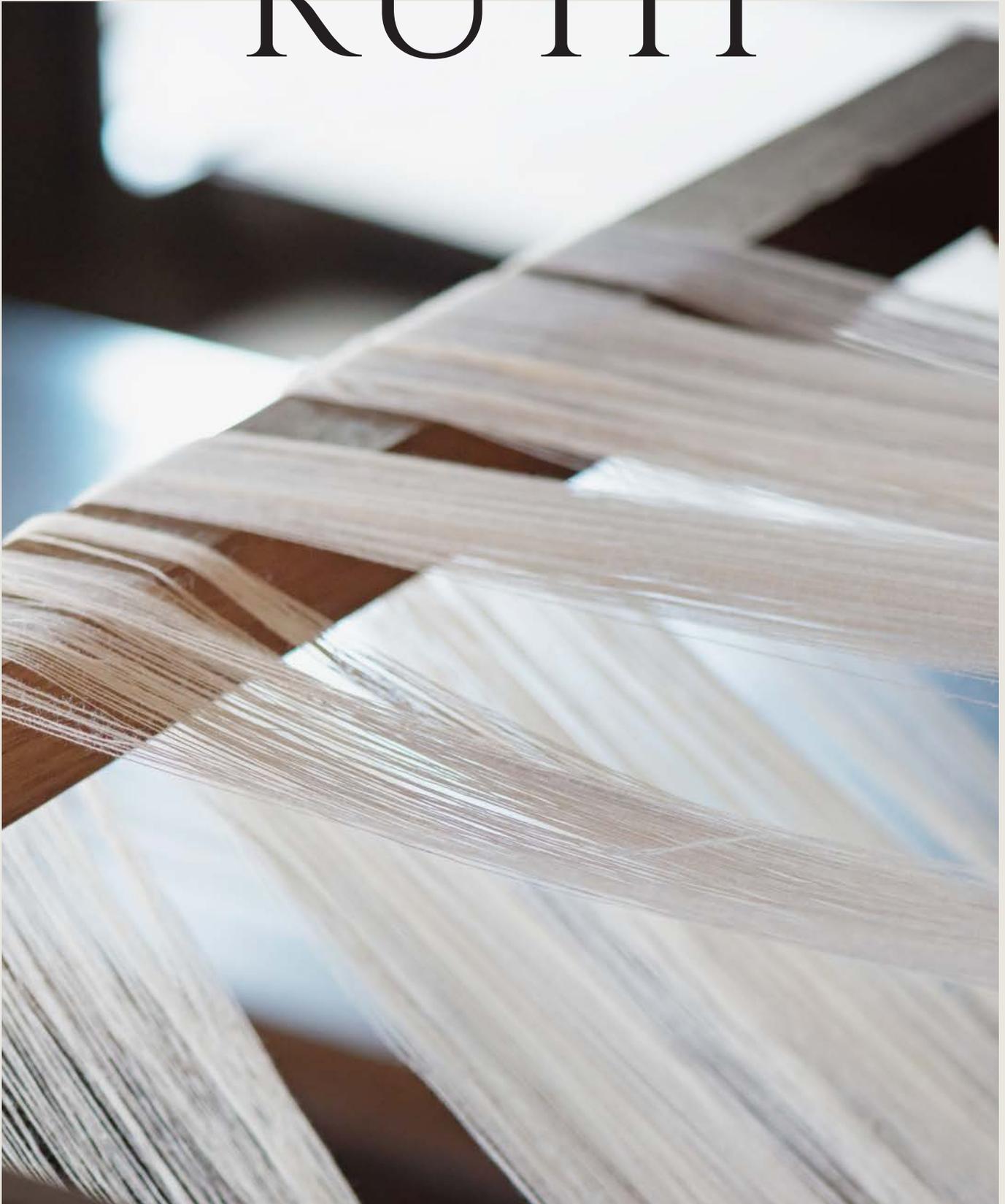


# RUTH

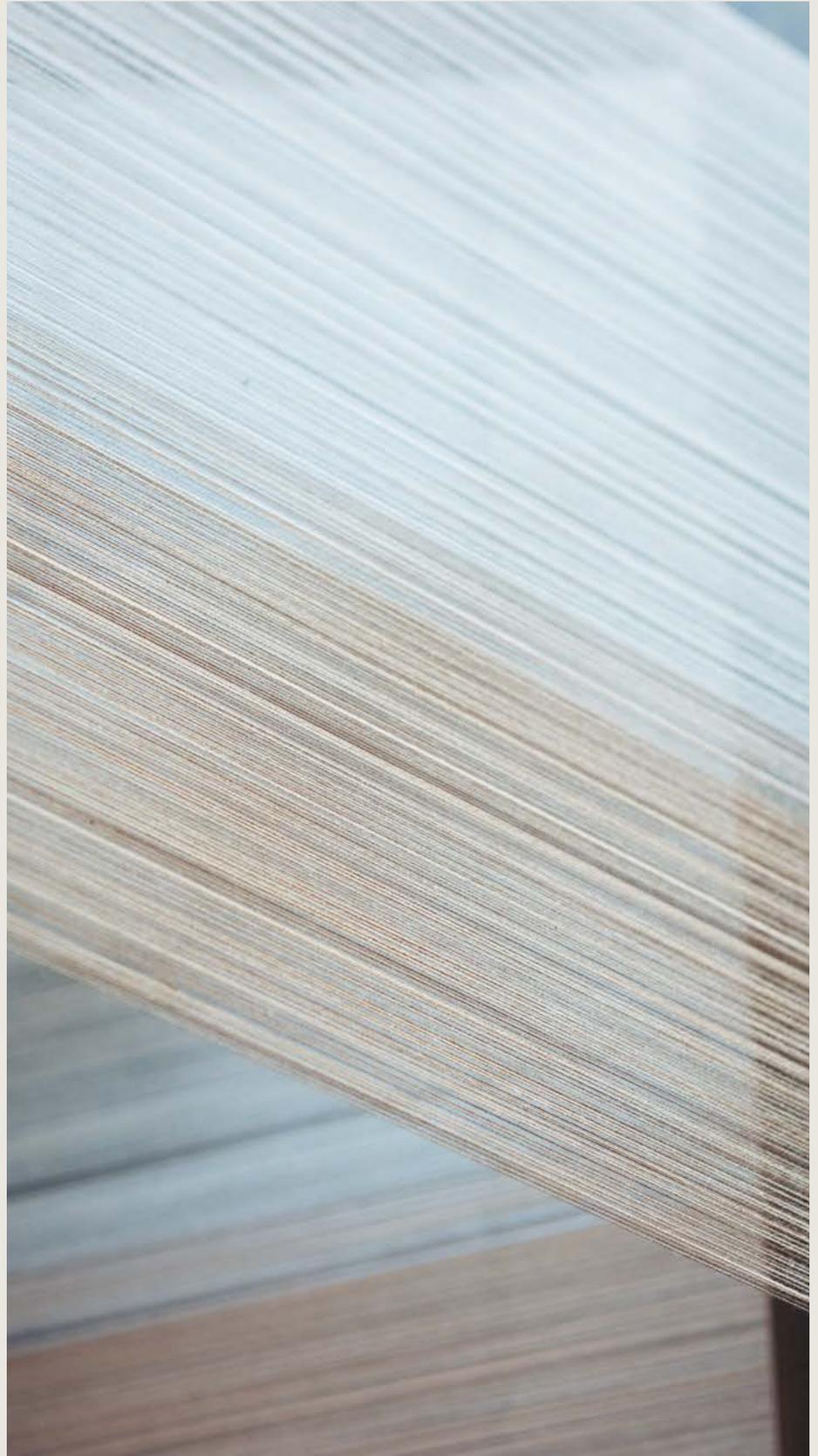


CITIZENSLA SPRING 2022 CURRICULUM

# INTRO

*A story of God's purpose woven into the ordinary lives of faithful devotion.*

Ruth is often misrepresented as a fairytale-like story of two people falling in love. However, the book of Ruth is a masterfully written narrative that helps us to reflect on how present and involved God is in our everyday lives. The book of Ruth is a gift to us as we begin to see how the ordinary and seemingly mundane parts of the story begin to take shape and unfold as part of God's sovereign plan for redemption. This is not just seen in the main characters of the story but revealed as a piece of the puzzle in God's larger plan of redemption for all of humanity. To many of us who feel tired from the daily, cyclical grind of everyday life we hope that this study and reflective work through the book of Ruth will help in remembering God's hand at work as we live our lives in devotion to Him.



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# COVENANT COMMUNITY



Showing the kindness and loyalty of God to others.

**Whole Group**  
Inductive Bible Study

**Micro Groups:**  
Reflection + Application

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

## "In the Days When the Judges Ruled.."

Right from the beginning, the book starts off with a very important piece of information about the story's context, "In the days when the judges ruled..". It is believed that the events of Ruth occurred sometime between 1160 and 1100 BC during the latter period of the rule of judges. This was considered to be a dark period in Israel's history marked by immorality, national disunity, and frequent threats from foreign oppression. During this time, famine and war were seen as God's judgment upon His people and much of the time of judges was marked by the characteristic phrase, "everyone did what was right in their eyes." This time in Israel's history was often a cycle of God's people rebelling, God's judgment falling upon them, the Israelites crying for mercy, and God appointing a judge to help deliver them from their affliction. Within this seemingly hopeless time for the Israelites, the book of Ruth offers a ray of light as the readers get a glimpse into the intimate lives of an Israelite family that stands as a representation of God's faithful remnant.

## Living in a Patriarchal World

As 21st century readers, it's important for us to immerse ourselves into the cultural context of both Ruth and Naomi in order to better understand the circumstances they were living in. Women at the time derived their value from the men in their family. A woman's primary job was to get married and bear sons to carry on the family name. In Carolyn Custis James' book *Finding God in the Margins* she writes, "On their own in the ancient culture, unprotected widows became targets for abuse, exploitation, assault, and even trafficking. Under patriarchy women have no independent legal rights and no voice. Rights and protections women in the West naturally assume are completely absent for Naomi and her daughters-in-law. Anyone can abuse them with impunity, since there is no male to defend them against an assailant. Their future is frightening-promising only poverty, vulnerability, and misery." It is from this perspective we can understand how truly counter-cultural this book is in the Bible. In a world where a marriage was transactional between two families and a woman's worth was found in her husband and her ability to have sons, we see a remarkable story of God's hand upon a widow who lost her two sons and her barren daughter-in-law. These women's hardships are on display but we see God use their stories to demonstrate a Father's love for His beloved daughters as chosen, valued, and dignified despite what the world deemed them to be.

## CONNECTING THE DOTS OF SCRIPTURE

### JUDGES

Period of time marked by complete disobedience. An era of darkness, despair, and utter hopelessness. The book of Judges, although classified as a narrative, invokes distance in its literary style.

### RUTH

Within the same period as Judges comes the story of Ruth, a zoomed in, intimate window into one family's obedience to God that serves as a bridge out of darkness into hope.

### 1 SAMUEL

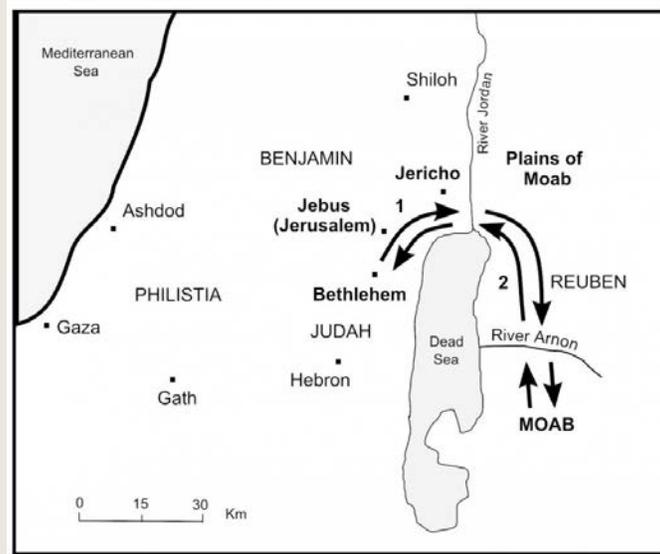
At the end of Ruth, we are given a genealogy with an epic reveal of King David as a descendant of Ruth. Thus, the book of Ruth serves as a bridge and ushers in a new era with one of Israel's greatest kings. It feels like a new beginning in Israel's history.

### GOSPELS

Through King David's lineage comes Jesus, the ultimate redeemer and King, who enters the world and restores humanity's relationship with God.

# SETTING

The story opens with a report of famine which forces Naomi and her family out of their hometown of Bethlehem into Moab. Bethlehem, a city within Judah, is known for its rich agricultural area and even the name Bethlehem itself means “House of Bread.” In order to go from Bethlehem to the neighboring foreign land of Moab, Naomi and her family had to, “hike through the desolate Jericho pass, through the Judean wilderness near the Dead Sea, going across the Jordan River, into the land of Moab. This was a definite departure from the Promise Land of Israel, and a return towards the wilderness from which God had delivered Israel hundreds of years before. These were clearly steps in the wrong direction.” (Gospel Coalition)



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# GENRE

The book of Ruth is a short narrative story and while compact it is rich in detail and artistry. The story is unique in that it is written with a woman protagonist and thus carries feminine values, feelings, and perspectives. The story is also unique in that Boaz is almost completely depicted in a positive light but many scholars believe this is a literary function of Boaz as the embodiment of God’s kindness. Much like their actual journey, the plot also follows a u-shape storyline with events descending from one bad news to the next and slowly rising back as the main characters’ conflicts are being resolved to an ultimate happy ending.

# CHARACTER NAMES

Naomi	<i>Pleasant one</i>	Mahlon	<i>Sickness</i>
Ruth	<i>Friend</i>	Kilion	<i>Wasting Away</i>
Elimelech	<i>My God is kind</i>	Orpah	<i>Back of the neck</i>
Boaz	<i>Strength</i>		

# COMMENTARY NOTES

## Chapter 1

- a. God commanded the Israelites to not marry among the pagan nations surrounding them.
- b. To be a childless widow was to be among the lowest, most disadvantaged class in the ancient world. There was no one to support you, and you had to live on the generosity of strangers.
- c. According to the laws of Ancient Israel, if a young woman was left widowed, without having had a son, then one of her deceased husband's brothers was responsible for being a "surrogate father" and providing her with a son.
- d. In Ruth 1:8, the word kindness in English is translated from the original Hebrew word *hesed*. Carolyn Custis James describes *hesed* as, "a loyal, selfless love that motivates a person to do voluntarily what no one has a right to expect or ask of them...it's actually the kind of love we find most fully expressed in Jesus. In a nutshell, *hesed* is the gospel lived out." We see this word "kindness" or *hesed* used multiple times throughout the book of Ruth.
- e. It's important to note that Ruth and Orpah are believed to have been married to their husbands for many years prior to their deaths. We can assume that Ruth and Orpah struggled with infertility and barrenness.

## Chapter 2

- a. Kinsman, or in Hebrew *goel*, was to be a special family representative. A kinsman was a chieftain in the family.
- b. Leviticus 19:9-10 commanded farmers in Israel that they should not completely harvest their fields. This was one of the social assistance programs in Israel. Farmers were not to completely harvest their fields, so the poor and needy could come and glean the remains for themselves.
- c. The gleaning law was never specific in how much a harvester should allow others to glean from their fields. Ruth is bold in her request to glean where the grain is freshly cut. As Carolyn Custis James writes, "Her proposal presses Boaz beyond the letter of the law to fulfill its spirit. The letter of the law says, 'Let them glean.' The spirit of the law says, 'Feed them.'"

## Chapter 3

- a. The word rest Naomi uses is *manowach* which speaks of what a home should be—a place of rest and security.
- b. *Goel*-kinsman redeemer- had specifically defined roles in Israel's family life:
  - The *goel* was responsible to buy a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Leviticus 25:48)
  - He was responsible to be the "avenger of blood" to make sure the murderer of a family member answered to the crime (Numbers 35:19)
  - He was responsible to buy back family land that had been forfeited (Leviticus 25:25)
  - He was responsible to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)
- c. Uncovering Boaz's feet was understood as an act of total submission.
- d. During the days of the Judges when there was much political and social instability in Israel, it was not unusual for gangs of thieves to come and steal all the hard-earned grain a farmer had grown. Boaz slept at the threshing floor to guard his crop against these kinds of attacks.
- e. "Under your wing" was a culturally relevant way to say, "I am a widow, take me as your wife."
- f. Boaz calls Ruth a "*hah-yil* woman" which means strength, moral strength, good quality, integrity, and virtue.

## Chapter 4

- a. The city gate was always the place where the esteemed and honorable men of the city sat. For an ancient city in Israel it was a combination of a city council chamber and a courtroom.
- b. The duty of the *goel* was not only to preserve the family name but also to keep land allotted to members of the clan within the clan. When Israel came into the Promised Land during the days of Joshua, the land was divided among the tribes and then among the family groups. God intended that the land stay within those tribes and family groups, so the land could never permanently be sold. Every fifty years, it had to be returned to the original family group (Leviticus 25:8-17). But fifty years is a long time. So God made provision for land that was "sold," that it might be redeemed back to the family by the *goel*. The *goel* had the responsibility to protect the persons, property, and posterity of the larger family.
- c. Deuteronomy 25:5-10 describes the ceremony conducted when a kinsman declined his responsibility. The one declining removed a sandal and the woman he declined to honor spat in his face. But in this case, because there was no lack of honor was involved, they just did the part of the ceremony involving the sandal.

### Sources:

1. James, Carolyn C. *Finding God in the Margins*. Lexham Press, 2018.
2. Taken from the ESV® Study Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), Copyright © 2008 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
3. Guzik, David. *Enduring Word*. 2018, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/> Accessed March 2022

# INDUCTIVE METHOD

The Inductive Bible Study is a three-step process you can bring to any text in the Bible to help you understand, interpret, and apply what you are reading. This method of reading through Scripture brings you directly to God's Word apart from another person's understanding of it. The Inductive Method encourages us to notice details and then develop a generalization that makes sense of that information. More often than not, our interaction with the Bible is incredibly subjective. We function as if we determine the meaning of the Scriptures. By using the Inductive Method, we keep the words in the Bible front and center. We make it our goal to discover what the author intended to say through the text we read. The Inductive Method helps us to compile the evidence first before we reach our own conclusions. It helps us to approach the Bible with an attitude of seeking to discover the meaning of the text.

## THREE STEPS TO THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

- Observation-What does the text say?
- Interpretation-What does the text mean?
- Application-How does the text speak to my life?

## GOALS

- Discover what a biblical author intended to communicate to his original audience.
- Encounter Jesus and be transformed by His word.
- Discover or rediscover a deep love and curiosity for the Bible.

## IMPLICATIONS

- God works through human authors who made choices of words, phrases, illustrations, etc.
- Studying the Bible is a cross-cultural experience for us because we don't live in the ancient world that the original audience did.
- It takes effort and humility to think about the author and audience rather than expect the Bible to be written directly for us.

# TOOLBOX: OBSERVATION

Content Element	Example	Pay Attention
Characters	A blind man, crowds, Simon Peter, the Pharisees	Note both individuals and groups; note which are major and minor.
Descriptors of Characters	Short, angry, rich, muttering	Note adjectives, verbs, adverbs and emotions for each.
References to any member of Trinity	God, Father, Jesus, Lord, Holy Spirit, Son of Man, Rabbi, etc	Note the different titles used and who uses them; include pronouns. Particularly notice everything Jesus says and does.
Character interactions and relationships	Peter to Jesus: "Go away from me, Lord" (Luke 5:8)	Note when dialogue or monologue; note speaker for each.
Places and setting	Jericho, sycamore tree, house, wilderness, synagogue, a banquet	Look up each place on a map; note distance between locations.
Time references	Now, in those days, later, in the year of, immediately	Notice the length of time passed between actions and events since the preceding story.
Primary event(s)	Miracle, confrontation, teaching, travel	Note if there is one primary event or a few woven together. If so, ask yourself how these events are related to each other.
Action (verbs)	Mark 1:17: "Follow me" (command in present tense) "and I will make you become fishers of men" (promise in future tense)	Note imperatives; notice shift between past, present and future tense.
Old Testament allusions or quotations	"Clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist" (Mark 1:6/2 Kings 1:8)	Use a Bible with cross-references or a Bible background commentary to find exact references in Old Testament reference; read the context of the Old Testament reference.
Numbers	"He summoned ten of his slaves and gave them ten pounds" (Luke 19:13)	Calculate size or amount into a modern unit of measurement.  Some numbers, such as 6, 7, 12, 40, 70, have symbolic overtones and indicate an Old Testament allusion.

# TOOLBOX: OBSERVATION

Connection Element	Definition	Example
Repetition	Reiteration of the same term	"Holy" (Leviticus); "seed" (Mark 4:1-20)
Continuity	Repeated use of similar terms, phrases, ideas	Three lost and found parables (Luke 15)
Series or progression	The relationship between parts of group with common characteristics; can be indicated by use of <i>and</i> , <i>moreover</i> , <i>furthermore</i> , <i>likewise</i> or <i>then</i>	"In the beginning was the Word, <i>and</i> the Word was with God, <i>and</i> the Word was God" (John 1:1)
Contrast or alternative	Association of opposites; often indicated by use of, <i>but</i> , <i>some...others</i> , <i>not...but</i> , <i>although...yet</i> , <i>though...yet</i> .	" <i>Some</i> were convinced by what he had said, while <i>others</i> refused to believe" (Acts 28:24)
Comparison	Association of things that are alike but vary in some way; sometimes indicated by use of <i>even as</i> , <i>as</i> or <i>so</i>	"As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21)
Images, symbols, metaphors	Expression of a secondary idea distinct from the original meaning of the term.	"Olive tree" (Romans 11:24); "Living water" (John 4:11)
Cause to effect	Progression from the reason for an action or condition to the result; a situation that leads to a response; sometimes indicated by use of <i>so that</i> , <i>that</i> or <i>immediately</i>	"Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and <i>immediately</i> all the doors were opened" (Acts 16:26)
General to specific	Movement from a general idea or activity to particulars about that idea	"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" followed by specific ways the author is cared for by the Lord (Psalm 23)
Climax	Progression from lesser to greater to greatest	Tempted by desire, desire conceived, sin birthed, sin fully grown, sin gives birth to death (James 1:14-15)

# TOOLBOX: OBSERVATION

Connection Element	Definition	Example
Reason	Words such as <i>for</i> , <i>because</i> , <i>since</i> , <i>as</i> and <i>whereas</i> reveal reasoning or explanation	"Blessed are the poor in spirit, <i>for</i> theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3)
Inference	A conclusion based on an event or statement; often indicated by use of <i>therefore</i> , <i>wherefore</i> , <i>consequently</i> or <i>accordingly</i>	"Be perfect, <i>therefore</i> , as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48)
Condition	A statement that is only true or will happen if something else is true or happens; indicated by <i>if</i> , <i>if...then</i> or <i>provided that</i>	" <i>If</i> you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15)
Temporal Statements	The relationship between an action and the time the action can come to pass; indicated by <i>when</i> , <i>then</i> , or <i>whenever</i>	"Blessed are you <i>when</i> people revile you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:11)

# TOOLBOX: OBSERVATION

Question Type	Goal	Description
Type 1	To SEE the text more fully	Questions that help us to envision the scene.
Type 2	To RELATE the text to our lives	Questions that make a connection between ourselves and the characters.
Type 3	To UNDERSTAND a part of the text	Questions that explore the tension or points of intrigue in the text.
Type 4	To UNDERSTAND the text as a whole	Questions that reveal how different sections of the text.

# TOOLBOX: INTERPRETATION

- Starting with the beginning of the text, walk through the passage using questions generated by the group.
- Select questions that the group feels will get to the meaning of the text.
- Answer the questions from the text:
  - Use the immediate context to define meanings
  - Develop theories that hold multiple observations together
  - Use cultural and historical background to answer through the lens of the author and original audience
  - Base answers on evidence from the text itself and the context. Do not use cross-references except for old testament passages that are alluded to in the text
- After walking through the passage and answering the questions together as a group, a few main themes should emerge. Summarize the core message.

# TOOLBOX: APPLICATION

- Turn the main point(s) into questions for reflection.
- Look for places in your life that are similar to one of the characters or the situation.
- Look for promises, commands and/or an example to follow or avoid.
- Be specific.
- Choose an action that you can take in the next two days.
- Share your insights/plans with the group.

Area of Life	Application Questions
God	What does this passage show about God's character and purposes? How does my view of God need to change in light of what I learn here? How would my relationship with God be different if I fully believed what this passage says about him?
Self	With which of the characters do I most identify? Why? Does that character provide an example to follow or avoid? How does this passage challenge me to repent, trust, or act?
Relationships	What problem between people is addressed in this passage? In which of my relationships is that problem present? How does this passage call me to treat people differently?
Mission	What does this passage reveal about God's purposes in the world? How does it invite me to participate with what God is doing?

# WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

## Week 2

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Inductive Bible Study: Ruth 1

## Week 4

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Inductive Bible Study: Ruth 2

## Week 6

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Microgroups

## ● Week 1

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Introductions + Overview of Ruth

## ● Week 3

---

Microgroups

## ● Week 5

---

Good Friday Service

# WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

## Week 8

---

Microgroups

## Week 10

---

Microgroups

## Week 12

---

Debrief

## ● Week 7

---

Inductive Bible Study: Ruth 3

## ● Week 9

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Inductive Bible Study: Ruth 4

## ● Week 11

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Fellowship

# RUTH 1



# RUTH 1 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion.

5 They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was

10 left without her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to

15 her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.” But

20 Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet

# RUTH 1 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain  
25 from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me.” Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do  
30 not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said  
35 no more. So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?” She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me  
40 Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought

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# RUTH 1 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

calamity upon me?” So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her  
daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they  
43 came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

CITIZENS

MICRO GROUP

DISCUSSION GUIDE #1

## Sermon Recap

This past Sunday, Elizabeth preached on Ruth 1 and how Naomi carried a stigma of worthlessness in society because she lost her husband and two sons. Not only was she now considered worthless in the patriarchal society, but she seemed to have been cursed or forsaken by God. However, Naomi was overlooking the incredible blessing God had given her in Ruth. And, she overlooked her own worth in God's sight. We often measure our self-worth by society's standard when God says our worth is determined by His love—that is the radical message of the gospel.



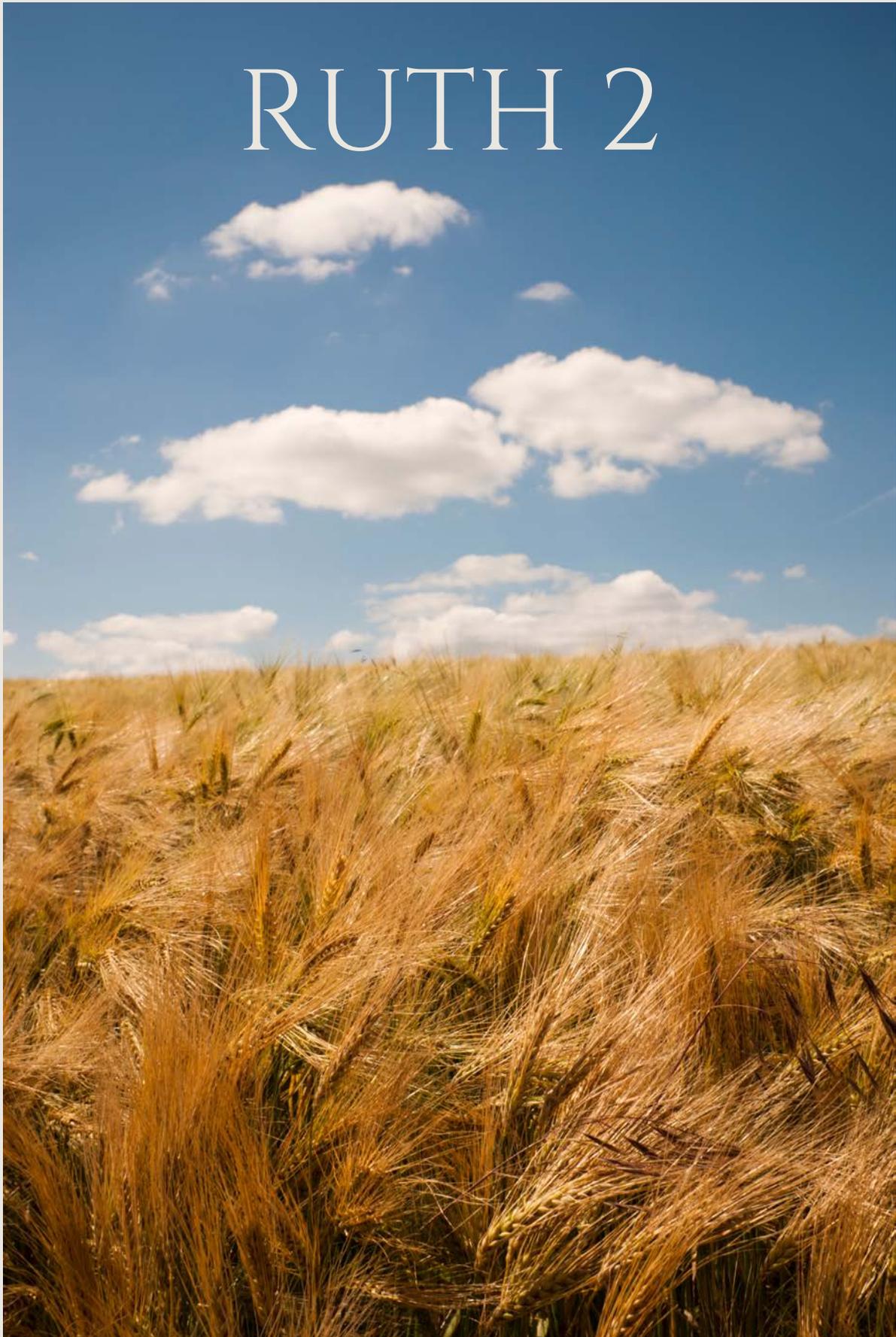
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## MICRO GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What kinds of people carry a stigma or are considered less-than in our society? What about in the church?
2. In Ruth 1, Naomi openly expresses her bitterness toward God. Do you think there is a place for expressing bitterness as a faithful Christian? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever felt overlooked or forsaken by God? How did you respond? How did you find hope again?
4. Are there any ways you tend to measure your self-worth by society's standard rather than God's? (i.e. relationship status, career success, etc.) How might God measure your life differently than you do?
5. Who or what are the Ruth's in your life—people who support and love you or other types of blessings that you sometimes overlook?
6. Ruth was powerless and looked down upon just like Naomi, but even amidst her limitations, she chose radical faithfulness, which God used powerfully. How do you feel called to be like Ruth in this season? How do you feel called to be faithful in your particular circumstances and limitations?

# RUTH 2



# RUTH 2 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." So she set out and  
5 went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is  
10 this?" And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest." Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter,  
15 do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I  
20 found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a

# RUTH 2 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

foreigner?” But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. The Lord repay you for what you have done,  
25 and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!” Then she said, “I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants.” And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she  
30 sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.” So she gleaned in the field  
35 until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the  
40 man who took notice of you.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she

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# RUTH 2 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

had worked and said, “The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz.”  
And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the Lord,  
whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to  
her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.” And Ruth the  
45 Moabite said, “Besides, he said to me, ‘You shall keep close by my young men  
until they have finished all my harvest.’” And Naomi said to Ruth, her  
daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young  
women, lest in another field you be assaulted.” So she kept close to the young  
women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And  
50 she lived with her mother-in-law.



# CITIZENS

## MICRO GROUP

### DISCUSSION GUIDE #2

#### Sermon Recap

Although God doesn't say a word or directly act in Ruth 2, we see the central characters attributing everything that happened to the hand of God. We believe that these are not merely a series of coincidences but the very hand of Yahweh orchestrating every detail of their lives. As the story continues to play out, both Ruth and Boaz show us what everyday faith looks like. They are signposts that point us to the heart of Jesus. And when we, as the church, continue to cultivate the grace that we have been given, we are offered the opportunity to bear witness of God's love to a world in need of hope and light.

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#### Micro Group Discussion Questions

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1. Reflect on a time in your life when you felt deeply grateful. Where did you see God working behind the scenes in this moment or season of your life?
2. Ruth was a poor immigrant widow and Boaz was a wealthy male Israelite landowner. While Ruth and Boaz had little to nothing in common, they both revealed the heart of Jesus in their own way. Similarly, we are each given a unique way to embody the love of Jesus in a way that only we can. Who are the people you think God might be inviting you to embody His sacrificial love and kindness?
3. Through Boaz we see someone who organized his entire life according to his relationship to God. The small choices that he made created a culture of care and compassion in his field. When we think about our own lives—our schools, workplaces, relationships, or homes—what do our small choices reveal about the kind of culture we are setting?
4. Boaz reminds Ruth of her identity when he calls her daughter. While others may call her Ruth the Moabite or deem her an outsider, to God she is fully loved and accepted as His own child. Currently, what identity do you think you have either placed on yourself or others have placed on you? What truth do you need to be reminded of today?

# RUTH 3



# RUTH 3 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak  
5 and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”

So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law  
10 had commanded her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings  
15 over your servant, for you are a redeemer.” And he said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. And now it is true  
20 that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight,

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# RUTH 3 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.” So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, “Let it not be known that the  
25 woman came to the threshing floor.” And he said, “Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, “These six measures of barley he  
30 gave to me, for he said to me, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” She replied, “Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.”



## Micro Group Discussion Questions

1. From the beginning of Ruth until now, we see a multi-faceted faith through Naomi and Ruth. Sometimes their faith was to simply persevere through loss and other times it was a faith that wrestled with bitterness towards God. In Ruth 3, we see Naomi and Ruth's faith lead them to take greater risks. Given both your external circumstances and internal state, how would you describe your relationship with God today?
2. When Naomi and Ruth realize that they had a prospective kinsmen redeemer, their actions were a reflection of the new hope they possessed. In Christ and His resurrection, our hope is that we do not need to make ourselves more acceptable, worthy, or valuable to receive God's acceptance. Sometimes, what we do or don't do is rooted in our sense of hopelessness. Perhaps our hopelessness comes from a broken relationship that seems irreconcilable. Other times, hopelessness is situational-like feeling stuck in a workplace that you don't enjoy with no prospective job opportunity in sight. Maybe the hopelessness we feel comes from within and you feel unable to be fully healed or restored. However, if we believed this hope is real and that God's promises were really true, what would be your next proactive step in a situation or relationship that feels hopeless in the moment?
3. There is a part in the story when everything goes according to plan until the "heart drop moment" when Boaz reveals there is a relative that is closer than him. Share and reflect about a time when you felt led by God to make certain decisions in your life but things didn't go according to plan. What did you learn through that process?
4. In Ruth 2, Boaz blesses Ruth with a prayer and says, "May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." In the sermon we learned that Ruth later asks Boaz to fulfill that prayer himself. Considering your season of life, limitations, gifts, and resources what is something that you can do to embody God's promises to those around you?

## CITIZENS

### MICRO GROUP

### DISCUSSION GUIDE #3

## Sermon Recap

In chapter 3, we saw a dramatic transformation in both Naomi and Ruth. With the knowledge of a kinsman redeemer they spurred into action. We learned of their elaborate plan for Ruth to propose to Boaz in the threshing floor and Boaz's response to fulfill his duty if the closer relative did not. Naomi and Ruth clung onto the hope that through Boaz, their kinsmen redeemer, all that was lost would be restored back to their family. But their trust in God did not make them complacent. Rather, we see how Naomi and Ruth were proactive in seizing the opportunities God had placed on them. With humility, Ruth uncovered Boaz's feet in an act of submission but also boldly requests to be his wife. We too hold humility and boldness in tension. We acknowledge that there is nothing we can do to earn right standing before a Holy and perfect God but through Christ we have confidence to approach Him as His own children. Through this, we have a hope that leads us to an authentic transformation that makes us more like our Savior.

# RUTH 4



# RUTH 4 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

5 Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one  
10 besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of  
15 redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.” Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the  
20 people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of

# RUTH 4 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.” Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.” So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now these are the generations of Perez:

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# RUTH 4 (ESV)

## MANUSCRIPT

Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab,  
Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered  
43 Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.



## Micro Group Discussion Questions

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1. What is your idea of a happy ending? How do you envision true happiness? Did that vision shift at all after last Sunday's sermon?
2. Have you ever felt like an outsider? What was that experience like? Were you able to eventually find belonging? If so, how?
3. Who are outsiders in the communities you are a part of that God might be calling you to love or embrace?
4. Do you feel God's acceptance as a tangible reality in your life? If so, how does that impact you? Do you ever struggle to feel God's acceptance?
5. Do you feel belonging as part of God's family? Why or why not? What are the challenges you encounter as part of that community? What are the joys?

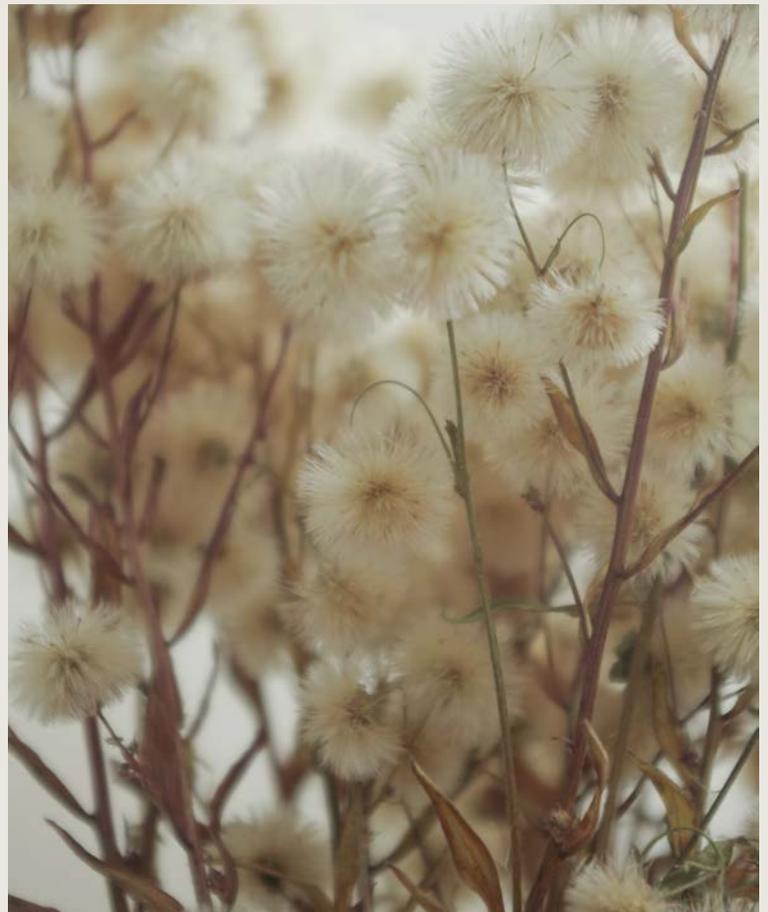
## CITIZENS

### MICRO GROUP

### DISCUSSION GUIDE #4

#### Sermon Recap

With a happy ending like the one seen in Ruth 4, many of us may be left feeling unsettled. We wonder if we, too, are entitled to this kind of a happy ending. And when we fast forward through the genealogy that leads us to the Messiah, we see that many in Jesus' time also anticipated a happy ending. They believed that this Messiah would be the one that would redeem them and lift them out of foreign rule. But rather than a conqueror, Jesus associated Himself with the marginalized and outcasts. God's people waited patiently for generations believing that God would give them their happy triumphant ending. But eventually, their promised King chose to be crucified and killed by Roman soldiers. Little did they know that Jesus endured it all because of His clear vision of God's happy ending. An ending that will include redeeming a whole family—an invitation for all who were previously disinherited. This invitation from God reminds us that we are all accepted and worthy of our Father's love and embrace. God is now inviting us to come together with all our unique perspectives and voices as we intently listen and make space for one another. Through the story of Ruth and in Jesus, we see a beautiful image of God's acceptance over all of us and us placing God at the very center of our lives.



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# SPRING JOURNAL

SERMON NOTES + REFLECTIONS

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# SPRING JOURNAL

SERMON NOTES + REFLECTIONS

## RUTH DEBRIEF

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1. What did you learn or reflect on after studying the book of Ruth this season?
2. What was something you appreciated or were encouraged by? What was challenging?
3. As we learned, so much of the book of Ruth focused on the theme of God's purpose woven into the ordinary lives of faithful obedience. Considering all that you've reflected on, what do you think faithful obedience looks like to you in this specific season of your life?