

The Story: Chapter 9
The Faith of a Foreign Woman

Pastor John Pickens
June 11, 2023

MAIN SCRIPTURE: Ruth Chapters 1, 2 and 4

DURING THE STORY SERIES, REMIX CLASS SESSIONS WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO SEGMENTS:

1) THE STORY STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS CHOSEN BY THE LEADER.

2) THE FOLLOWING REMIX QUESTIONS:

Opening Discussion

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

Thought #1: When the dream dies.

Read Ruth 1:1-5

“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.”

Naomi had experienced significant loss after significant loss. From losing their

hometown, to the death of her husband and sons, it’s easy to understand the weight of the grief she was carrying. Have you navigated extreme loss before? Or even “everyday losses” that chip away at your dream? How did these shift your view of the future? How did carrying the weight of grief impact you?

In Ruth 2:20, Naomi says *“Don’t call me Naomi,’ she told them. ‘Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter.’”*

Our experiences with grief can often shape us moving forward. In this week’s story we see three very different responses from the three widows:

1. Naomi became bitter and resentful in her loss.
2. Orpah doubled down on her dream for the future.
3. Ruth saw an invitation to something greater.

When you find yourself in a tough place, what is your natural reaction? Is it to become bitter or resentful? To double down on your own efforts to make the future a reality? Or do you see it as an invitation to trust God in the unknown? How has this natural reaction shaped your view of God in your season of grief?

Thought #2: An invitation to more.

Read Ruth 1:16-19

“But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” When Naomi

realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. So, the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem.”

We see in this passage the moment Ruth makes a choice. A choice to trust, to follow, to hope even in the midst of her loss and grief. And to the outside world (Naomi included) it didn't make sense.

We too can make a choice, even if it feels counterintuitive to what the world tells us.

We can choose community, even when we desire isolation.

We can choose to stay in the “hard”, even when we desire to take the easy path.

We can choose to draw close to Jesus, even when we are uncertain what the future holds.

We can choose to stay committed, even when we want to turn away.

This choice does not come without tension. Discuss this with your group. Have you experienced the desire to shrink back but have pressed into community, faith and God instead? With the choice to stay committed and fully dependent on God, where have you seen evidence of His goodness and mercy? Where have you seen Him at work in the midst of your grief and loss?

Thought #3: God's people respond.

Read Ruth 2:8-11

“So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work of me. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink

from the water jars the men have filled.” At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?” Boaz replied, “I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the god of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.””

As a body, when part of our community is hurting, it is an opportunity to come around them, support them and help them find refuge. Pastor John shared a story from his childhood where he remembered a family in the church providing food for his family when they were in need. This is a beautiful picture of how God works through His people to care for those who are grieving or hurting.

Recall a time when the Body of Christ provided for you in a time of need. Share this with your group. How did this convey God goodness and mercy in your time of need? How did this tangible act bring hope for the future?

We all have opportunities to partner with God in what He is already doing in the world. How can you be a part of helping someone else experience His goodness and mercy in the midst of their grief? Is there something God is calling you to step into or a place He is wanting to use you? Share this with your group.

Thought #4: A future better than imagined.

Ruth 4:18-21 says

“This, then, is the family line of Perez: Perez was the father of Heron, Heron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Aminadab, Aminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David.”

The story wasn't over! In fact, God was working it out for good all along, even in the midst of grief. Many generations after David, Jesus would be born, changing OUR lives forever. What started out as a story of extreme loss, God shaped a future that far exceeded anything anyone could have imagined.

Sharing our stories with one another helps faith rise! Take time together to share your stories of how God has worked through some of the hardest and darkest moments in your life. Where have you seen Him shape a future that exceeded what you could have imagined? How is He at work right now doing the same? Together, offer Him thanksgiving for what He has done and what we trust He will continue to do for His children.

Questions for Pastor Todd Keller or Julie Burch regarding your REMIX group?

- Email: Todd tkeller@collegechurch.com
Julie groups@collegechurch.com

***Remember to record your attendance for the week. Thank you.

How can we pray for each other this week?
