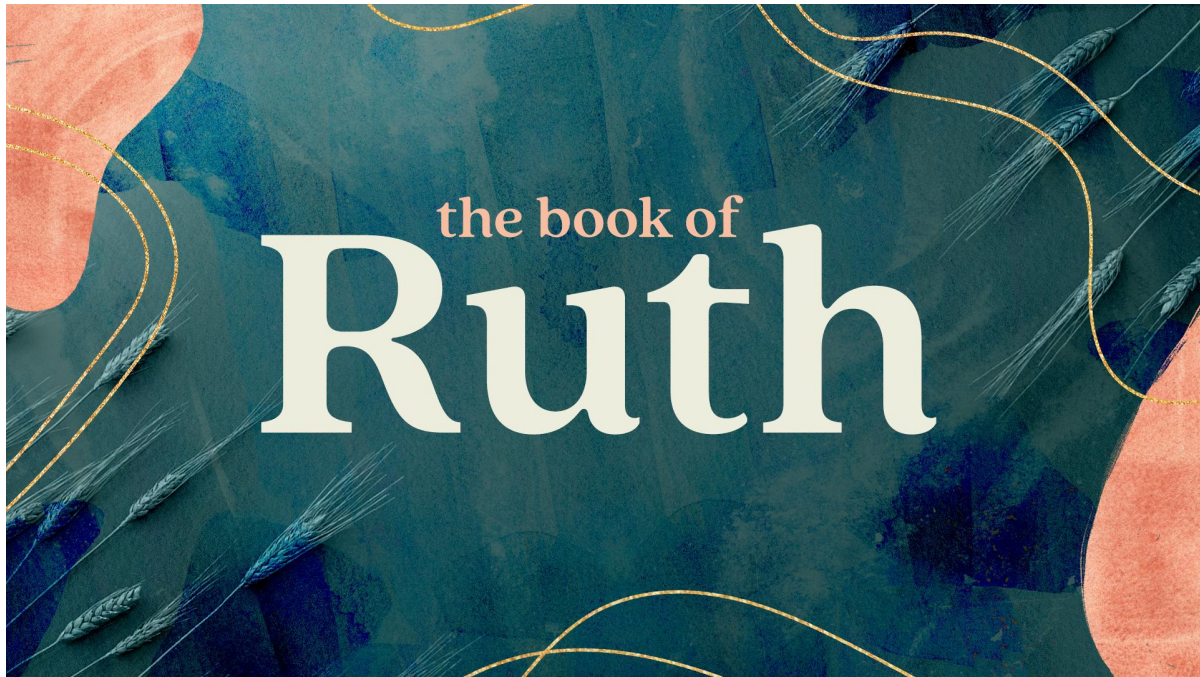




Introduction to Ruth

The book of Ruth is a short historical narrative set during the chaotic period of the judges, when Israel repeatedly turned from the Lord and experienced the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness. Yet against this dark backdrop, Ruth tells a remarkably hopeful story of God's quiet providence. Though the author is unknown, the book was likely written after the establishment of Israel's monarchy, looking back on events that ultimately lead to the birth of King David.

Ruth highlights God's covenant faithfulness as He works through ordinary people and seemingly ordinary events to accomplish His redemptive purposes. Through the loyalty of Ruth, the kindness and integrity of Boaz, and the restoration of Naomi, the Lord demonstrates His sovereign care for His people. The book also underscores the inclusion of the nations in God's redemptive plan, as Ruth, a Moabite woman, is graciously brought into the covenant community and becomes an ancestor of David and, ultimately, of Jesus Christ.

Far more than a beautiful love story, Ruth is a testimony to God's providence, redemption, and steadfast love. It reminds believers that even when God appears to be working quietly behind the scenes, He is faithfully directing every circumstance to accomplish His perfect purposes. As we study Ruth, we are invited to trust the God who provides, redeems, and remains faithful to His promises through every season of life.¹

¹ Adapted from Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 145–151.

Week of Monday, July 13, 2025

Ruth 1:1-5

1 During the time of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while. **2** The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the fields of Moab and settled there. **3** Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about ten years, **5** both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was left without her two children and without her husband.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Life has a way of changing in a hurry. A phone call. A doctor's appointment. The loss of a job. The death of someone you love. In a moment, life can look very different than you expected, and you may find yourself wondering, "God, what are you doing?" If you've ever asked that question, you're not alone.

That's where the book of Ruth begins.

The story takes place during the time of the judges, one of the darkest seasons in Israel's history. People had largely turned away from God and, as Judges 21:25 says, "everyone did whatever seemed right to him." It was a difficult time, and then a famine came to Bethlehem. Ironically, Bethlehem means "House of Bread," yet there was no bread.

To survive, Elimelech moved his family to Moab with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons. It probably seemed like the best decision at the time. But instead of things getting better, they got worse. Elimelech died. The two sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah, but after about ten years they died as well. By the end of verse five, Naomi has lost her home, her husband, and both of her sons. Ruth and Orpah are widows too. In that culture, this didn't just mean heartbreak. It also meant uncertainty about how they would survive.

If you stopped reading at verse five, you might wonder where God is in all of this. He doesn't speak. He doesn't perform a miracle. There isn't even a hint that He is doing anything at all.

But that's one of the beautiful truths of Ruth. Just because God seems silent doesn't mean He is absent.

As the story unfolds, we'll discover that God has been at work the entire time, arranging events that no one could see. What looked like the end of Naomi's story was actually the beginning of something far greater than she could have imagined.

Maybe that's where you are today. Maybe you're in a chapter of life that doesn't make sense. Maybe you're carrying grief, disappointment, or questions that seem to have no answers. Ruth reminds us that we don't have to understand everything God is doing in order to trust Him. He is always working, even when we can't see it.

Chapter one isn't the end of Ruth's story, and if you belong to Christ, your difficult chapter isn't the end of yours either.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Ruth 1

Judges 2:11–19 — Understand Israel's spiritual condition during the time of the judges.

Judges 21:25 — See the moral and spiritual backdrop of Ruth's story.

Deuteronomy 28:15–24 — Learn why famine carried covenant significance for Israel.

Deuteronomy 10:17–18 — See God's heart for widows, orphans, and sojourners.

Psalms 68:5–6 — Reflect on God as the defender and provider of the vulnerable.

Genesis 50:20 — Discover how God works through suffering to accomplish His purposes.

Romans 8:28 — Be encouraged by God's sovereign providence in every circumstance.

Matthew 1:5–6 — See Ruth's place in God's redemptive plan leading to Christ.

Group Discussion Questions

What details in Ruth 1:1–5 stand out to you, and what do they reveal about Naomi's circumstances?

Why do you think the author begins by telling us this happened “During the time of the judges”? How does that shape the way we read the story?

How would the deaths of Elimelech and Naomi's two sons have affected Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah both emotionally and practically?

One of the striking features of these verses is that God never speaks or performs a miracle. What does this teach us about God's providence, and have you ever experienced a season when He seemed silent?

Looking back on your own life, can you identify a difficult season that God later used for your good or for His glory? What did you learn through it?

Why is it often difficult to trust God's purposes in the middle of suffering? How does Ruth 1:1–5 encourage us to keep trusting Him even when we cannot see what He is doing?

Week of Monday, July 20, 2025

Ruth 1:6-17

6 She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. **7** She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.

8 Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. **9** May the LORD grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

10 They said to her, "We insist on returning with you to your people."

11 But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands? **12** Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, **13** would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, because the LORD's hand has turned against me." **14** Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. **15** Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law."

16 But Ruth replied:

Don't plead with me to abandon you
or to return and not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go,
and wherever you live, I will live;
your people will be my people,
and your God will be my God.

17 Where you die, I will die,
and there I will be buried.
May the LORD punish me,
and do so severely,
if anything but death separates you and me.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Have you ever made a commitment because of a conviction that others simply didn't understand? Maybe friends questioned your decision. Family tried to talk you out of it. From their perspective, your choice didn't make sense, but you knew you couldn't ignore what you believed was right.

That's exactly the kind of moment we find in our passage this week.

After losing her husband, Ruth stands at a crossroads. Naomi is returning to Bethlehem after hearing that the Lord has provided food for His people once again. Along the way, Naomi urges both of her daughters-in-law to return home. She genuinely wants what's best for them. In her mind, they would have a better future in Moab than following a grieving widow back to a foreign land with no guarantees.

Orpah eventually returns home, but Ruth doesn't.

Instead, Ruth makes it clear that her decision is no longer simply about staying with Naomi, it is about identifying herself with Naomi's God:

"Don't plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." (Ruth 1:16)

Ruth wasn't simply choosing Naomi. She was choosing Naomi's God.

From a human perspective, her decision didn't make much sense. She was leaving behind her homeland, her family, and everything familiar to travel to a place where she had no promise of comfort or security. Yet something had changed in Ruth's heart. Through Naomi and her family, she had come to know the God of Israel, and that conviction was stronger than the uncertainty that lay ahead.

Following the Lord often requires that same kind of faith. There will be times when obedience doesn't make sense to those around us. Some may question why we prioritize Christ, gather with His people, give generously, forgive freely, or choose holiness over what seems easier. But our decisions are not ultimately driven by what others think. They are driven by our confidence that the Lord is worthy of our trust.

Ruth had no idea how God would work through her faithfulness. She simply took the next step of obedience. In time, God would graciously provide for her, redeem her circumstances, and even include her in the family line of Jesus Christ.

We rarely know what God is accomplishing through our faithful obedience in the moment. Our responsibility isn't to see the whole picture. It's simply to trust Him enough to take the next faithful step.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Ruth 1

Genesis 12:1–4 Like Abraham, Ruth leaves her homeland, trusting God with the unknown.

Joshua 24:14–24 Ruth's words, "Your God will be my God," express wholehearted devotion.

Psalms 37:3–7 Ruth models trusting the Lord even when the future is uncertain.

Matthew 10:37–39 Following Christ requires loving Him above every earthly relationship.

Luke 9:57–62 Ruth demonstrates the cost and commitment of true discipleship.

John 6:66–69 Like Peter, Ruth chooses to remain with the Lord despite the cost.

Hebrews 11:8–16 Ruth, like Abraham, steps forward in faith without knowing what lies ahead.

Philippians 3:7–11 Ruth leaves everything behind, valuing the Lord above earthly security.

Group Discussion Questions

What stands out most to you about Ruth's response to Naomi in verses 16–17? What does it reveal about her faith?

Why do you think Ruth was willing to leave her homeland, family, and future behind to follow the Lord?

Have you ever faced a situation where following Christ meant choosing obedience over comfort or security? What happened?

Naomi tried to persuade Ruth to turn back. What are some ways believers today can be tempted to turn away from faithfully following Christ?

How does Ruth's commitment challenge the way we think about following Jesus today?

What does this passage teach us about trusting God when we cannot see what lies ahead?

Is there an area of your life where God is calling you to trust Him more fully or take a step of obedient faith?

Week of Monday, July 27, 2025

Ruth 1:18-22

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her.

19 The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival and the local women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

20 “Don’t call me Naomi. Call me Mara,” she answered, “for the Almighty has made me very bitter. **21** I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has opposed me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

22 So Naomi came back from the territory of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

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Weekly Devotional

People say that hindsight is 20/20. That may be true when you look back at things you should have done differently, but it is not necessarily true when you look back on things that have happened to us. And that is especially true of the things that have caused us suffering. We often lack perspective and understanding, and it leaves us feeling bitter, angry, depressed, and (perhaps worst of all) blaming God for everything.

That is what Naomi is experiencing here. She is looking back on the death of her husband and her sons, as well as the lack of any grandchildren born to her, and bitterness and resentment well up in her heart. When

the people of her hometown were excited to see her return from Moab, she shut the welcoming party down. She doesn't want to be known by Naomi, which means "pleasant," but by Mara, which means "Bitter."

And why is she bitter? She shifts all the blame on God. "The Almighty made me bitter. The Lord has brought me back empty. The Lord has opposed me, and the Almighty has afflicted me." Naomi makes it quite clear who is responsible for the death of her husband and sons and the bitterness of her soul.

When we suffer, we often call into question God's goodness. We put the blame on him as if he wronged us. Some of the most spiritual people in the Bible have done the same. King David, the man after God's own heart, cried out, "How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?" (Ps. 13:1). Job had a beautiful, faithful, and worshipful response to losing his wealth and his children (Job 1:20-22), yet when he lost his health, he called God's justice into question. Paul tells the Corinthians "[A] thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.... Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me" (2 Cor. 12:7). The Books of Psalms, Jeremiah, and Lamentations are full of examples of faithful people suffering so intensely that they question the goodness of God, and Naomi fits right in.

Yet while Naomi is in good company, is she really in a good frame of mind? While it may be "normal" to experience this, does that mean that we can stew in our bitterness directed towards God, disregarding the fact that he has revealed himself as "a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin"? (Ex. 34:6).

So how do we combat this? We need to trust in what we know about God rather than what we feel at any given moment. If God says who he says he is, if Christ really has died and was raised from the grave for our sins, and if we really have eternal life with him, then we must interpret every aspect of our lives through that grid accordingly, rather than letting our circumstances dominate our minds.

Because Naomi is letting her circumstances dominate her to the point of saying that the Lord has made her bitter, she can't see the glimpses of God's goodness. She feels like "the Lord has brought [her] back empty," but it is by God's grace that she is still alive, it is by God's grace that her Bethlehemite neighbors and family survived the famine, and it is by God's grace that she has a faithful daughter-in-law who just committed herself to Naomi and to Yahweh. Yes, her suffering is still quite real, but has the Lord failed or refused to show her his mercy and grace? Would she still want to be called Mara if she, like Job, worshiped and said, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21)?

And, even beyond seeing the glimpses of God's grace in the midst of our suffering, we need to remember that God has a plan for us and our suffering: he plans to make all things new. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). When we suffer, it is hard to look past ourselves, and it is hard to see what God is doing in the midst of it, how "all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). How could Naomi know what God was doing? How can we? Yet when we interpret our present suffering in light of the future glory that God promises us in Christ, our bitterness, our anger, and our confusion that our suffering causes will turn into a worshipful trust in our Redeemer and our Savior.

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Read Also:

Ruth 1

Job 1

Psalm 13

Psalm 42-43

Psalm 73

Jeremiah 20:14-18

Lamentations 3

Romans 8

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Group Discussion Questions

Why does Naomi blame God for the loss of her family and her bitterness? Is there any truth to her reasoning?

What in your life has made you feel bitter, angry, or resentful against God? How did you come to resolve it in your heart?

Read Psalm 73, noticing how the author draws near to God in v. 17 to come to a proper understanding of his situation. What would have happened if Naomi did the same? What would her response have been?

What other people in the Bible experienced suffering like Naomi? What happened to them and how did they respond to it?

What does the Bible say about suffering? Why do we suffer? How does God intend to deal with suffering? How are Christians instructed to suffer well?

In his book *Spiritual Depression*, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a 20 th century Welsh preacher, asks this: “Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?” What does he mean by this? How was Naomi “listening to herself”? How should she have been “talking to herself”?

Week of Monday, August 3, 2025

Ruth 2:1-13

1 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side. He was a prominent man of noble character from Elimelech's family. His name was Boaz.

2 Ruth the Moabite asked Naomi, "Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone with whom I find favor?"

Naomi answered her, "Go ahead, my daughter." **3** So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

4 Later, when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he said to the harvesters, "The LORD be with you." "The LORD bless you," they replied.

5 Boaz asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, "Whose young woman is this?"

6 The servant answered, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the territory of Moab. **7** She asked, 'Will you let me gather fallen grain among the bundles behind the harvesters?' She came and has been on her feet since early morning, except that she rested a little in the shelter."

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. **9** See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled."

10 She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?"

11 Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. **12** May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

13 "My lord," she said, "I have found favor with you, for you have comforted and encouraged your servant, although I am not like one of your female servants."

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

Have you ever looked back and realized that one ordinary day ended up changing your life?

Maybe it was a conversation you almost didn't have, a job you weren't planning to take, a church you decided to visit, or someone you just happened to meet. At the time, it didn't seem all that significant. But looking back, you can see how God was using that ordinary moment in ways you never could have imagined.

That's exactly what we find in Ruth 2.

After arriving in Bethlehem with Naomi, Ruth simply goes out looking for a field where she can gather leftover grain. She's not looking for a husband. She's not trying to fulfill some grand purpose. She's just trying to put food on the table.

Then we read this simple statement:

"She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz." (Ruth 2:3)

From Ruth's point of view, that's exactly what happened. She needed a field, and this was the one she chose. But as readers, we know there was much more going on.

This wasn't luck. It wasn't fate. It was God's quiet providence.

Without Ruth realizing it, God was leading her to the very man who would become her kinsman-redeemer. Boaz would marry Ruth, they would have a son named Obed, Obed would become the grandfather of King David, and generations later Jesus Christ would be born through that same family line.

Ruth couldn't see any of that. She was thinking about today's meal. God was carrying out a plan that stretched for generations. That's often how God works in our lives too.

Most of the time, He isn't working through dramatic miracles or life-changing moments that we recognize right away. More often, He is working quietly through everyday life, through conversations, opportunities, disappointments, and even the interruptions we never would have chosen.

That doesn't mean every event has some hidden message we need to figure out. Ruth wasn't trying to decode God's plan. She was simply living faithfully, and all the while God was faithfully working behind the scenes.

Maybe you've had moments where you can now look back and see God's hand at work. At the time, you didn't understand why something happened or where it was leading. But years later, you realized God had been guiding your steps all along.

The truth is, we won't always see what God is doing while we're walking through it. But Ruth reminds us that even when God's hand is hidden, it is never absent. The God who quietly guided Ruth into Boaz's field is the same God who is faithfully at work in the ordinary moments of our lives today.

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Ruth 2

Leviticus 19:9–10 – The law behind gleaning.

Deuteronomy 24:17–22 – God's heart for widows and foreigners.

Psalms 91:1–4 – Refuge under God's wings.

Psalms 37:3–7 – Trusting God's providence.

Matthew 6:25–34 – God's faithful provision.

Ephesians 2:11–22 – From outsider to member of God's family.

Group Discussion Questions

Verse 3 says Ruth "happened" to come to Boaz's field. Why do you think the author tells the story that way? What does this teach us about God's providence?

Ruth was simply looking for food, yet God was accomplishing something far greater than she could see. What does this passage teach us about the relationship between our ordinary responsibilities and God's greater purposes?

Boaz shows extraordinary kindness to Ruth because she is seeking refuge in the Lord. In what ways does Boaz point us forward to the greater Redeemer, Jesus Christ?

Can you think of a time when something that seemed ordinary, or even disappointing, became a significant turning point in your life? Looking back, how can you see God's hand at work?

Ruth didn't know what God was doing; she simply got up and faithfully did what was in front of her. What ordinary responsibilities has God given you today that require faithfulness?

When life feels uncertain, are you more likely to focus on what you can see or to trust what you know about God's character? Why?

Week of Monday, August 10, 2025

Ruth 2:14-23

14 At mealtime Boaz told her, “Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce.” So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

15 When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her even gather grain among the bundles, and don’t humiliate her. **16** Pull out some stalks from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don’t rebuke her.” **17** So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had gathered, and it was about twenty-six quarts of barley. **18** She picked up the grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.

19 Her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you gather barley today, and where did you work? May the LORD bless the man who noticed you.”

Ruth told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz.”

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May the LORD bless him because he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead.” Naomi continued, “The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers.”

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also told me, ‘Stay with my young men until they have finished all of my harvest.’”

22 So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “My daughter, it is good for you to work with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to you in another field.” **23** Ruth stayed close to Boaz’s female servants and gathered grain until the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

The New Testament makes much of our nearness to God. “But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13). “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (Jas 4:8). “Let us then draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Heb. 4:16 ESV). Our sin separated us from God, yet because Christ has dealt with our sin, we have been brought near to God and we can draw near to him in prayer. This new relationship is an astonishing act of God’s goodness and grace when we realize how deep our sin goes and how the cross of Christ was the only means to achieve it.

In this interaction between Boaz and Ruth, Boaz is drawing Ruth near to him. No longer is he simply a man who owns the field that she is gleaning; we begin to see the true godliness of his character, as “a man of noble character” (2:1). We see more than Boaz eyeing his future wife. We don’t know if the thought has even passed through his head. But his actions towards Ruth give us a glimpse of God’s own heart towards his people.

First, Boaz lavishes Ruth with his harvest. Boaz invites Ruth—a poor, Gentile widow gleaning in his field—to draw near to him and eat until she can’t eat another bite (v. 14). Boaz sees to it that Ruth goes home with a hefty amount of barley. Boaz, knowing full well who Ruth is, lavishes his kindness upon her. And God, knowing full well who we are, “lavished” his “glorious grace” upon us thorough Jesus Christ. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding” (Eph. 1:6-7).

Second, Boaz reflects God’s care for the oppressed. In v. 16, Boaz orders his servants to “Pull out some stalks from the bundles for [Ruth] and leave them for her to gather.” Why would Boaz tell them to take what they had already gathered and throw it on the ground for her? Deuteronomy 24:19 may give us a hint: “When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.”

When those stalks hit the ground, the Law states that they no longer belong to Boaz, but they are to be left for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow—three vulnerable classes of people that the Lord cares for and will defend (Ps. 46:5; 146:9). Boaz apparently knows his Torah, and he reflects this aspect of God’s steadfast love when he relinquishes his right to his harvest to provide this sojourning, fatherless widow named Ruth.

These acts of steadfast love are remarkable. When Naomi sees Ruth’s barley haul and tastes the leftovers from her meal, she knows that the man who owned the field was a godly and generous man. But when she learns that this man is Boaz, a family redeemer, someone who can possibly help their situation by more than just providing barley, she bursts into worship (v. 20) and gives Ruth a very simple instruction: stay close. Stay on his property. Stay close to his people. You will be safe. You will be provided for. Stay close to your Redeemer!

Christians ought to do the same: stay close to your Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Stay close to him. Stay in his Word. Stay close to his people. Draw close to him in prayer. Come near to him to find mercy and grace in the time of need. And know for sure that all who come near to him he will never cast out (John 6:37).

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Read Also:

Ruth 2

Deuteronomy 24:17-22

Psalm 146

Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 2:11-21

Hebrews 4:14-16

James 1:26-27

Group Discussion Questions

Why were resident aliens, those who are fatherless, and widows are particularly vulnerable in ancient Israel? Was this the case for Ruth and Naomi?

Read Deuteronomy 24:17-22 and discuss how it relates to Ruth 2:14-23.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22 and discuss how Boaz drawing Ruth near to him reflects this?

Why does Naomi say that Boaz “has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead”?

How should we “stay close to our Redeemer”? What happens if we neglect this?

James 4:8 says “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.” How does God draw near to us? What would happen if God stayed at a distance?

Week of Monday, August 17, 2025

Ruth 3:1-13

1 Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, shouldn't I find rest for you, so that you will be taken care of? **2** Now isn't Boaz our relative? Haven't you been working with his female servants? This evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. **3** Wash, put on perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing floor, but don't let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** When he lies down, notice the place where he's lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do."

5 So Ruth said to her, "I will do everything you say." **6** She went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do. **7** After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, he went to lie down at the end of the pile of barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! **9** So he asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Ruth, your servant," she replied. "Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer."

10 Then he said, "May the LORD bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. **11** Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of noble character. **12** Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. **13** Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will. Now lie down until morning."

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

O – Observe what it teaches

P – Practice this in your life

E – Express this in your prayers

Weekly Devotional

There is so much going on in these verses, and there are plenty of rabbit trails we could run down—and the Lord knows I love a good rabbit trail! But I think there is a simple and beautiful truth here that has already been running like a stream throughout this book of Scripture, and it is one that is essential to the life of every believer: *God often uses His people as the means through which He provides His grace and care to others.*

I could name numerous occasions and numerous people through whom God has shown me His grace and provision. But there is one particular occasion that stands out in my mind because God used it to teach me something important: I wasn't just called to receive God's grace. I could also be used by God to extend His grace to someone else.

Back when we were involved in college ministry, I was having lunch with a friend who began sharing about some financial struggles he and his wife were facing. He told me about a specific need they had and then asked if I would pray for them. I was getting ready to tell him that I certainly would when the Lord gently reminded me that I could do more than pray. At the time, Christina and I had been saving for something—I honestly don't even remember what it was now, which probably tells you how important it was. We didn't have a lot of money, but we had enough to meet this particular need. So I excused myself from the table and called Christina. I explained what was going on and asked what she thought about using some of the money we had saved to help them. Being the generous person she is, she was excited about the opportunity. When I returned to the table, I told my friend, “I absolutely will pray for you. But I also want you to know that we would be happy to help cover this need.”

I've been on the receiving end of God's provision through His people many times. But that moment taught me something I haven't forgotten: *sometimes God answers prayer by allowing you to be part of the answer.* That's exactly what we see happening in Ruth 3. Earlier in the story, Boaz had prayed for Ruth: “May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge” (Ruth 2:12). Now, in chapter 3, Ruth comes to Boaz and uses almost the exact same language: “Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer” (Ruth 3:9). It's almost as if God is presenting Boaz with the opportunity to participate in answering the prayer he himself had prayed.

And Boaz, being a man of great godly character, doesn't shy away from that opportunity. Of course, it's not as simple as saying yes. There is another family redeemer who has a prior claim, so Boaz has some business to take care of before he can fulfill Ruth's request. But he is willing and ready to be used by God to provide care and security for someone in need.

And I wonder what would happen if, while we are praying for others, we began praying something else as well: “Lord, show me how You might want to use me.” We often pray, “God, would You provide for them?” And we should. But perhaps we should also pray, “God, would You allow me to be part of Your provision?”

Maybe God wants to use you through a word of encouragement. Maybe it's a shared meal with someone who is lonely. Maybe it's taking the time to listen to someone who simply needs to be heard. Maybe it's meeting a practical need. Maybe it's giving financially to someone who is struggling. We are not merely recipients of God's grace. *God delights to make us instruments of His grace in the lives of others.* So this week, as you pray for the people God has placed around you, don't just ask God to help them. Ask Him to show you how He might want to use you to help them. And then be ready to follow where He leads.

-Devotional written by Jason McDonald

Read Also:

Ruth 3

Psalm 57:1–3 — Consider what it means to take refuge under God’s wings in times of uncertainty.

Psalm 91:1–4 — Reflect on God as our refuge and the beautiful imagery of finding shelter under His wings.

Philippians 2:1–5 — Consider how believers are called to look beyond their own interests and seek the good of others.

Galatians 6:1–10 — Think about the practical ways God uses His people to carry one another’s burdens and do good.

Ephesians 2:8–10 — Remember that we are saved by grace and created in Christ to be used by God for good works.

1 Peter 4:8–11 — Consider how God equips His people to serve one another as faithful stewards of His grace.

Psalm 37:3–7 — Reflect on the relationship between faithful obedience, trusting God, and waiting patiently for Him to work.

Group Discussion Questions

What stands out to you most about Naomi's concern for Ruth in verses 1–5? What does this reveal about how Naomi has changed since the beginning of the book?

Ruth responds to Naomi, “I will do whatever you say” (v. 5). What do we learn from Ruth's willingness to trust and obey even though she doesn't know how the situation will turn out?

What do you think Ruth is asking Boaz to do when she says, “Take me under your wing” (v. 9)? How does this connect with Boaz's words in Ruth 2:12?

Boaz had previously prayed that Ruth would find refuge under God's wings. What is significant about Ruth now asking Boaz to spread his wings over her? What does this teach us about how God sometimes answers prayer through His people?

What do verses 10–13 reveal about Boaz's character? What does he do that demonstrates integrity, especially given the circumstances surrounding their meeting?

Ruth 3 contains some potentially awkward or culturally unfamiliar details. How should we approach passages like this without either ignoring the difficult details or allowing them to distract us from the main point of the text?

Think about people in your life who may need God's grace, care, encouragement, or provision. What are some ways God might want to use you to meet those needs?

What is one specific way you could pray this week, “Lord, show me how You want to use me as an instrument of Your grace in someone else's life”? What might obedience to that prayer look like?

Week of Monday, August 24, 2025

Ruth 3:14-18

14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark. Then Boaz said, “Don’t let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.” **15** And he told Ruth, “Bring the shawl you’re wearing and hold it out.” When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she went into the town.

16 She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, “What happened, my daughter?”

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. **17** She said, “He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

18 Naomi said, “My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won’t rest unless he resolves this today.”

HOPE Journaling

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Weekly Devotional

When a couple gets engaged, everyone wants to see the engagement ring. The groom-to-be has to get just the right ring for his new fiancée. The bride-to-be shows it off every chance she gets, and can even get distracted by this new piece of jewelry as it sparkles in the light. But it is the gesture of the man giving the woman the ring that shows his intention to marry her, and her joyous acceptance of his proposal.

What just happened on Boaz's threshing floor was an engagement of sorts. Ruth essentially proposed marriage to him, and Boaz said "Yes" so long as the nearer family redeemer does not exercise his right to redeem Ruth himself. But, there is no ring involved, and no engagement party afterwards. It was a bit more risqué than that, since a single woman had just proposed to a man and slept near (but not *with*) him in his barn after he had a little bit too much to drink.

But Boaz does send Ruth off with a token of his willingness and desire to perform his duty of a family redeemer—marrying her and caring for Naomi. He gives her "six measures of barley." That barley must have been important, because Ruth makes a special mention of "*these* six measures of barley" when she recounts the events to Naomi. And, when Naomi sees them, she encourages Ruth by saying that Boaz is not going to rest until the issue is resolved.

Those six measures of barley were essentially a downpayment of the bride price, and they contained and communicated his promise: "As surely as the Lord lives, I will [redeem you]" (3:13). No doubt that Ruth and Naomi were nervous and apprehensive about what would transpire. Yet that heap of barley would have been enough for them to know that Boaz would not forsake them; that he would press the closer redeemer to fulfill his duty to Ruth and Naomi or politely have him move out of the way so that he could joyfully and lovingly assume that role.

We must remember that our Redeemer has done the same thing for us. Christ knows that we live in a time of nervousness, apprehension, and tribulation in this world. Christ knows that his Bride is awaiting his return, to be fully redeemed. He saw this in the face of his disciples as he was teaching them that he had to be crucified, raised from the dead, and ascend into heaven. So, he sent us the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus is explaining his departure to the disciples in the Gospel of John, he tells them that the Holy Spirit will be "another Counselor to be with [them] forever" who will teach them and remind them everything Christ told them (John 14:15, 26). Even though Christ was leaving, he would still be present with them through his Holy Spirit.

When Paul is explaining the beauty of our salvation in Christ to the Ephesians, he tells them, "In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).

We already have the promise of eternal life with Christ granted to us, yet the Holy Spirit indwelling us functions a lot like those six measures of barley given to Ruth and Naomi. In both cases, *the promise of redemption will certainly be accomplished by the Redeemer because the redemption process has already started*. Ruth's redeemer gave her six measures of barley to promise her that she will be redeemed, that Naomi will be redeemed, and that their family line would not die off. Our Redeemer gave us his Holy Spirit, to promise us that he will come again, to guarantee that he will bring us into eternal life, and to declare that we belong to him.

-Devotional written by Rick Leeman

Read Also:

Ruth 3

Ephesians 1:3-13

John 14

Romans 8:12-17

Philippians 1:6

Isaiah 54:4-10

Isaiah 63:7-14

Group Discussion Questions

How do you think Ruth and Naomi were feeling after Ruth returned?

How does what Ruth and Naomi are feeling in this moment compare to how we feel in our everyday lives? What struggles are the same? Which are different?

Ruth and Naomi know that Boaz is going to be proactive until he solves the issue of their redemption. Do we think about what our Redeemer is doing before he comes again? Why or why not? What does the Bible say he is doing?

What does the Bible say we should be doing while we wait for our Redeemer?

How can we emulate Boaz's diligence ("He won't rest unless he resolves this today," 3:18) in our Christian life?

Read John 14 and Ephesians 1:3-13 above. How does the Holy Spirit minister to us while we wait for Christ to return?

Week of Monday, August 31, 2025

Ruth 4:1-12

1 Boaz went to the gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the family redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, “Come over here and sit down.” So he went over and sat down. **2** Then Boaz took ten men of the town’s elders and said, “Sit here.” And they sat down. **3** He said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab, is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. **4** I thought I should inform you: Buy it back in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do it. But if you do not want to redeem it, tell me so that I will know, because there isn’t anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you.”

“I want to redeem it,” he answered.

5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will acquire Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man’s name on his property.”

6 The redeemer replied, “I can’t redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can’t redeem it.”

7 At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel.

8 So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, “Buy back the property yourself.”

9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. **10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man’s name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today.”

11 All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. **12** May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

HOPE Journaling

H – Highlight what stands out to you

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Weekly Devotional

It is easy to say we care about someone. It is harder when caring for them costs us something.

That is the difference we see between the two men in Ruth 4:1–12. Boaz meets the closer family redeemer at the city gate and tells him that Naomi's property is available to be redeemed. At first, the man agrees. It appears to be a good opportunity for him.

But then Boaz explains that redeeming the property also means taking responsibility for Ruth and preserving the family line of her deceased husband. Suddenly, the arrangement no longer seems personally beneficial.

“I can't redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can't redeem it.” (Ruth 4:6)

When the man realizes what redemption will cost him, he walks away. Boaz does not.

Boaz willingly accepts responsibility for Ruth and Naomi. He does everything properly and publicly, keeping the promise he made to Ruth. His concern for them is more than kind words or good intentions. He is willing to rearrange his life and use his resources to help them.

That is where this passage becomes very practical for us. We often want to help others, as long as it fits comfortably into our schedules and plans. But real love is rarely convenient. It may mean giving someone our time when we are tired, listening when we would rather speak, sharing what we have, forgiving someone who hurt us, or stepping into a difficult situation rather than leaving it for someone else.

Boaz shows us that godly love does not simply ask, “What will this cost me?” It also asks, “How can I faithfully care for the person God has placed in front of me?”

Boaz also points us toward Jesus. Jesus saw the full cost of our redemption and did not walk away. He willingly gave His life to rescue us from sin and bring us into God's family. Our salvation is free to us, but it came at a great cost to Him.

Because Jesus has loved us sacrificially, we can love others in the same way. We will not be called to redeem someone as Boaz did, but every day we are given opportunities to put love into action.

Who has God placed in front of you? What would it look like to care for that person in a way that costs you something?

-Devotional written by Eric Foster

Read Also:

Ruth 4

Deuteronomy 25:5–10 – Preserving a deceased relative’s family line.

Leviticus 25:23–34 – The responsibility of a family redeemer.

Philippians 2:5–11 – Christ willingly humbled Himself for us.

2 Corinthians 8:9 – Christ became poor so that we might become rich.

Galatians 4:4–7 – Redeemed and adopted into God’s family.

1 Peter 1:18–19 – Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

Group Discussion Questions

Why do you think Boaz handled the matter publicly at the city gate and invited the elders to serve as witnesses? What does this reveal about his character?

Why was the nearer relative initially willing to redeem the property but unwilling once he understood the full responsibility? What warning does his response offer us?

Boaz’s compassion led him to accept a personal cost. What is the difference between merely feeling compassion and acting compassionately?

In what ways does Boaz point us toward Jesus Christ? In what ways is Jesus the greater Redeemer?

What did our redemption cost Jesus? How should remembering that cost deepen our gratitude and shape the way we live?

The elders could not yet see how God would use the family of Boaz and Ruth. What does their blessing teach us about trusting God with outcomes we cannot yet see?

Is there a responsibility, sacrifice, or act of obedience you have been avoiding because of what it might cost you? How does the example of Boaz, and ultimately Jesus, challenge you?