

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 Ruth herself, the Moabites, reveal to us that faith overcomes every obstacle, even the Law (e.g. Deut. 23:3), to being a part of the people of God?
- How might Obed's name (servant) be pragmatic, but also prophetic concerning his future descendant?
- How does the way that the storyteller of *Ruth* connects the story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz to the generations before and after it speak theologically to us today? In what ways might it speak to how our lives are connected to the larger story of the people of God?

Live the Gospel

- What are ways that the fruit of Boaz and Ruth's righteousness and faith are a blessing for the whole community?
- Does Naomi's journey from fullness to bitterness and back pattern your own journey of faith in anyway?
- In what ways does the story of *Ruth* reveal the interdependence we all have with each other for experiencing God's full life?
- Why might it be important to realize that whatever God is doing in and through your life that it is being done in a span of time that goes beyond the boundaries of even your own life?
- Do words of blessing come from you to the people of God around you? How might we grow from the examples of this in Ruth?

Advance the Gospel

- What is the significance of the whole community blessing Boaz and Ruth? Does this matter? How should it inform the culture of the people of God?
- How do we see prayers of blessing throughout this story? What does that mean for us?
- Why does the blessing offered by the community of faith make a difference? How prominent is prayer in this story?

Ruth: Resurrection, Righteousness, Redemption Experiencing the Blessed Community

Jerry Cisar — June 13, 2021

Text: Ruth 4:11-22

Introduction

I. The Blessing from the Community (11-12)

A. The Community Gathered

- i. "All the people which were at the gate and the elders"
- ii. Immediately we have a wedding ceremony.

David Jackman: "It is no accident that some form of public marriage ceremony exists in almost every culture of the world. It is important socially that others know publicly that two people are committing themselves to one another in marriage. But it is also very important for each individual within the partnership. If the love commitment which a man and woman have for each other is not prepared to go public, so that everyone knows they are man and wife, then I would question whether it is real love or a real commitment at all."

B. The Blessing of the Community

- i. A sudden focus on Ruth providing seed
- ii. This resurrection, righteousness, and redemption of this book are made real as God's blessing in response to prayer.
 - a) Naomi blesses her daughters-in-law in 1:8-9.
 - b) Boaz blesses his workers and they respond by blessing him in 2:4.

c) Boaz blesses Ruth in 2:12.

d) Naomi blesses Boaz in 2:20.

e) Boaz blesses Ruth in 3:10.

f) The whole community blesses Ruth.

iii. Do words of blessing come from you to the people of God around you?

C. After the public witness and blessing, Boaz took Ruth as his wife.

II. The Blessing for the Community (13b-17)

A. Boaz and Ruth would produce blessing for the community.

i. Ruth bore a son for Naomi, but more than a son for Naomi, a son for the whole community of God's people (Isa. 9:6-7).

ii. The women of the town name the child.

a) "Obed" a vowel modification on Ebed... servant.

b) This son would be a servant in the ordinary sense of the word and therefore redeem her, but his seed would be *the Suffering Servant of the Lord* who would prepare a feast for all peoples (Isa 25:6) and therefore redeem the people of God as a whole.

B. Our faith and its obedience impact the community of faith.

i. Ruth's faith and Boaz's redemptive living did not just impact their or Naomi's life, but have impacted each of us today!

a) Naomi is a twin!

b) Naomi's return to fulness is dependent upon not only her own return to the land but also on Ruth's faith and Boaz's redemptive living!

➤ We are all twins that need the faith and love of others to complete our faith.

III. The Blessed Community (18-22)

A. It connects the lives of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz to the larger story of the people of God.

"I believe... in the communion of saints." What does that mean?

James K. A. Smith: "Christianity can sometimes fall prey to the... tyranny of the contemporary. In the name of 'relevance,' we keep 'updating' the faith to appear [fashionable].... In such versions of the faith, 'church history' amounts to the life story of the church planter who started our congregation." Sadly, he points out, the treasures and riches of our true union with the saints of all times are neglected and ignored.

B. Why does the author choose 10 generations?

i. Two lists of 10 generations in Genesis:

a) From Adam to Noah.

b) From Noah's son Shem to Abram.

ii. The ten generations, then, points to hope; Hope in the work that God will accomplish (even beyond our own lives, but of which we are a part).

C. It means we must have staying power (Phil. 1:6).

D. Our blessing comes in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3).

E. Faith overcomes every obstacle to becoming a part of God's people Israel (Deut. 23:3).