedule

Week 1 – June 9, 2021	Loss	Ruth Chapter 1:1-7
Week 2 - June 16, 2021	Loyalty	Ruth Chapter 1:8-18, 2:1-23
Week 3 - June 23, 2021	Love	Ruth Chapter 3:1-18
Week 4- June 30, 2021	Legacy	Ruth Chapter 4:1-22

Let's look at Ruth, Chapter 4: 1-22 -New International Version

4 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer^(a) he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend, and sit down.” So he went over and sat down.

² Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here,” and they did so. ³ Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. ⁴ I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.”

“I will redeem it,” he said.

⁵ Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the^(a) dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.”

⁶ At this, the guardian-redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.”

⁷ (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

⁸ So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. ¹⁸ This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab,

²⁰ Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon,

²¹ Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed,

²² Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.

Observation-What does it say?

Let's look at some things that are related:

1. Cause and Effect- The “Why” something happens followed by the “What” that actually happens.
 - a. The “Why” – Naomi and Ruth needed a guardian/kinsman redeemer because they were widows who had no sons and no legal standing.
 - b. The “What” – Boaz willingly agrees to assume this role, but in reality, he is not next in line.
 - c. We talked about this idea of the guardian/kinsman redeemer on last week and the legal obligations that went along with a person who assumes the role as the *go'el* (nearest relative) to redeem another relative. Let's look at this in more detail.
 - d. Deuteronomy 25:5-10, outlines the duty of *levirate marriage* which was first introduced in (Gen. 38:6-10, which required a *brother* to marry his brother's widow if one of his brothers dies without having a son and leaves a widow. In this case, that would mean that Elimelech/Elimelek's brother would have this responsibility. But notice, neither the unnamed kinsman redeemer nor Boaz was Elimelech/Elimelek's brother. In short, neither one of them were legally obligated to redeem Naomi or Ruth. Also, the person to be redeemed according to *levirate marriage* would be Naomi and not Ruth, because Naomi was Elimelech/Elimelek's widow and both Boaz and the unnamed guardian redeemer were relatives of Elimelech/Elimelek.
 - e. Why is this important? It is important because Boaz makes a novel argument to the unnamed guardian redeemer using the *spirit of the law* to establish a **moral** rather than a **legal** obligation to serve as the *levir* to provide an heir to inherit the land (Num. 27:1-11).

- f. Upon receiving information that he would be required to redeem the land **and** take Ruth as his wife, the unnamed guardian redeemer decided that he did not want to place his own estate in jeopardy (v. 5-10). In addition, Boaz understood Ruth and Naomi came as a package and that he could not redeem one without the other. Moreover, because he was a good man, he did not want Ruth to break the promise she had made to be with Naomi in life and death (v. 1:16-18).
- g. Boaz kept his promise to Ruth, and he proudly redeemed her and Naomi before the elders and all the people (v. 9-10).

Let's examine the 6 W's of the text:

1. Who: People

- h. Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, the unnamed guardian redeemer, the ten elders, the Lord, the women living there, all the people, Rachel, Leah, Elimelek/Elimelech, Mahlon, Kihlion

2. What: Truths, Events, Subjects, Sequences

- a. Redemption refused (4:1-8)
- b. Redemption accepted (4:9-12)
- c. Redemption rewarded (4:13)
- d. Redemption rejoiced (4:14-17)
- e. Redemption foreshadowed (4:18-22)

3. When: Days, Years, Reign, Era

- b. 1100 B.C. during the reign of the Judges

4. Where: Locations, Territories, Geography, Regions

- b. In Bethlehem in Judah (Israel)

5. Why: The reason something is occurring

- d. Boaz goes on quest to find the unnamed guardian redeemer who is a closer relative of Elimelek/Elimelech.
- e. The unnamed redeemer initially agrees to redeem the land, but refuses redemption when he is told he must take Ruth as his wife and build a family to continue her husband Mahlon's family name.
- f. Upon receiving the refusal, Boaz accepts the responsibility and redeems Ruth and Naomi.
- g. God blesses this act of redemption through the birth of a son which leads to rejoicing and an heir with eternal consequences

6. Wherefore: The underlying “why” or motive in the text
 - a. The text depicts God’s willingness to go to great lengths to redeem His beloved.
 - b. The text also depicts the great blessings that follow redemption. Upon Boaz making this grand gesture of redemption for not just one widow, but two, the elders and the people at the gate pronounced a blessing over this union.
 - c. Notice that v.11-12, mention some specific women that we cannot overlook. First, it mentions Rachel and Leah, the wives of Jacob. If you know the story of Rachel, you know that she was unable to have children for many years “before God opened her womb” and that it was through Rachel and her sister Leah that God built up the family of Israel. Rachel and Leah are known as the Mothers of Israel. This fact is very important because Ruth had been unable to conceive in Moab during her marriage to Mahlon. The people pronounced a blessing over their union so that God would do the same thing he did for Rachel and allow Ruth to conceive.
 - d. Following this blessing, the elders and all the people also prayed that Boaz and Ruth would be famous in Bethlehem.
 - e. V. 12, mentions Tamar. Tamar was a foreigner like Ruth, but God blessed her to become the mother of Perez and Zerah, through whom Judah’s descendant’s came.
 - f. God answered this blessing by giving Boaz and Ruth, a son named Obed, which was a miracle birth that is believed to be a foreshadowing of the miracle birth of Jesus Christ in the same town of Bethlehem.
 - g. From this union God brought forth a great king, King David, and the greatest King of All, the Eternal King, Jesus.

Correlation-Where does it fit?

Let’s look at Chapter 4 to apply the Clarity of Correlation to determine the link between the culture and historical times of the writer of the text and our present-day reality. We will apply the steps of correlation to extract biblical principles that we can apply to our lives. We asked and answered the six interrogative questions of (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and Wherefore) during our observation. Now, it is time to record the truths, great and small in the text.

Truths from the text:

- God rewards faithfulness and obedience (v. 11-15)
- The story of Boaz and Ruth is an illustration of God’s divine redemption through Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate redeemer (v. 18-22)
- God is the giver of life (v.13)
- Marriage is an institution created, celebrated, and cherished by God (v. 13)
- God can birth miracles out of mourning (v. 13-17)
- Ruth, a non-Israelite was listed in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1:5) which foreshadowed Jesus coming for the Jew (Israelite) and the Gentile (non-Jew).

Application-How does it apply?

1: God stands ready to redeem us.

As we discussed earlier, Boaz did not have a legal obligation to redeem Ruth and Naomi. He acted out of kindness in response to the kindness he had received from Ruth and the loyalty he witnessed from Ruth to Naomi and her dead husband (2:11-12). Loving kindness is the motivation for God's redemption of His people. God did not send His Son to redeem us out of obligation, but love was the motivating factor. As the Ultimate Redeemer, Jesus, has taken on our sin, and He has adopted us into the family of God that we might have a spiritual inheritance. God also gave Boaz and Ruth a spiritual inheritance because Jesus came from the lineage of their son, Obed, and is referred to in scripture as the Son of David (Matt. 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9). Ruth and Boaz could not have known that their faithfulness and obedience in the ordinary would result in such an extraordinary blessing.

2: God rewards faithfulness and obedience.

The blessings pronounced by the elders and all the people at the gate came true (v. 11-14). Marriage, God-given conception, and the long-awaited heir were among the many blessings God bestowed upon Boaz and Ruth. Ruth's obedience caused God to open her womb and bring forth life (v. 13). God gave Ruth a blessing that had not happened in Moab although she had been married for at least 10 years. Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem empty handed, but in just a few short weeks, they experienced an Ephesians 3:20 blessing. Their sorrow was turned into joy, and their loss was replaced with abundance. Ruth became more valuable to Naomi than seven sons (v. 15). In Hebrew culture, seven sons were viewed as the greatest blessing a Hebrew family could receive. The fact that the people in Bethlehem viewed Ruth to be even more valuable is a reward that only God could provide. Don't forget, Ruth was a foreigner, yet the people were praising her for her faithfulness and obedience. Naomi was no longer bitter and empty (1:20-21), but joyful and blessed. Naomi was afforded the privilege of taking care of the grandfather of King David! God demonstrates His faithfulness in the ordinary activities of death, traveling, harvesting, work, eating, sleeping, marriage, and birth. Faithfulness in the ordinary opens the door for God to move in extraordinary ways.

Homework: I encourage you to spend time this week reflecting on the following questions.

1. In what areas of my life am I being faithful and obedient to God? Explain why.
2. In what areas of my life am I not being faithful and obedient to God? Explain why not.
3. Read Galatians 6:9, John 14:21, Deuteronomy 28: 1-14, and John 15:14. Write down the promises that God makes to those who are faithful and obedient to him.

Resource List

1. Life Application Study Bible (2007), New Living Translation (NLT), Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Carol Stream, IL.
2. New Living Translation (NLT) Study Bible (2004), Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, IL.
3. The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament, Eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Published by David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO.
4. Holy Bible, New International Version (2011), Biblica, Inc., Colorado Springs, CO
5. Contemporary Comparative Side-By-Side Bible (2011), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI

I reviewed these bible studies briefly to compare ideas for themes for the 4 weeks

1. Ruth – God’s Amazing Love for You (2018), Courtney Joseph, Women Living Well Ministries
2. Ruth – Loss, Love, and Legacy (2009), Kelly Minter, Lifeway Press

