

Ruth: A Story of God's Redeeming Love
Additional Discussion Questions

Introduction

1. What comes to mind when you think of the book of Ruth?

2. Why study this book?

3. Where in History does this book take place?
 - a. Read Judges 21:25, Deuteronomy 28 and 30:2-3, 8:10. Old testament books help us understand the background to this story. God promises blessings on his people for obedience but warned them of curses for disobedience.
 - i. What were the people of Israel like at this time?
 - ii. And why might there be famine in the Land?

4. What does God's Providence mean in your own words?

Chapter 1: God is Faithful to the Faithless

1. In Genesis 19:30-38, numbers 25:1-9 and Judges 3:12-14 we see who the Moabites are and how they were a long-time enemy of Israel.
 - a. How did the nation begin?
 - b. What is the problem with this family moving to Moab and marrying their women?
2. Why does God establish commands for us? Why does he tell us to do certain things and not do other things?
3. Have there been times when disobeying God seemed easier than obeying him?
4. Have you acted like Elimelech and disobeyed God to Meet your needs? When and why did you do so?
5. When have you been unfaithful to God but He has remained faithful to you? How were you unfaithful, and how did God display His faithfulness toward you?
6. The Westminster Confession of Faith 7.3. says "*Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein He freely offers unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto eternal life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing, and able to believe.*" The Covenant of Grace takes our unfaithfulness into account. Does this impact your faithfulness to God? If so, how?
7. What are some other Biblical examples of God remaining faithful to the unfaithful?

Chapter 2: God is Faithful to the Hopeless

1. Up to this point Naomi's story is one of tragedy and suffering. What hint of a better future did Naomi hear?
2. What did Naomi do next after she heard this news of hope?
3. Naomi didn't know how her story would end, but the Lord did. Who was going to be born into Naomi's family? (4:17) and who else? (Matthew 1:1)
4. We don't know how our stories will end, but the Lord does! Read 1 Peter 1:3-4. What is the future inheritance for all those who are in Christ? And how certain is it?
5. Have you ever faced a choice like Orpha and Ruth? To return to God's faithfulness or to continue living in Sin? What did that look like?
6. We see in this book that God's *hesed* is a major theme. Define *hesed*. (pg 19-20)
7. Have you ever had someone display *hesed* toward you? Have you shown *hesed* to someone else?
8. What Hebrew word is used 10 times in chapter 1? What does it mean?

9. Ruth's reply to Naomi is written in a Hebrew form known as a Chiasm, verses 16-17 (with a chiasm, the outer statements echo one another, and the central statement is the most important point.) So what is the core statement that Ruth is making here?

10. What is Ruth committing herself to in verses 16-17

11. Ruth has counted the cost of following the Lord, and committed herself to doing what it takes. Has there been a cost to your faith in God? If so what have you sacrificed?

12. We see in Ruth's profession of faith how she quotes God's covenantal promises back to God. We don't do this because he forgets them, he wants us to repeat his promises because *we forget them*. Do you regularly pray God's promises back to Him? If not, it is something you should practice when you pray. What are some of God's promises that you can pray back to Him?

13. When is it hardest for you to trust God's plan for your life? What will you do to remind yourself this week that he is sovereign over all things?

Chapter 3: God is Faithful to Those Who Forget His Promises

1. Are there times when you have forgotten God's promises to you? Can you identify with Naomi's bitterness (and her name change) over her circumstances? How can remembering God's promises be a cure for bitterness?
2. In verses 20-21 Naomi refers to God as Almighty Lord and Lord Almighty, emphasizing God's sovereignty. Using the different names of God can be a powerful way to bolster your prayers or remind yourself of the character of God. How do you refer to God?
3. How is Naomi like the Prodigal Son and Job? How is she different? Do you see in yourself similarities between you and the Prodigal Son or Job? If so, how?
4. By calling herself Mara (bitter), it seems as though Naomi didn't think she was blessed by having Ruth as a daughter-in-law. How did Ruth respond to this? What lessons might we learn from Ruth's actions?
5. Is there a Naomi in your life? Someone who is bitter over life? Maybe you? Are there times when you have forgotten God's blessings because you were too focused on your present circumstances?
6. What signs of God's blessings or Grace have you seen in your church family recently?

Chapter 4: Boaz's Kindness to Those in His Fields

1. What do we learn about the character of Boaz in these verses?
2. Explain the importance of gleaning in Israelite Society?
3. Describe some of the ways Boaz's treatment of Ruth showed he did not see her as a marginalized person, namely a poor widowed foreigner from a pagan culture.
4. How did Boaz display Christ's *hesed* to his workers and to Ruth?
5. Do your actions demonstrate Christ's *hesed* to others? How could you display *hesed* at home, church, work or to the marginalized in your community?
6. Have you ever experienced something randomly but looked back and saw God's providential hand in it? How is understanding God's providence less stressful than believing in luck or chance?
7. Our God is a God of loving-kindness (*hesed*). How has he displayed His loving-kindness to you?

Chapter 5: Boaz's Kindness to Ruth

1. Boaz address Ruth as "daughter". What were some of the ways Boaz extended Ruth the protection of a family member?
2. Describe a few ways Boaz's actions foreshadow Christ's *hesed*.
3. Ruth is overwhelmed by the grace she receives from Boaz. How does her response in verse 10 point us to how we can respond to the grace God has shown us?
4. In verse 12, Boaz says "Under whose wings you have come for refuge" And throughout the Old testament, this image is used to describe God's protection of and provision for His people. Describe a meaningful time when you recognized God's provision, And how you have felt protected under those wings.

Chapter 6: Boaz's Kindness to Naomi

1. Think back to our previous study. What have we discovered about Boaz's character?
2. What does Boaz do in verses 14-16 that match what you already know about him? What was the result for Ruth (v 17-18)?
3. What did Naomi have to say about Boaz? (v 19-22)
4. Describe the four qualifications for a kinsman-redeemer.
5. To be a redeemer you have to have both willingness and the ability to redeem. As we will see, Boaz had both. How does Philippians 2:6-8 show Jesus' willingness to redeem?
6. Read Galatians 4:4-7. What familial image is used to describe what it is like to be redeemed by Christ?

Chapter 7: Naomi's Scheme

1. Describe the rules of a levirate marriage. (see Deuteronomy 25:5-10)
2. What was your impression of Naomi's plan? Why was it risky?
3. Look at the specific instructions Naomi provides for Ruth in verses 3-4. How does Ruth respond to Naomi's plan?
4. In what areas has God asked you to wait? What could He be trying to teach you as you wait or have waited on Him?
5. In the John Newton quote, he asks, "Which part of our past experiences can charge Him with unfaithfulness?" Reminding ourselves of God's faithfulness in our lives can help as we wait on Him. In the past, how has God shown His faithfulness to you?

Chapter 8: Ruth's Obedience

1. Does Ruth follow Naomi's plan exactly? Compare verse 4 with verse 9.
2. Have you ever felt obligated to obey someone even when it seemed they were giving you bad advice?
3. What does the fact that Boaz was sleeping separate from the others at the threshing floor tell you about his character?
4. Describe the two ways Ruth proposed to Boaz.
5. What do we learn about Boaz by his reacting to Ruth's proposal? How does Boaz foreshadow Christ in this manner?

Chapter 9: Boaz's Response

1. Just because we are seeking God's will does not mean we won't face obstacles or trials. It can be difficult to persevere in the face of opposition. Think of a time you faced a trial in your life. How did God work it out?
2. Naomi asked Ruth if she was Ms. Ruth or Mrs. Boaz. To whom do you belong? Who has redeemed you? How do you know?
3. How has God been sanctifying you? What areas of your life been difficult or do you need to trust God more?
4. Sometimes, when we read a Bible story, it gives us a direct example to follow. But Ruth 3 contains much that we cannot imitate, such as threshing floor marriage proposals! Think again about the actions of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz in this chapter. How can you apply their example to your own lives this week?

Chapter 10: The Final Obstacle

1. How does the other redeemer respond to Boaz's initial suggestion (v 4)? What changes in verse 6 and why?
2. A true redeemer is willing to pay a price for the good of others. How is this true of Boaz? How is Jesus Christ the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer?
3. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How do verses 6-11 show Jesus acting as our Kinsman-Redeemer? How do verses 1-5 match the character and actions of Boaz?
4. One more significant thing happens at the city gate: a threefold prayer of blessing from the people and the elders. What are the three blessings and who are they directed too? (Ruth 4:11-12)?
5. How were these prayers answered?
6. As a modern society, we don't bless others very much. We may say, "Congratulations," but we don't offer blessings. We tend to curse others more frequently. Do you agree with this? How can we affect change in our lives to become people who bless rather than curse?
7. How has this study helped your appreciation of the character and love of Jesus your Redeemer to grow? What aspect of Jesus' character do you most want to hold on to this week?

Chapter 11: Redemption

1. Explain the significance of Ruth being a Gentile and what her acceptance in the family of God and inclusion in the lineage of Christ means for us.
2. In Ruth 1 Naomi changes her name to "Mara" which means bitter from Naomi which means "pleasant". Have things changed for her in Chapter now?
3. Do you think Naomi's redemption was greater than Ruth's? Why or why not?
4. What did the women say Ruth's child would do for Naomi (v 15)? Why do you think they were confident of this?
5. Have you been impacted by a godly person in your life who has undergone a great transformation in their Christian walk?

Chapter 12: God's Ultimate Purpose

1. God is in the business of answering prayer. Have you prayed for the transformation of someone in your life? Have you seen such prayers answered?
2. Obed's name means "servant" This is indeed a good name for a child who would grow up to care for and serve his grandmother. What does your name mean? Does it pertain to who you are and what you do?
3. Read Matthew 1:1-6a. How are these verses similar to Ruth 4:18-22? Who are the women mentioned?
4. These women included a prostitute, a Moabite, and an adulterer. Why is it surprising that these women in Jesus' family tree? What does it teach us about the people God uses to work his purposes out?
5. Why is genesis 3:15 called the protoevangelium? How does this statement impact the rest of the Bible?
6. How does the Story of Ruth address the question of how we can be faithful in faithless times?
7. Whether this was your first- or fiftieth- time reading Ruth, I hope God has used this study to speak to you of his love and inspire you to change. Think back over the book of Ruth. How has it pointed you to Jesus? What have you been most helped by? What challenge will you take away with you?