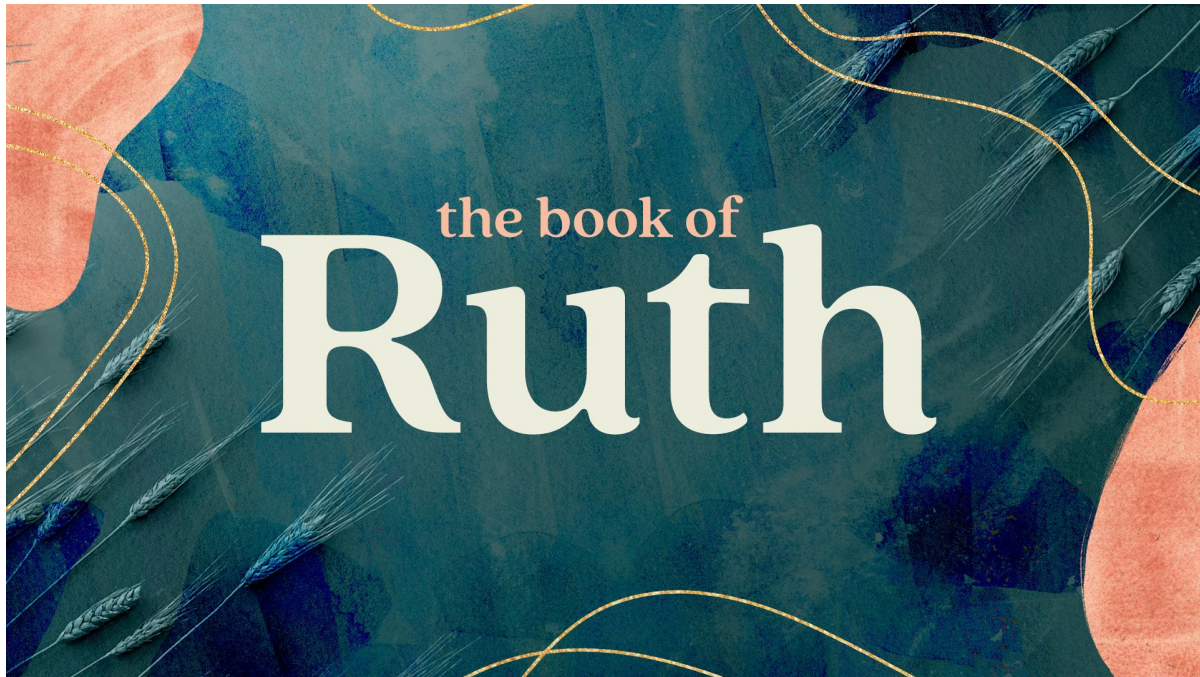




## Introduction to Ruth

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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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?