

**Ruth: Resurrection – Righteousness – Redemption**  
***The Descent of Hope into the Tomb of Despair***  
Jerry Cisar — April 25, 2021

Text: Ruth 1:1-5

**Introduction: Hope**

**LIVE THE STORY**

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

**Love the Gospel**

- How does the darkness of the time of Judges speak to the world today?
- How does the opening section of *Ruth* (the book) point us toward the Gospel? How does it offer us hope?
- How does this opening section of *Ruth* help cast this story as one of death and resurrection?

**Live the Gospel**

- What was Naomi hoping for? What do we as God's people hope for in the world today? How do the two connect?
- Why is hope vital to our existence?
- Discuss this line from the sermon: "Just as Ruth and Boaz become agents of righteousness that function as a witness of and testament to God's reign, disciples living out the Sermon on the Mount are, in effect, the antitype of Ruth and Boaz doing what was right in God's eyes, both Jew and Gentile." Why is this?

**Advance the Gospel**

- How might the book of Ruth foreshadow the church as a city on a hill, a light in a dark world?
- How might this book offer hope to those who currently have no hope? How might we use this series to reach out to them?
- How is your hope barometer doing? Where would you put yourself in the story, so to speak, of hope? Rising hope? Descending hope? Dying Hope? Dead Hope?

**I. In a Hopeless Time (1a)**

A. A Particular Period in Israel's History

This was a time "when violence against women, vengeance, idolatry, death, and disintegration were widespread..." (E. John Hamlin)

- i. By the end of the book of Judges, Bethlehem of Judah is not a safe place to live.
- ii. "In those days, there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17:6; 21:25).

The theological purpose of *Ruth*, in a manner of speaking, is to explain how God will remain faithful to his covenant people who have strayed so far from Him. Despite being planted by God in the land of milk and honey, a new garden, in order to bear fruit, they have lived as wickedly as the nations around them. Yet God has a small remnant (even if He has to snatch a key player out of Moab). And through that remnant will come a righteous king who will rule in righteousness, bringing about the kingdom God envisioned from the start.

B. "In a hopelessly dark time...."

➤ Gen. 11:27-30

## II. Hoping for Bread (1b-2)

A. Elimelek

i. "My God is King"

ii. They leave the house of bread in search of bread.

a) Gen. 12:10

b) Gen. 19:9

c) We are sojourners.

God has always called his people to treat such sojourners, such strangers or migrants, with hospitality but human nature (even amongst God's people) is to treat them with hostility.

B. What motivates Elimelek?

## III. Dying Hope (3-4)

A. Naomi's hope is dying.

i. The opening verses of Ruth serve to diminish any hope and paint as bleak a picture as possible. The sense is that there is no future.

a) Abram's genealogy

➤ Gen. 9:26-27

b) But God... Genesis 12.

B. But there is still a thread of hope for Naomi.

## IV. Dead Hope (5)

A. The Death of Hope

In five verses, the narrator has set this story to begin in a tomb of despair. Israel herself is familiar with such a tomb.

B. Naomi a Remnant

a) Rom. 9:27; 11:5

b) Isaiah 9 and 11

## Conclusion