

Read through the Bible



The Book of Ruth



**OUR
SAVIOR
LIVING
LOVE**

Monday, May Eighth

Welcome to our one-week journey through the book of Ruth! This booklet is laid out to help you walk through a portion of Ruth each day this week. Whether you start off your day with this, find some time during your lunch break, or sit down with it before you go to bed, the hope would be for you to engage with the Bible on a consistent basis as God engages you and calls you into His story. If you've never read through Ruth before or you've read it many times through, may your journey through it be filled with fresh perspective as you reflect on God's faithfulness, love, and care for His people. - Vicar Chris

Read: Ruth 1:1-18

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

The story of Ruth begins with a series of big life changes for a Jewish family seeking a better life. While these events are not the story's focus, they give us great insight as to how it came to be.

- What causes Naomi, Elimelech, and their two sons to leave their home in Bethlehem and travel to Moab? (see verse 1)
- How does Naomi's family change over time? (see verses 3-5)

Imagine what it must have been like for Naomi. She moves with her husband and her two sons to a foreign land to escape famine, only to see all of them die within a span of ten years. What started as a famine of food became a famine of family, and Naomi was left in complete devastation. What more did she have to hope for?

- What prompts Naomi to leave Moab? (see verses 6-7)
- What is Naomi's wish for Ruth and Orpah? (see verses 8, and 11-13) What is Ruth's desire? (see verses 16-18)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to go to God in prayer and thank Him for being with you throughout the big life changes you've experienced.

Tuesday, May Ninth

If you've ever gone fishing before in the Tampa Bay area, you've probably experienced the excitement that comes with catching a fish. There's the moment when you hook the fish, the moment when you reel the fish in, and the moment when you hoist your fish up proudly alongside of you. Fishing is fun when you're catching fish. But what happens when you go out to fish and you end up catching nothing? Not even a bite? If you continue to go out repeatedly and end up without any fish each time, your attitude towards fishing may start to change. In fact, after a few unsuccessful trips, you may even find yourself sticking the pole somewhere deep in your garage never to be seen or used again. In today's passage, we see how the loss of Naomi's husband and sons had begun to change her attitude towards God. How would she view their relationship in light of these devastating events?

Read: Ruth 1:19-22

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- What does Naomi want the people of Bethlehem to call her? What is her reason for this? (see verses 20-21)

Naomi's name means 'pleasant.' For much of her life, it illustrated her attitude towards her life circumstances. But now, having lost her husband and two sons, she wishes for others to call her Mara, meaning 'bitter.' This name change shows us how the recent events in her life had changed her attitude and heart towards God.

- Naomi comments that the Lord has "brought [her] back empty" (v. 21). How does verse 22 indicate that things might be changing for her?

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

How do you typically react to difficult situations in your life? How does your attitude towards God change in those moments?

Wednesday, May Tenth

In the past few years, our culture and media have really taken hold of the 'pay it forward' idea. The concept is simple, yet thoughtful – offer to pay for the person's order behind you. In 2014, a local Starbucks in St. Pete made national news when over 700 people paid it forward over the span of a few days. How might a distant relative of Naomi 'pay it forward' to Ruth in our passage today?

Read: Ruth 2:1-13

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- Without husbands, land, or livestock, Naomi and Ruth are left without a means of survival. What solution does Ruth propose? (see verses 2-3)

Back in Ruth's time, gleaning was the practice of following behind the harvest to collect what remained for food. The poor and widowed often did this for survival by collecting bits of edible food that were left behind in the fields. As one who was younger and more able to do this task, Ruth offers to glean for Naomi.

- After inquiring about Ruth, what does Boaz offer to her? (see verses 8-9)
- Ruth doesn't understand why she is being shown such favor by Boaz. How does he explain it? (see verses 11-12)

Boaz justifies his faithfulness to her by speaking of her faithfulness to Naomi. But as a Jewish man of good repute, he also might have taken these words from Scripture to heart – "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 23:22). Ruth was both poor and a foreigner.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Think about a way you can 'pay it forward' to someone today. Ask God to help guide you in showing favor to someone in need.

Thursday, May Eleventh

If you've ever been to IKEA over in Tampa, you likely made your way through a maze of showrooms filled with funky, common sense furniture (ok, maybe you had the meatballs or the cinnamon rolls while you were there too...). While there are many pieces to choose from, perhaps you were most surprised to find out that almost all of their furniture requires self-assembly. Oftentimes, when first-time IKEA shoppers open up the instruction manual of their newly purchased piece of furniture, a daunting realization occurs – "This looks like it's going to be a lot harder to put together than I thought." But after following the first few steps outlined in the instruction manual, folks realize that the assembly is actually much easier than they expected. In today's passage, Ruth finds the difficult task of gleanings to be much easier than she expected, thanks to the help of a kind land owner she recently met.

Read: Ruth 2:14-23

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- What instructions does Boaz give to his men? (see verses 15-16)
- What does Ruth learn about Boaz from Naomi? (see verse 20)

A kinsman-redeemer was a male relative who had a responsibility to help a family member in need or in trouble. The laws outlining this responsibility are found in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). Naomi recognizes Boaz's kindness as a gesture of this responsibility for his distant relatives. In doing so, Boaz's actions remind Naomi that she still has family who is looking out for her and for Ruth.

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Boaz's role as the kinsman-redeemer foreshadows one who would become the ultimate kinsman-redeemer for humanity – Jesus. Take some time to write down specific ways Jesus provides for you.

Friday, May Twelfth

Imagine taking a road trip with your family or some of your friends. You're headed to Savannah, Georgia for the weekend, and you begin to make your way up I-75. Just outside of Ocala, you hit a slowdown that eventually turns into a standstill. No cars are moving, and you hear on the radio that there's a big accident about 5 miles up the road. You begin to realize this road trip is not going to be the 6 hours you'd thought it'd be. All of a sudden, one of your family members or friends in the backseat instructs you to take the exit off to the right. You ask, "Why? That takes us right into Ocala." The passenger exclaims, "Trust me. I know a shortcut." In today's passage, Naomi attempts to provide Ruth with a shortcut in order to gain the approval and admiration of Boaz.

Read: Ruth 3:1-18

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- What instructions does Naomi give to Ruth? (see verses 3-4)? What prompts her to say these things? (see verses 1-2)

It seems like quite the precarious situation that Naomi is proposing to Ruth. She is to get all dressed up, wait until Boaz had had something to drink and is in good spirits, and then lie at his feet on the threshing floor until he wakes up. In doing so, Naomi seems to be providing a shortcut for Ruth and Boaz that might 'speed up' any feelings he might have for her. How would they interact?

- What does Boaz propose to Ruth? (see verses 10-13) How do the two keep the risky situation from going any further? (see verses 13-14)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

While Boaz may have had feelings for Ruth, his plan for her showed that he wanted to do things properly and intentionally. He could have taken a shortcut, but he didn't. Take some time in prayer to thank God for not taking a shortcut with our salvation. Thank Him for sending His Son properly and intentionally.

Saturday, May Thirteenth

Marriage proposals have become more and more creative over the past few decades. For example, a man might propose to his girlfriend with a flash mob of singers and dancers at Disney. Or a guy might propose with the help of a social media platform. Or a young man might take his girlfriend out on a boat with lights carefully placed on the deck saying, "Will you marry me?" Back in Ruth's time, marriage proposals were generally nowhere near as creative as they are today. Oftentimes, they were presented as a binding agreement or a transactional understanding between families. While Boaz appears to have feelings for Ruth beyond a simple binding agreement, he realizes there is one hurdle he needs to overcome in order to propose to this admirable woman.

Read: Ruth 4:1-12

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- What does Boaz propose to this other kinsman-redeemer? (see verses 2-4)

In order to marry Ruth, Boaz had to go through a complicated process that involved a public forum at the town gate. As a distant relative to Naomi, Boaz could "redeem" her property by purchasing it. However, the laws required that her family land be first offered to a closer relative, who we meet as the other kinsman-redeemer. If he turns down the offer, Boaz is able to purchase Naomi's land and take Ruth as his wife. Easier said than done, right?

- How does the man initially respond? (see verse 4) How does the man respond once he finds out he would also acquire Ruth as his wife? (see verses 5-6)
- How does it come to be that Boaz and Ruth are to be married? (see verses 9-10)

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Consider chatting with someone tomorrow at church about something God has been revealing to you from this study of Ruth.

Sunday, May Fourteenth

If you are a mother or caregiver reading along with us through Ruth, Happy Mother's Day! A mother's love for her child is a beautiful depiction of the love God has for us as His children. In this study's final passage, we see the fruits of Ruth becoming a mother.

Read: Ruth 4:13-22

Reflect: Use the passage in Ruth to work through these questions

- Compare Naomi's comment in Ruth 1:21 to what the women say to Naomi in verses 14 and 15 of chapter 4. How do they show her how her circumstances had changed?
- According to the lineage, who turned out to be Ruth's great-grandson? (see verses 17-22)

It's truly amazing how God works in the lives of His people in ways they could have never imagined. Having lost her husband and two sons, Naomi could not have imagined how God would remain faithful to her even when she had become bitter towards Him. As a widow and foreigner, Ruth could not have imagined how a rich, Jewish land owner could show her so much favor and admiration. And yet, Naomi and Ruth, once without anything of value, ended up gaining so much by the mercy shown them through their kinsman-redeemer. We must always remember that in Christ, we who once had nothing of value have now received everything of value through Him. He is truly our kinsman-redeemer!

Respond: Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Thank a mother today for all she does in loving her child(ren).

Well, that's a wrap! I pray your time in the Bible has shown you God's faithfulness, love, and care for His people as demonstrated in the story of Ruth. I'll be back in a few weeks with our next book of the Bible...1 Corinthians. – Vicar Chris

Questions? Comments? Contact Vicar Chris at chris.futch@oursaviorfl.org or (727) 531-2761.