



## Life Group Study Ruth 1-2

Have you ever had your life flipped upside down? Have circumstances in your life ever caused you to wonder how you will function in the coming days, months, years? Have you been part of a major transition of some sort, lost someone extremely close to you, or been relocated to a foreign land? Have you ever been so dependent on God and His providence that you feel as if you would not have made it without Him? Take 5-10 minutes to discuss how God has been revealing himself to you lately. Is your current journey going smoothly or is it difficult? Is it easy to see God's plans at the moment in your life, or do you feel clouded in your understanding of what he is doing? Do you feel closer or farther away from God today than you did yesterday?

### **Weekly Reading: Ruth 1-2 in its entirety**

#### **Background:**

Israel is in a time of national despair. The people of God who were to totally take over the land did not move forward in faith and take over the promised land. The people repeatedly did not drive out the inhabitants of the land, and thus became defiled by their practices while being repressed by them. The individual people all did as they saw fit (Judges 17:6), and the spiritual state of the people gradually degenerated.

As we enter the book of Ruth, we see a time of relative peace between Moab and Israel, in contrast to Judges 3:12-30. A man from Judah, Elimelech, travels to Moab as a sojourner due to a famine in the land of Judah. He leaves his homeland of Bethlehem in search of greener pastures, along with his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The sons marry Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah, but within ten years Elimelech and his two sons die, leaving the women to fend for themselves. Ruth remained with her mother in law Naomi as they returned to Bethlehem as Orpah returned to her homeland. This story takes place approximately 1300 BC.

## Group Study:

### **Read Ruth 1:1-5 - The Unlikely Setting for Good**

Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah are widowed, and are forced to make a choice of where they will move to in order to survive. Their entire worlds have been flipped upside down, experiencing grief, sorrow, fear, uncertainty, and despair. How could God possibly make something good from this current state of ashes?

### **Read Ruth 1:6-18 - A Not So Easy Choice**

The book of Ruth reminds us, even during difficult times and situations who is in control. Reread Ruth 1:6. Who remained in control in spite of the current situation?

The women were all forced to make a choice? What choice did Naomi make? What choice did Ruth make? What choice did Orpah make? When we look closer into scripture, we see that these were not just choices of who would live with who, but in reality moved much deeper into their long term choices of who they would serve. Contrast Ruth 1:15 with Ruth 1:16-17. For two women from pagan backgrounds, how would this choice have drastically changed the outcome of their lives? What choice did Ruth make in contrast to Orpah? Discuss briefly.

### **Read Ruth 1:19-22, Genesis 35:10-12, Genesis 49:8-11, Micah 5:2 - Setting the Stage for Good in the midst of Trouble**

Where did Ruth and Naomi eventually return to? Which Country? Which Tribal Land? Which town? Compare this with Genesis 35:10-12, Genesis 49:8-11, and Micah 5:2. How was God beginning to foreshadow his plans through the return of Ruth and Naomi to this exact area? Do you see this as the beginning of the fulfillment of God's prior prophecies? Why or why not?

In spite of this amazing circumstance and relocation for God's plans, how did Naomi respond? Do you think that Naomi felt that God was doing amazing things through her at that time? How do our circumstances often times relate to God's overall plan for good? It is better to trust our feeling or God's truth during these times? Have you ever had to trust in God's word as you wrestled through a difficult situation? Did you trust your feeling or God's truth during that time? Take 5-10 minutes to discuss. How can this example help us to try to view things from God's perspective?

### **Read Ruth 2:1-23 - A Type of One to Come**

Summarize the overall plot in Ruth 2.

Read Ruth 2:3. Do you feel that this was chance or had Divine purpose? What is so interesting about the clan to where Boaz came from?

Boaz was the owner of the field, and higher in status than the reapers. Ruth was a widow, a foreigner from Moab, and the caretaker for her mother-in-law. What amazing thing happened in Ruth 2:5? What does this tell you about the character of Boaz?

What did Boaz promise to Ruth? In terms of her safety? In terms of her welfare? In regards to her needs? Why does scripture say that Boaz took notice of her? Hint: See Ruth 2:10-12. How did Ruth respond?

How did Naomi respond to how Boaz treated Ruth? How does her statement in Ruth 2:20 show her faith? How does it reflect how she sees herself in light of the current situation? Do you think that Naomi began to see part of God's plans during this time?

Typology is where we see a foreshadowing of an attribute of God's characteristics displayed through an individual in scripture, even before Jesus makes his presence on earth known. Characters and nations can become a "type" of Jesus, not actually Jesus himself, but rather a foreshadowing of what Jesus would do for us.

How did Boaz become a type of Jesus in this situation? In regards to His status compared to ours? In regards to their current situation in comparison to ours? In regards to how he treated Ruth and Naomi compared to us? In regards to his promise to Ruth compared to his promises to us? How is Jesus our Redeemer, as Boaz was a redeemer for Ruth?

Take 5-10 minutes to discuss how Boaz becomes a "type" of Jesus to Ruth, and how this aligns with your understanding of how God views us and interacts with us.

### **Conclusion:**

These sections of scripture truly show the importance of following after God even when times are difficult. They give us a larger picture of how God's plans are good despite current situations, and the command to remain faithful to God's truth and promises in spite of difficult situations. We see a picture of how God looks after us; He seeks us out, blesses us, provides for us, protects us, as looks out for our family. He gives us blessings that we do not deserve and elevates our status above where we belong. We experience this as children of God, not because we deserve it, but because he loves us despite our current status.

How will you apply these principles to your life right now? How will your life change as a result of these revelations? How will this affect how you interact with others who do not know Jesus? With other Christians? Does this give you hope for the future, in spite of your current situation? Do you truly believe that God is in control, when things seem out of control at times?

### **Prayer**

Conclude in prayer about what you have learned.