

Bonhoeffer: “The call goes out, and without any further ado the obedient deed of the one called follows. *The disciple’s answer is not a spoken confession of faith in Jesus. Instead, it is the obedient deed.*” (Discipleship, 57.)

- C. Ruth’s declaration
 - i. “Stop it!”
 - ii. “Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge.”
 - iii. “Your people, my people; Your God, my God.” (16c)
 - iv. “Where you are buried, I will be buried. *Not even death will separate us!*”
 - a) Gen. 49: 29– 32; 50: 24– 26
 - b) Ruth didn’t just join a people in the vague sense of the word; she joined herself to a particular person... Naomi and all that did and didn’t come with her.

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 is a seed of hope planted into the “tomb of despair of our story” (ref. 1:1-5)?
- What do we learn from the simple line, Naomi “heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food”?

Live the Gospel

- What is *the scandal of the ordinary*? What are ways “believers” often stumble because of this scandal?
- Explain how Ruth’s decision to leave a life and a people have application to us today. Have you joined yourself to a people in following Jesus?
- Does your faith look more like Orpah’s or Ruth’s? Explain.

Advance the Gospel

- How might this chapter speak to some modern evangelistic methods?

Ruth: Resurrection, Righteousness, Redemption Counting the Cost: A Discipleship Conversation

Jerry Cisar — May 2, 2021

Text: Ruth 1:6-18

Introduction

“Cheap grace is the mortal enemy of our church. Our struggle today is for costly grace.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

“Costly grace is the *hidden* treasure in the field, for the sake of which people go and sell with joy everything they have....” (Bonhoeffer)

I. Recognizing God’s Visitation (6-7)

- A. “She heard...”
 - i. From the “tomb of despair,” she heard.
 - ii. When God goes to work, He speaks and Naomi heard.

Chad Bird: “Into this cosmos of darkness and hopelessness, the whisper of an ancient song of liberation and joy was in the wind once more.”

- B. She heard about God’s visitation all the way from Moab.

- C. God had *visited* His people.
 - i. When God visits His people, things happen.
 - a) Gen. 21:1
 - b) Gen. 50:24-25
 - c) Ex. 4:31
 - d) 1Sam. 2:21

- ii. When God visits His people, it means deliverance from evil or judgment if they are doing evil, and in the case of Sarah and Hannah, a child of promise is given.
 - a) Luke 1:68-69
 - b) Luke 1:78-79
- iii. God's visitation requires a response.
 - a) Luke 19:44
 - b) *The Scandal of the Ordinary*
 - Luke 4
 - Acts 7:25-27
- iv. Naomi recognized God's visitation and she responds to what she heard.

II. Counting the Cost (8-15)

- A. Go Be Blessed! (8-10)
 - i. This first instruction to her daughters is a *blessing*.
 - a) Go back to "your mother's house" (lit.).
 - b) *Chesed*: the steadfast love of the covenant.
 - c) Rest in the house of your husband
 - ii. They wept bitterly and then told her they would go with her.
 - a) This was a decision about being joined to one people or the other.
 - b) To belong to one people or another meant to belong to one god or the other.
- B. There's Nothing in It For You (11-14)
 - i. This is a negative declaration about what will happen *if* they follow Naomi. "What's in it for you?"

- a) "Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?"
 - The practice of levirate marriage
- b) "Even if I did bear a son, would you wait 15-20 years for him to grow up? No way!"
- ii. Her point is clear: *there is nothing in it for you!*
 - a) "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (Job 1:9)
 - b) Jesus' Evangelistic Methods
 - Luke 14:25-31, 33
 - Luke 18:22-25
- iii. After counting the costs, Orpah and Ruth become distinct.
- C. Choose Wisely (15)
 - i. Here we see what this decision is really about.
 - a) Whatever people we belong to, it is to those people's god(s) that we worship.
 - b) To be a Christian is to belong to *a people* every bit as much today as it did then.

III. The Faith that Follows (16-18)

- A. Is Ruth's vow any different than what is required to become a Christian?
- B. Levi's response to Jesus' call to discipleship (Luke 5:27-28)