
LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

[Winter Season: January 11 - March 22 | Spring Season: April 12 – June 14]

LEADER DETAILS

- **MAIN TEXT:** Ruth 2:1-20 (Supporting text: Deuteronomy 24:19-22)
- **MAIN IDEA:** We are called to be faithful with what's before us, trusting God is working his providence.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Give space to understand what someone is saying before moving along.
- **ICEBREAKER:** What entry-level job in any industry would you choose just to learn how things work? why?

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Full details at: emergence.church/digital-bulletin)

- **Prayer and Fasting – Tuesdays from February 24 – March 31.** In-person prayer in Totowa and Ringwood at 7:00AM (Lent Devotionals every Tuesday via email and socials).
 - **The Why** – Fasting is a spiritual discipline that helps us draw closer to God by reminding us of our dependence on Him. We are intentional as a church to practice this corporately at times. This season, we are praying and fasting as we head toward Easter, preparing our hearts and petitioning God to move in power to see people saved.
- **Easter Weekend Details! April 3rd-5th**
 - Good Friday Prayer Gathering – 5pm and 6:30pm both campuses
 - Easter Saturday (Totowa Only) – 4:00pm and 5:30pm
 - Easter Sunday: Totowa – 8am, 9:15am, 10:30am, 11:45am | Ringwood – 8am, 9:30am, 11:00am
 - Mugs and Cards to invite available at both campuses starting March 5th and 8th!

GETTING STARTED:

- **Pray:** This helps everyone to prepare their hearts as you head to the discussion
 - **Watch Community Extras Video** (length – questions from video are included below)
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LAST WEEK'S GROWTH STEP FOLLOW-UP:

[Leaders: These follow-ups are meant to offer some accountability while being low-pressure. Keep it casual, "If you were able to try this last week, how did it go?" Sharing is optional; it's always okay to pass.]

- **Outward Action:** Reach out intentionally to one person who may be in a hard season, not to fix it, but to be with them in it.
 - **Inward Prayer:** As we fast and pray, spend time this week simply asking God to reveal anything you're clinging to more than Him.
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SERMON DISCUSSION: (value quality of discussion over quantity of questions answered)

Setting the Stage

As we continue our series in Ruth, chapter 2 begins with Naomi and Ruth back in Bethlehem and in great need. In both the Totowa and Ringwood sermons, in large part we looked at characteristics in Ruth, Boaz, and God. We saw the importance of human responsibility as well as the silent hand of God's providence quietly guiding events. Ruth works hard in a difficult season, while Boaz models what faithfulness looks like in a season of prosperity. Together they show us something important about the will of God: we are called to act faithfully, while trusting that God is at work.

First, we will look at Ruth's example in how she was faithful in her difficult circumstances.

Ruth's Example: Being Faithful with Little

Read Ruth 2:1-7

After arriving in Bethlehem with Naomi, Ruth goes out to glean in the fields so they can survive. According to God's law (Deut. 24:19–22), farmers were to leave part of their harvest behind for widows, foreigners, and the poor (a provision that reflected God's heart for the vulnerable). Even so, gleaning wasn't easy or necessarily safe, especially for a foreign widow like Ruth. Despite that being the case, she takes initiative and goes to work. Ruth reminds us that trusting God doesn't mean doing nothing. It means praying, making a wise plan, and stepping forward in faith. Pastor Ryan pointed out that Ruth makes a plan, works her plan, and does so with excellence and diligence.

- **What do you think it looks like to trust God while still doing your part in a difficult season?**
- **For you, what scriptures or thoughts motivate and inspire you to do everything in excellence and with diligence?** *[Leaders: In 1 Cor. 10:31 Paul tells us to do everything for the glory of God. We want to help people ground their diligence and motivation for anything in life with a perspective toward Christ. Maybe have some scriptures ready for yourself. Some ideas: 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 cor. 9:24-27; Col. 3:22-24; Romans 13:11-14; Heb. 12:12-13; etc.]*
- **What does excellence look like in your current season at home, work, school, or ministry?** *[leader: optional addition "how can we support you in that?" just a thought, as you feel it's applicable]*

God's Quiet Providence

One of the interesting phrases in this chapter is when the narrator says Ruth "happened" to come to the field belonging to Boaz (2:3). From a human perspective it looks random, but the reader knows something the characters don't. What looks like coincidence is actually the providence of God. Providence the reality that God is working behind the scenes of everyday life to see his purposes fulfilled.

- **Can you share a moment that seemed random at the time but later you were confident it was God at work? How does that impact your outlook toward situations in the present?**

Boaz's Example: Being Faithful with Prosperity

Read Ruth 2:8-17

As we see, Boaz is a man of wealth and influence, and in a season of prosperity. Yet instead of using his position for selfish gain, he uses it to bless others. In the Totowa sermon, Pastor Ryan pointed out 6 qualities we see in Boaz that teach us how to be faithful in a season of prosperity: (1) he knows blessing is from the LORD, (2) he blesses his employees, (3) he stays engaged in his work, (4) he protects the vulnerable, (5) he rewards faithfulness in others, and (6) he practices generosity. In Ringwood, Pastor Tyler noted that Boaz goes above and beyond what the law required to be a blessing to Ruth.

- What stands out to you most about Boaz's character? Why?
- Why do you think prosperity can sometimes make it harder for people to stay close to God? Where have you seen this in your own life?
- Boaz uses his strength and power to protect and provide for Ruth. Where has God given you influence, resources, or strength that could be used to help someone else?

When Both Hands Work Together

Read Ruth 2:18-20

When Ruth returns home with a large amount of grain and mentions Boaz, Naomi immediately recognizes God's kindness at work and begins to speak with hope again. In this moment we see how God often works: our faithfulness and His providence come together. God's kindness reaches others through the faithful actions of His people.

- When was a time when you were in need, and one of God's people showed kindness to you?
- Like Boaz, we as Christians are called to be agents of God's kindness and blessing. What would it look like for you potentially to use the opportunities God has for you to be a blessing this Easter season?

GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

- **Outward Action:** Look for an opportunity to bless someone through generosity, encouragement, or practical help.
- **Inward Prayer:** As we pray and fast, ask God to shape your heart to care about what He cares about.

PRAY:

- That God would help us be people who work faithfully with the opportunities He gives us.
- That our lives would become channels of God's kindness to others, like Boaz
- That God would help us trust Him in difficult seasons like Ruth.
- That we would recognize and celebrate the kindness of God shown to us through Jesus.