

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?

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- 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 sunlit forest path with text overlaid. The path is made of dirt and is flanked by tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the leaves, creating a warm, golden glow. The text is white and centered on a dark, semi-transparent rectangular background.

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."

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- **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?



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GOING DEEPER

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

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'.

RUTH 2

A GOD OF PROVIDENCE

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

We live in a society that is materially wealthy compared to many, and we have many freedoms when it comes to choice. Do you think that our trust in God is weakened by these facts?



Read Ruth 2

- Looking at the first 4 verses, what can we learn about Boaz?
- **Look at Deuteronomy 24 : 19, and Leviticus 19 : 9,10.**
 - What do we learn about God's character from the law on gleaning?
 - What do we learn about Boaz from the way he kept the law (remember **Judges 21 : 25**)?
- Boaz noticed Ruth straightaway. What strikes you about Ruth as we watch her in the opening part of this chapter? **Look at chapter 2 : 1-7.**
- We talked last week about God's loving-kindness which comes up throughout the book of Ruth. Where do you see examples of it in this chapter?
 - What does it tell us about Boaz that he shows the same kindness (**v 8-9, v 14-16**)?

RUTH 2

A GOD OF PROVIDENCE

BIBLE STUDY



- What do we learn about Ruth in **verse 10** and **verse 13**?
- What is the ‘gossip’ that has gone round about Ruth, according to Boaz in **verse 11**?
- How might this challenge us as we think about how people talk about us behind our backs – at work, at the school gate, in our neighbourhood?
- Think about how we left Naomi last week, and how she is in today’s chapter in **verses 19-23**.
- Naomi may have felt that God’s kindness had stopped flowing as she came back to Bethlehem. **Review chapter 2** again to see the places where it had obviously continued.



RUTH 2

A GOD OF PROVIDENCE

GOING DEEPER

Boaz gives a beautiful picture of God's wings in Ruth 2 : 12.



Look at these verses to see other places where this picture appears

Exodus 19 : 4 | Psalm 36 : 7 | Psalm 57 : 1



Jesus also used the picture of being protective like a mother hen in Matthew 23 v 37)

Are these pictures that you can identify with when you think of God?
Can you think of other places in the Bible where God provides protection?

RUTH 2

A GOD OF PROVIDENCE

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

Use this song
as a prayer in
your group

*(Ben Cantelon
- Guardian)*



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiRH8Hc8VQI>

PRAY

Ask God to remind you through today's chapter of his provision and protection of us.

Honestly seek to share with your group if you feel more like Naomi did at the start of the chapter than at the end of the chapter.

Ask them to pray for you.

RUTH 3

A KINSMAN / REDEEMER

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

As Christians, we seek to model God to those around us through good character.

Brainstorm what you think are elements of good character.



Read Ruth 3

- **Look at verse 1** and look back at **chapter 1 v 9**. What do you think Naomi is seeking for Ruth when she talks about a 'home' and a place of rest?
- **Read verses 1- 4**. Ruth's visit to the threshing floor would have been pretty controversial, as it was the place where the men spent the night after harvesting, in order to guard the valuable grain. As we see here (**verse 7**), they would have been eating and drinking and in 'good spirits' before going to sleep. Women were not allowed to enter.
 - The relationship between the two women must have been strong if Ruth trusted Naomi with this!
 - How do you think people may have read Ruth's actions if they didn't know Naomi's thoughts behind them?

RUTH 3

A KINSMAN / REDEEMER

BIBLE STUDY



- Think about what we have learned about Boaz (and about Naomi) so far in the book of Ruth. How does this help us to have confidence that Ruth won't get hurt?
- **In verse 9**, Ruth asks Boaz to 'spread the corner of your garment over me'. What was she actually asking him to do? Looking at **chapter 2 v 12**, how does her request link Boaz with what he said about the Lord?
- **Looking at verses 10-14**, how do Boaz' words confirm that he is a man of honour (**verse 1**) who wishes to protect Ruth?



RUTH 3

A KINSMAN / REDEEMER

BIBLE STUDY



- As we continue to move through the book of Ruth, the importance of good character continues to stand out. How do the elements of character shown here differ from the character often acclaimed in society today?
- **Look at verses 16-18.** Ruth returns to Naomi with a symbol of abundance (enough grain for two weeks of food)! Naomi responds with calm assurance to wait (**v.18**).
- **Look at Psalm 46 v 10.** Where might God be asking us to wait in a situation we are facing? With what assurance can we do so?



RUTH 3

A KINSMAN / REDEEMER

GOING DEEPER

Consider the theme of redemption, which pervades the book of Ruth.

Think about Ruth – a Moabite, penniless, a widow, entering a foreign society. What did the gift of redemption offered by Boaz give her?

Of course, we often use the word redemption with reference to what Jesus has done for us.

Talk about what being redeemed by Jesus looks like, and think about how the picture of being redeemed in the book of Ruth is similar to our redemption as believers. (**Hosea 2 v 23; 1 Peter 2 v 10**).



What difference does it make to our everyday lives and actions that we are redeemed by Jesus?

RUTH 3

A KINSMAN / REDEEMER

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

Use this song
as a prayer in
your group

*Yet not I but
Christ in me*



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

PRAY

Praise Jesus for what he has done through his powerful gift of redemption.

Thank God that he is our Father and we are now part of his family, forgiven and free, because of Jesus.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill each person in the group so that assurance of this flows freely.

RUTH 4

FROM EMPTINESS TO ABUNDANCE

BIBLE STUDY



STARTER:

How have you experienced the blessing of God when life has felt empty?



Read Ruth 4

- **Look at the first six verses.** We have looked at Boaz' character. What aspects do you think are shown in what he says and does here?
- What is ironic about what the first kinsman-redeemer says in **verse 6**, given how the book ends?
- Thinking about the inheritance that Boaz was giving to Ruth, how was his behaviour like that of Jesus with us? Look at **Ephesians 1 v 18** and talk about what it means.

RUTH 4

FROM EMPTINESS TO ABUNDANCE

BIBLE STUDY



- Look at the blessing that was given at the town gate by the elders (**v 11,12**). Later readers of Ruth would have understood the importance of the names that are mentioned as key people in Israel's history (although also stories tinged with tragedy).

Meanwhile, we read this passage in conjunction with what we know about Ruth's ancestor David. (**Ruth 4 v 22 & Matthew 1 v 1**).

- Thinking about the sweep of history represented here, as well as where we stand today as God's unfolding story continues, what strikes you about the God we worship?
- **Look at verses 14-15**, and look back at **chapter 1 v 21**. What do you think is in Naomi's heart as she looks down at the baby in her arms?



RUTH 4

FROM EMPTINESS TO ABUNDANCE

GOING DEEPER

The book of Ruth has been described as ‘the story of a God who provides for his people, according to his promises’. Look back through the book of Ruth and talk about how you see God working all things out for his good (**Romans 8 v 28**).

Are there ever times when it feels as though God’s good isn’t the same as our good? How can we continue to trust God in those situations?

Ruth is also a picture of God’s salvation. Looking back through the book from where we first meet Ruth to where she is at the end, how could her story symbolise our salvation journey?

WE KNOW THAT GOD CAUSES EVERYTHING TO

WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD

OF THOSE WHO LOVE GOD AND ARE CALLED

ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE FOR THEM.

ROMANS 8:28

RUTH 4

FROM EMPTINESS TO ABUNDANCE

LISTEN | PRAY

LISTEN

This song was recorded during the pandemic in 2020.

It uses words from **Numbers 6 : 24-26.**

Listen to it as a fitting prayer to finish the book of Ruth.

The Blessing



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl3mNj5U>

PRAY

Thank God for what we have learned from our studies in Ruth.

Thank him for his faithfulness and patience with us.

Thank him for gently drawing us back to himself when we reach out to him.

Thank him for our salvation which means we have hope today and for ever.