

SESSION 4

Bible Study Notes: Ruth and the Barley Harvest

Week 2 - Ruth 2:1-23

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when something that seemed like a coincidence turned out to be God orchestrating circumstances in your life.

Key Scripture

Ruth 2:3 - "As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech."

Proverbs 3:9-10 - "Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the first fruits of all of your increase, so that your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Main Takeaways

1. God Weaves Perfect Narratives Through Our Free Will

- Despite everyone's choices (good and bad), God orchestrated Ruth arriving at exactly the right field at exactly the right time
- Our mistakes don't disqualify us from God's perfect plan

2. The Symbolism of the Barley Harvest

- Represents new beginnings, resurrection, and fresh starts
- Connected to Passover and First Fruits
- Symbolizes redemption and hope
- Known as the "poor grain" - showing God's heart for the humble

3. Progressive Intimacy with God

- Ruth's journey: Moab → Bethlehem → Field → Among the workers → Eating with Boaz
- God brings us from wide, loose living into closer intimacy step by step
- Holy Spirit (Naomi) guides us; Jesus (Boaz) provides for us; Angels (servants) assist us

4. The Principle of First Fruits

- Giving God our first and best demonstrates priority and trust
- God always promises more blessing than what we give
- "God's not trying to get money from you; He's trying to get money to you"

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. What stands out to you most about how Ruth "happened" to end up in Boaz's field? What does this teach us about God's sovereignty?
2. Why do you think God had Ruth arrive specifically during the barley harvest? What's the significance of the timing?
3. How does Boaz progressively show favor to Ruth throughout chapter 2? What does this reveal about how God relates to us?

Personal Reflection

4. The pastor mentioned that Ruth was probably nervous despite her courage. When have you stepped out in obedience to God while feeling afraid? What happened?
5. Ruth went from the corners of the field to eating at Boaz's table. Where do you see yourself in your journey with God right now? What might be your next step of intimacy?
6. Discuss this statement: "You may be in a situation where you don't know what God's doing, but God's like, 'It's so good. I'm setting you up for more than you ever dreamed.'" How does this encourage you in your current circumstances?

Practical Application

7. The sermon discussed giving our first fruits to God. What does this look like practically in your life beyond just finances? (Time? Talents? Attention?)
8. Ruth worked hard and didn't just wait for a handout. How do we balance working diligently with trusting God to provide?
9. Naomi (representing Holy Spirit) gently guided Ruth without overwhelming her with all the information at once. How can we be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's gentle leading rather than demanding all the answers immediately?

Going Deeper

10. The pastor mentioned that angels assist those in relationship with God in participating in the harvest. How does this change your perspective on spiritual warfare and partnering with God's purposes?
11. Ruth 2:12 says Ruth came to "take refuge under God's wings." What does it mean to you personally to take refuge in God? How is that different from just believing in God?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: First Fruits Practice

- Identify one area where you can give God your "first" rather than your "leftovers" (time, money, energy, attention)
- Journal about the experience and any resistance you feel

Option 2: Notice God's Orchestration

- Keep a daily log of "coincidences" or divine appointments you notice
- At the end of the week, reflect on how God may have been weaving circumstances

Option 3: Progressive Intimacy

- Identify where you are in your journey with God (Moab, Bethlehem, field, etc.)

- Take one concrete step toward deeper intimacy this week
- Share your experience with an accountability partner

Option 4: Serve as an "Angel"

- Ask God to show you someone who needs assistance in their "harvest"
- Practically help them this week (like Boaz's servants helped Ruth)

Key Quotes to Remember

"God weaves a perfectly prophetic narrative even when we all have free will."

"You can't outdo God. You can't outdo Him."

"We're satisfied when we sit with Jesus."

"Sometimes you're in a situation and you're like, 'I don't know what God's doing.' And God's like, 'Oh, it's so good. It's so good.'"

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll explore:

- What a Kinsman Redeemer is and how it works
- Ruth Chapter 3
- The romance between Ruth and Boaz deepens
- How this all points to our relationship with Jesus

Closing Prayer Points

- Thank God for orchestrating circumstances even when we can't see the full picture
- Ask for courage to step out in faith like Ruth did
- Pray for deeper intimacy with Jesus
- Ask Holy Spirit to gently guide us into God's perfect plans
- Pray for provision and favor in each person's "field"

Additional Resources

- Read Ruth Chapter 3 before next week
- Research: What does it mean that Jesus is our Kinsman Redeemer?
- Reflect: Journal about your personal journey from "Moab" to intimacy with God