

RUTH 1

A DESPERATE SITUATION

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

What are some of the ways that God uses to show us that he loves us when our life is desperately hard?



Read Ruth 1

- What was the situation like for the people of Israel when Elimelech and his family moved to Moab?
(Ruth 1 : 1; also Judges 3 : 5-7; 21 : 25).
- The family obviously felt compelled to move to Moab because of the famine, and we are told that they went there to 'live for a while', not permanently. However, Israel's history with Moab was complicated – the Moabite nation resulted from a case of incest, and they worshipped other gods.

What were the risks that Elimelech ran by moving his family there?
Do you think he had a choice?

Can you think of a time in your life when you tried to escape something difficult which ultimately ended in you moving away from God?

RUTH 1

A DESPERATE SITUATION

BIBLE STUDY

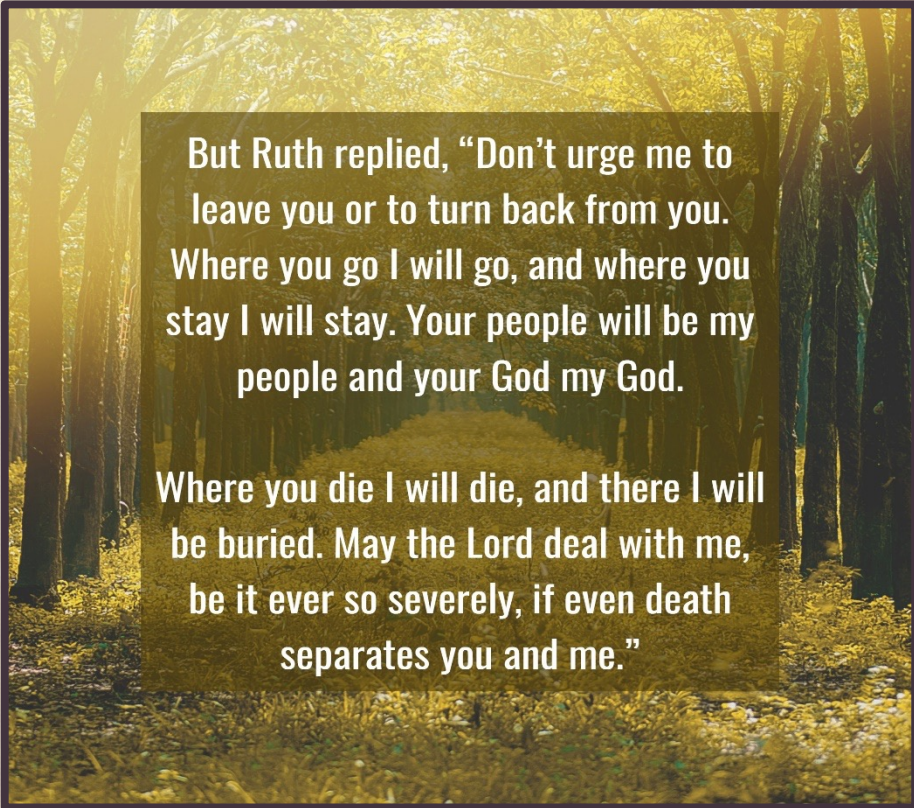


- Naomi is left bereft and grieving, and responsible for two Gentile daughters-in-law. Looking at **verses 6-15**, what do you think we can learn about her?
- Whilst Orpah heads back to her people, Ruth decides differently, making a powerful statement (**verses 16-17**).

What do you think we can learn about Ruth as a person, and about her own faith journey, from these words?

(Note that she does not mention Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, but appeals to Yahweh - Naomi's God).

- In 21st century Croydon, we may view these women as helpless victims of their culture and their circumstances. Nevertheless, they show great strength. In which ways?

A photograph of a forest path with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The path is covered in fallen leaves and small plants.

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

RUTH 1

A DESPERATE SITUATION

BIBLE STUDY



- In **verse 20**, Naomi asks her former friends to call her by a different name. (At this time, one's name could change after a major life change or event). Who does Naomi claim is behind the terrible events in her life (**v 20, 21**)?
- Do you think it is a sin to talk about God like this? Why is it good that the Bible includes words like this?
- Despite the sadness pervading this chapter, do you think there are any signs of God at work? Where?



RUTH 1

A DESPERATE SITUATION

As we study Ruth, we will be able to reflect on the way that God uses **our circumstances** to direct **our lives** if we put them both in his hands.

Today we are going to think about God's loving-kindness
(*in Hebrew – hesed*).

We first see Naomi using the word in Ruth 1 : 8 when she mentions it as a characteristic of the God she worships.

Look at the following verses and meditate on what they tell us about God's loving-kindness
(*they may use another word for hesed in your translation*)

PSALM 103 v 4
PSALM 117 v 2
EPHESIANS 2 v 7

GOING DEEPER



This word 'hesed' and the theme of God's loving-kindness will come up many times in the book of Ruth.

Look back over your life story and think about the times when God has stepped in to show kindness to you. This may be by bringing people into your life at a time when they have been instrumental, or being merciful to you when you have turned away from him

RUTH 1

A DESPERATE SITUATION

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

Use this song
as a prayer in
your group

*(Philippa Hanna –
You're Still God)*

THAT YOU STILL REIGN
AND YOU'RE STILL GOD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVoczdl400k>

PRAY

Thank God that he is still God when things are bleak and tough. Thank him for his loving-kindness shown along the pathway through our life.

Ask him to help us to learn to trust him and to acknowledge with hope that 'for the Christian, God writes the last chapter'.