
GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2020

GOSPEL GLIMPSES: JESUS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

WEEK 7 – FEBRUARY 23, 2020 - RUTH 1:1-8, 1:16-2:10, AND 2:17-20

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

1) Share about a time in your life when you were a stranger in a new place.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

This week we conclude our sermon series on “Gospel Glimpses” where we have been considering the issue of “typology,” and where we discover images or “glimpses” of Jesus in the Old Testament. This week we turn our attention to the story of Ruth and consider the image of the “kinsman-redeemer” and how that relates to the redemption that Jesus has given to us.

The book of Ruth begins with darkness. There is famine in the land. Elimelech and Naomi leave their home of Bethlehem looking for a better life. They reach Moab and their sons marry Ruth and Orpah. However, the darkness continues as Elimelech dies, and then ten years later Naomi’s two sons die. Naomi and her two daughters-in-law are now on their own.

Naomi hears that things have improved in Judah (Bethlehem) and she decides to return home. However, it needs to be understood that she would have had no claim to the inheritance of her family or to continue the name of Elimelech’s family. She would have nothing in Bethlehem, but she decides that is better to have nothing in Bethlehem than to keep living in Moab. As she arrives back home, she tells her friends to call her Mara because her life is “bitter.”

Ruth means “friend” and in this story we see her being a true friend to Naomi. She says she will make the journey back to Bethlehem with her, even though it means leaving her home and her relatives behind. Ruth will be an outsider in Bethlehem, but she promises to cling to Naomi and embrace her people. She will be devoted to Naomi.

In the book of Ruth, we see numerous illustrations of devotion and kindness. Ruth is devoted to Naomi. Yet, Boaz is also devoted to Ruth. In Ruth 2:12 he blesses Ruth. He shows his devotion by stepping in as a kinsman-redeemer. The Hebrew word for kinsman-redeemer is “go-el” and can originally be found in Leviticus 25:25, 48-49.



In the instance of Ruth and Naomi, being a kinsman-redeemer would have been costly. That is why the first “go-el” declines (Ruth 3:12 and 4:1-10) However, Boaz steps in and is willing to show his devotion by paying the price to bring Naomi and Ruth into his family. The actions of Boaz reveal a willingness to pay a price so that Ruth and Naomi might have abundance. This image of kinsman-redeemer (go-el) prepares us for what Christ will do for us.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read Ruth 1:1-8

¹ In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. ² The man’s name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there. ³ Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. ⁴ The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband. ⁶ Then Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah. ⁸ But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me.

Read Ruth 1:16-2:10

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!” ¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more. ¹⁹ So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked. ²⁰ “Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the LORD has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?” ²² So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest. ²¹ Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech. ² One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.” Naomi replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.” ³ So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech. ⁴ While she was there, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters. “The LORD be with you!” he said. “The LORD bless you!” the harvesters replied. ⁵ Then Boaz asked his foreman, “Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?” ⁶ And the foreman replied, “She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi. ⁷ She asked me this morning if she could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes’ rest in the shelter.” ⁸ Boaz went over and said to Ruth, “Listen, my

daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don't go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field. ⁹ See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well." ¹⁰ Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" she asked. "I am only a foreigner."

Read 2:17-20

¹⁷ So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. ¹⁸ She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal. ¹⁹ "Where did you gather all this grain today?" Naomi asked. "Where did you work? May the LORD bless the one who helped you!" So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, "The man I worked with today is named Boaz." ²⁰ "May the LORD bless him!" Naomi told her daughter-in-law. "He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our kinsman redeemers."

- 2) Ruth turned away from her past and turned toward God in Vs 1:16. Share about a time when you felt like you turned to God or Christ.
- 3) In Vs 1:16-17, Ruth's devotion to Naomi is much like God's devotion of grace in His covenant with Israel. Have you had someone in your life who has shown that kind of devotion to you? Or someone you have shown that kind of devotion to?
- 4) Notice how Naomi wants her townspeople to address her in v20. Naomi doesn't know the end to her story yet. She doesn't know the amazing plans God still has for her. How does Naomi feel at this point, towards God? Have you ever felt that way? We know that God promises to work all things for good for those who love him. Have you experienced any goodness come out of a time of anger or bitterness towards God and how has that affected your faith?
- 5) In Vs 2:15-16, Boaz is generous with Ruth, telling his field workers to let her glean freely and pull extra stalks for her to gather. Have you had someone in your life who was surprisingly generous with you? How did that affect your generosity with others?
- 6) Jesus is our kinsman redeemer. He came down to Earth as man to be our kinsman and purchased our eternal inheritance with His blood. How does Boaz become Naomi's kinsman-redeemer?
- 7) Ruth will eventually marry Boaz. Matthew 1:5 tells us that Ruth becomes the grandmother of King David, from whom Jesus descends: "5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David." Talk about the significance of God including Ruth in the lineage of Jesus. What do we learn about the kind of people that God calls and uses?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) 8. How do we glimpse God's saving plan for us, through Jesus, in this story?