
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 3:1-18
- **MAIN IDEA:** God works through imperfect situations as his people walk in obedience and integrity.
- **GROWTH FOCUS:** Give space to understand what someone is saying (“What do you mean by that?”; “that’s interesting, share a little more what you’re thinking on that”; etc.).
- **ICEBREAKER:** What is one of the best pieces of advice that someone gave you?

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 3:25 – questions from video are included below)

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:** 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.
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SERMON DISCUSSION

Prioritize meaningful conversation over getting through every question.

Before We Get To Ruth...

At the beginning of the sermon, we heard stories of how something as simple as inviting someone to Easter and giving them a mug led to changed lives. We were reminded that God often does big things through small steps of obedience. Pastor Ryan encouraged us to be the followers of Jesus who will “do whatever he tells us” (John 2:5).

- Can you think of a time when a small step of obedience led to something bigger than you expected?
- Is there a step of obedience you sense God prompting you toward in this season?

Naomi’s Bold Plan

Read Ruth 3:1-5

Naomi gives Ruth a bold and unconventional plan to approach Boaz at the threshing floor as a potential redeemer. Pastor Ryan highlighted the difference between passages where the Bible **describes** what happened and passages where it **prescribes** what we should do. In other words, sometimes scripture shows us what happened, not necessarily what should always be done.

- Why is it important to understand the difference between what the Bible describes and what it commands, and how can we learn to interpret Scripture more carefully?

[Leaders: Sometimes this is more obvious, like the example Ryan gave of the commandment “do not murder”. Other times it can be trickier. One good method (or fancy word “hermeneutic”) is interpreting a word within its verse, the verse within its paragraph, a paragraph within its chapter, a chapter within its book, and a book within the context of the whole Bible. Like Ryan pointed out, this is how we know the Bible doesn’t “prescribe” polygamy, when we take into account Genesis 2:24 and passages showing the disastrous results of multiple wives. Here is one way of answering it, but feel free to add the many other helpful tools you may know of!]

A Vulnerable Moment

Read Ruth 3:6-8

When Boaz wakes up to find Ruth at his feet, the situation could easily become compromising. Instead, the passage highlights the integrity of both Ruth and Boaz. The Bible’s instruction when facing sexual temptation is not to see how close we can get to the line, but to flee from it. Followers of Jesus are called to pursue purity and make wise decisions that honor God and protect our integrity.

- The Bible tells believers to stand against the devil (Eph. 6:11), but to *flee* sexual temptation (1 Cor. 6:18). How does that strike you? Why do you think that instruction is so strong?
- Why is it important to make decisions about integrity (sexual or other areas as well) **before** a moment of temptation comes? Where have you seen that been helpful in your own life?
- Where might God be calling you to greater integrity in your own life?

Integrity on Display

Read Ruth 3:9-14

Ruth boldly asks Boaz to “spread his wing” over her, essentially asking him to redeem and marry her. Boaz shows incredible character in this moment. Even though he wants to help Ruth, he refuses to take shortcuts and insists on handling the situation the right way according to God’s law. He also takes steps to protect Ruth’s safety (by not sending her home at night) and reputation (by having her leave as soon as the sun is up before others are awake).

- Share a time when you were tempted to take a shortcut but decided not to, and it was for the better.
- What are some practical ways you’ve taken steps to help protect your reputation and that of others?

The Greater Love Story

Read Ruth 3:15-18

The story of Ruth and Boaz points to a much greater story: the redemption we have in Jesus. Just as Boaz redeems Ruth and brings her under his protection, Jesus redeems us and covers us with His salvation. From the promise in Genesis to the wedding supper in Revelation, Scripture tells the great love story of a God who delights to forgive, redeem, and make us His own.

- How does resting in the security of Jesus' redemption change the way you live your daily life?
 - Share a moment in your life when the love of Christ became real to you. When did you first realize or deeply experience that the God of the universe loves you and has redeemed you? (video question)
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GROWTH STEP THIS WEEK

- **Outward Action:** Mug people :) ... prayerfully.
 - **Inward Prayer:** As we pray and fast, ask God to give you courage to obey Him quickly and faithfully.
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PRAY:

- For Easter and the muggings and invites
- For courage to take steps of obedience
- For wisdom and purity in relationships
- For integrity to honor God even when it’s difficult
- For gratitude that Jesus is our true Redeemer who covers us with His grace