

# Session 3 - Ruth

## The Book of Ruth 1-4

### Intro

Previously we looked at brokenness and how being broken doesn't mean we are worthless, and we saw this in the life of Tamar. Last week we looked at how our past doesn't define us, and we saw that in the life of Rahab.

Today we will be looking at the life of Ruth in the Bible. Actually, the story of Ruth is a whole book in the Bible. It's a really interesting and powerful story.

### Part 1

The story begins with Naomi, who was one of God's people who had settled in the land of Moab. She had 2 sons, and they had married Moabite women. The Moabites had their own gods and were a very different culture to God's people. Naomi's husband died, and her two sons died. She and her two daughters in law (Orpah and Ruth) were widowed and without children. They were left without anything. In those times, if you remember from Tamar's story, the land and anything of ownership was passed through the male heirs. Naomi said to her daughters in law that she was not able to produce any more sons and so they should go back to their families, the Moabites. Orpah went back, but Ruth stayed, and this is what she said:

<sup>16</sup> But 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. <sup>17</sup> 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." <sup>18</sup> When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

#### Ruth 1:16-18

So, we know that Ruth was from a different culture and different beliefs. But here we see her choosing to stay with Naomi and actively choosing to be a part of God's people.

### Discussion Questions

- ▶ How hard do you think making that decision was for her?
- ▶ Why do you think she did such a thing?
- ▶ If it was you, what would you have done?

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### Craft Time

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## Part 2

So, Ruth goes with Naomi back to her homeland.

There was a law in these times to help widows in this situation where they were left with nothing and no heirs. It is similar to the one in Tamar's story. The next closest male relative looks after the widow and therefore they are secure and cared for. Bare this in mind for the future of this story.

Now, there was a man named Boaz who was a relative of Naomi. He owned a large amount of land and people worked for him on that land. There was another law to help the poor which said that, when people were harvesting crops, if any fell to the ground, they had to leave them for the poor to pick up and be able to feed themselves. This was called gleaning. (*Find out more in Leviticus 19:9-10*)

So, when they arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth went out into the fields to pick up any crops that were left. She didn't realise that the field belonged to Boaz. As he went to check on the field and his workers, he noticed her and said to her that she can stay and glean in his field, and he made sure she wasn't hurt by any of the men in the field.

<sup>10</sup> At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favour in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"

<sup>11</sup> Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. <sup>12</sup> May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

**Ruth 2:10-12**

## Discussion Questions

### What do you think of Boaz?

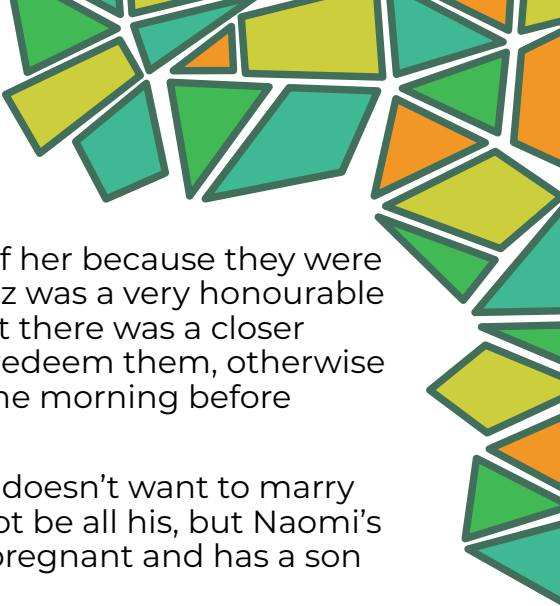
(Point out that his mother was Rahab (prostitute and foreigner) and the impact that would have had on his compassion toward Ruth's situation. How God used Rahab's influence in this story as well.)

## Craft Time

## Part 3

Boaz looks after Ruth well, even tells his workers to leave more crops on the ground for her to pick up!

Naomi tells Ruth that she should propose marriage to Boaz which would redeem them out of this situation. So, while Boaz was sleeping with the harvested grain (he was watching over it), she went in and uncovered his feet. This sounds really weird to us, but it is actually a type of proposal in that time! So, Ruth proposed to Boaz. When he woke up, he was a little surprised.



Now, he had the opportunity to really take advantage of her because they were alone, and it was the middle of the night. However, Boaz was a very honourable man, and he did not take advantage of her. He said that there was a closer relative than him and he would check first if he would redeem them, otherwise he will marry her. Then, he made sure she left early in the morning before anyone could see her and ruin her reputation.

Boaz goes to the closer relative, finds out that the man doesn't want to marry her because that would mean the inheritance would not be all his, but Naomi's family's also. So, Boaz marries Ruth, and she becomes pregnant and has a son named Obed. Now Ruth and Naomi were secure.

Even though Ruth was a foreigner and someone who probably worshipped other gods before choosing to follow the God of Israel, God provided for her. She was an outcast, but God provided for her to be taken into God's chosen family. And, as we see, she was not just in the family, she was an important part of Jesus' family tree.

Reading Ruth, we might be surprised by her positivity. She always seems to see the good in things, to be thankful. She fights on, even when all seems lost, that is probably because she has this trust in God.

## Discussion Questions

- ▶ **What things in your life are you surrounded by, or have been provided, that you can be thankful for?**
- ▶ **What things or qualities in each other, or the group, are you thankful for?**  
*(Maybe we could ask each other?)*

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## Craft Time

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### Summary

Out of poverty, sacrificing family, lack of security and safety, we see how God provides and restores Naomi's family to how it should be and even more so.

*(You should all have beads, necklaces, bracelets. We made those out of junk mail that we usually just throw away. But here we haven't just saved them, found some use for them but we have done that and made them into something more.)*

In the story of Ruth, we see Boaz being the 'redeemer' as it is called in the Bible. That is someone who gives back the value of something, like how we redeem a voucher. While Boaz was the one who was able to restore Ruth and Naomi's situation, there is one who can do that for us now and that would be Jesus who Ruth and Boaz foreshadow/hint at.

*Extra depending on context:*

*Suggest if anyone wants to know more about Jesus they can ask.*

*Can you see how trusting God and finding Jesus to be your redeemer could restore your life?*

