

Session 1: The Lord empties His children in order that He may fill them. (Ruth 1:1-22)

F. Why Ruth? Good question... Beautiful story of: loss, pain, romance, and provision, subtraction and godliness.

1. Reveals God's intimate care and activity at the individual level.
2. Demonstration of God's lavish love for people. ↗
3. It's a story of Ruth and Boaz, but it's a story of you and Jesus.
4. Indicates how God works through human decisions - both good and good.
 - ↳ Naomi - Bad (sometimes)
 - ↳ Ruth - Naive
 - ↳ Boaz - Wise, Godly.

II. Major Players.

1. Ruth - a Moabite widow; subject of nearly every portion of the story.
2. Naomi - Israelite widow/mother-in-law, matriarch of a family line on the brink of extinction.
3. Boaz - Israelite man, kin to Naomi + Ruth, potential redeemer of a dying line, wise + Godly.

III. Context

1. Author: Anonymous → Places emphasis on the story, particularly God's providential governance over human affairs.
2. Date: Written after David became king, providing a wide-lens picture of how God's providence carried out.
 - ↳ Opposite of "getting so caught up in the trees ~~to see~~ that you can't see the forest."
3. Setting: Set during a time when Israel had no king, and people did what they wanted in the land. (Judges last verse)
4. Genre: Historical short-story → Historically accurate story written w/ the flair of ~~and~~ a skilled writer.
5. Redemptive Context: Pointing forward to JC, ^{the King eternal king (David)} the greater kinsman-redeemer. (Boaz)

IV: The Sin: EASY Innocent self-preservation or blatant disobedience and HARD disregard for God at His word?

1. Actions/Choices have consequences. (God emptied Naomi and Elimelech's family)
 - Elimelech's choices.

i. Leaving the shelter of God's provision in Bethlehem (The House of Bread) to find food in Moab. (v.2)

↳ Moab was not a good place, not characterized by godliness. There were it's hallmarks:

1. Originated out of an incestuous relationship (Gen. 19)
2. Their king hired Balaam to curse Israel (Num. 22-24)
3. The Moabite women seduced Israelite men to worship false gods (Num. 25)
4. Oppressed Israel a few yrs ago in Judges 3.

↳ Not a lateral move. Leaving God's provision for Moab was dis. regarding God for ease of satisfaction...

ii. Proved that Elimelech didn't regard God as King over his life. A violation of his own name. (v.2)

↳ Elimelech = "My God is King."

1. His actions indicated one thing but that.

iii. Led his family (sons) to follow in his disobedient path. (L. 2-4)

↳ Both of his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Moabite wives, approving the worship of false gods.

i. This act violated God's command (Deut. 7:3)

Q: What are your choices?

→ The cause/guarantee of sin.

i. Death

↳ Elimelech died in Moab. Went there b/c of better prospects for life. wound up w/ no life.

↳ His two sons, Mahlon + Chilion, died in Moab.

ii. Despair

↳ Naomi was left w/ no heirs and no provision after her husband and sons died.

Q: Are you feeling the consequences of sin?

V. Unlikely Loyalty: A clear and distinct picture of faithfulness to Naomi and God. (Ruth is captured by her familiar stuff)

1. Unlikely for Practical Reasons.

→ Naomi wasn't going to have any more sons. (Moab had better husband prospects)

→ Ruth would be going to a foreign land, a land full of people who didn't think highly of Moabites. (Moab would be more comfortable)

2. ~~But~~ Ruth Chose to Naomi.

→ While Orpah turned back, Ruth clung to Naomi.

→ Ruth covenanted w/ Naomi.

1. Where you go... I will go (v. 16)

4. Your God... is my God (v. 16)

2. Where you ~~stay~~ ^{live}... I will ~~stay~~ ^{live} (v. 16)

5. Where you die... I will die (v. 17)

3. ~~Your~~ ^{your} people... are my people (v. 16)

4. May the Lord deal severely w/ me if I break this.

↳ God of the Israelites.

i. By choosing to leave Moab, Ruth was emptying herself of everything she'd ever known.

ii. This moment of forsaking her old way of life and turning to the God of Israel is the same thing some have done in His place, but it's also something people need to do.

VI. A Stark Reality Stated: "I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty." (v. 21)

1. Realization of emptiness is beautiful in its tragedy, etc..

→ It's acknowledging that apart from God, I despair.

→ It demonstrates total dependence upon God to ~~save~~ fill you.

Q: How does He do this by providing grace in the form of a Redeemer - to restore the family to life and right sense of our need for something outside of ourselves are we fit to receive God's provision. If we think we are full, if we think we are satisfied, "what do we need with God?"

It's over!

"God often empties us, breaks us down, readying us to receive His provision.

Only when we are empty, only when we are broken, and we have a keen

sense of our need for something outside of ourselves are we fit to receive God's provision. If we think we are full, if we think we are satisfied,

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- Brian Elliott

VII. The Lord loves to fill empty people.

1. Only in emptiness will we truly be filled by him through JC.