Small Group Guide: Ruth Chapter 3 -- Courageous Steps Toward Redemption

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Overview

This week's sermon walked through Ruth chapter 3, exploring how God's providence does not eliminate our responsibility to respond in faith. Through the actions of Ruth and Boaz, we see a picture of courageous obedience, integrity, patient trust, and ultimately, a foreshadowing of the redemption Jesus offers to all who come to him.

Key Takeaways

- God's sovereignty and our obedience are not competing realities. God works through the faithful decisions of his people.
- Genuine faith produces a response. It is not simply agreeing that God exists but trusting him enough to obey.
- Provision for today is not necessarily redemption for tomorrow. God is often working toward something far greater than our immediate needs.
- We are sometimes the answer to the prayers we have been praying. God answers prayer through the faithfulness of his people.
- Faith knows when to act and faith knows when to rest. Both courageous obedience and patient trust are dimensions of genuine faith.
- Jesus is the ultimate Redeemer. Every picture of redemption in Scripture points forward to what he has fully and finally accomplished.

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. Have you ever found yourself in a season of waiting on God? Looking back, was God waiting on you to take a step of obedience, or was he calling you to be still? What did you learn from that season?

Digging In

2. The sermon described Ruth's plan to approach Boaz at the threshing floor as bold and potentially risky. What do you think it cost Ruth to take that step? What does her willingness to take that risk reveal about her faith?

3. The pastor said, "The providence of God does not eliminate our responsibility to respond in faith." How do you hold together the truth that God is sovereign with the reality that he calls us to act? Where do you tend to lean -- toward passivity or toward trying to control outcomes?

4. Boaz had prayed in Ruth chapter 2 that Ruth would find refuge under the wings of God. Then in chapter 3, Ruth asks Boaz to spread his wings over her. What does it mean to you that God often answers prayer through the faithfulness of his people? Can you think of a time when you were the answer to someone else's prayer, or when someone else became the answer to yours?

5. Boaz refused to take a shortcut, even when one was available to him. He insisted on doing things the right way, even at the risk of losing the outcome he wanted. What does his example say about integrity? Where in your own life is God calling you to choose the right way over the expedient way?

6. The sermon drew a distinction between two struggles: hesitating to take the first step of obedience, and struggling to release control after taking that step. Which of those two tendencies is more of a challenge for you personally? What does it look like practically to commit your situation to God and then trust him with the outcome?

7. The pastor described Boaz as a type or shadow of Jesus -- a picture that points forward to a greater redemption. What similarities stood out to you between Boaz's treatment of Ruth and the way Jesus deals with us? What does the story of Ruth add to your understanding of what it means that Jesus is your Redeemer?

Going Deeper

8. Ruth came to Boaz with nothing to offer except her trust and her request. The sermon closed with the invitation to come to Jesus in the same way. Is there anything that makes it difficult for you to approach Jesus with that kind of vulnerability and dependence? What would it look like to lay yourself at his feet this week?

Practical Applications

- **Identify the next step.** Is there an area of your life where you have been waiting for clarity but God may be waiting for obedience? Name it specifically and ask God for the courage to take one faithful step this week.

- **Examine your prayers.** Think about something you have been praying for -- a person, a need, a situation. Ask honestly whether God may be calling you to participate in the answer. What would that look like in a practical way?

- **Practice releasing control.** If you have taken a step of obedience but are still trying to manage the outcome, identify one specific way you can surrender that to God this week. Consider writing it down as an act of intentional trust.

- **Reflect on your Redeemer.** Set aside time this week to meditate on what it means that Jesus has already accomplished your redemption. Read Hebrews 2:14-17 and 1 Peter 1:18-19 and let those truths shape how you approach the uncertainties in your life right now.

- **Show chesed.** The Hebrew word chesed -- steadfast love expressed through action -- was central to this week's message. Who in your life needs someone to show up for them with that kind of faithful, sacrificial kindness? Commit to one concrete act of chesed this week.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying as a group over these areas:

- That each person would have the courage to take the next faithful step God is calling them toward
- That your group would grow in genuine trust, both in seasons of action and in seasons of waiting
- That anyone who has not yet placed their trust in Jesus as Redeemer would take that step
- That your group would be people of integrity and chesed in a world that does what is right in its own eyes