

SESSION 3

Bible Study Notes: Ruth - Chapter 2

"From the Corners to the Center"

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share one thing you've done that seemed random at the time, but looking back, you can see God's hand in it.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon (5 minutes)

1. **Declare who you are before circumstances get hard** - Ruth made declarations about her identity and commitments before arriving in Bethlehem
2. **Humility opens doors** - Ruth's humble approach ("please let me glean") caught Boaz's attention
3. **Nothing is random with God** - Ruth "just happened" to end up in Boaz's field during barley harvest (a jealousy offering)
4. **God sees what no one else sees** - Your faithful acts done in secret are noticed by God
5. **God brings us OUT to bring us IN** - From worldliness to intimacy, from the corners of the field to the center

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Identity & Declarations

1. Ruth declared her commitments to Naomi before anything good had happened to her yet. What are your "core values" that you've decided on regardless of circumstances? Have you ever had to stand by those when it was difficult?

2. The sermon mentioned: "Know who you are before you ever get into any situation that's hard." Why is this important? What happens when we don't have this foundation?

Asking for Guidance

3. Ruth asked Naomi (representing the Holy Spirit) for permission before going to glean: "Let me go..." How often do you consult the Holy Spirit before doing things that seem logical or obvious?
4. Share a time when you asked God about something that seemed like a "no-brainer" decision. What happened?

Bitterness vs. Faithfulness

5. Naomi blamed God for her circumstances and called herself "Mara" (bitter), while Ruth stayed faithful. What causes us to rewrite our stories and blame God for our own choices?
6. Have you ever been in a season where you felt bitter like Naomi? What brought you out of it (or what might help someone in that place)?

Humility & Hard Work

7. Ruth approached Boaz's field with humility, asking to glean "behind the harvesters" and picking up "leftovers." How does humility differ from low self-esteem or false modesty?
8. Boaz noticed Ruth because of her work ethic and character, not her appearance. In what areas of your life do you need to focus more on character than image?

Divine "Coincidences"

9. "As it turned out" Ruth ended up in Boaz's field during barley harvest (used for jealousy offerings - repentance from unfaithfulness). How does this symbolism speak to the church's journey back to intimacy with God?
10. Where have you seen "divine coincidences" in your own life recently?

Hidden Faithfulness

11. The sermon emphasized that God sees and rewards the good we do in secret. Why is it tempting to make sure others know about our good deeds? How can we resist this?

12. Boaz told Ruth: "I've been told all about what you've done for your mother-in-law." Your faithful acts are being noticed. How does this encourage you in areas where you feel unseen?

Personal Reflection Questions (10 minutes)

Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- **Am I being faithful where God has me, or am I distracted by things that seem more appealing?**
- **What "idols" have I allowed to take priority over intimacy with God?** (Even good things like family, work, or ministry can become idols)
- **Where do I need to practice humility instead of "peeing higher on the tree" (competing/posturing)?**
- **What declarations do I need to make about who I am in Christ before my circumstances change?**

Practical Applications (Choose 1-2)

1. **Consult First** - This week, before making any decision (even small ones), pause and ask the Holy Spirit, "Is this okay? Is this the best thing?"
2. **Secret Service** - Do one act of kindness this week that no one will know about. Don't post it, don't mention it - let God be your only witness.
3. **Identity Declarations** - Write out 3-5 "I am" statements based on Scripture (not circumstances). Read them daily this week, especially when facing challenges.
4. **Gratitude Reset** - If you're in a "Naomi season" of bitterness, write down 10 things God has actually provided (even if they seem small, like Ruth being willing to walk 100 miles with you).
5. **Humility Check** - Identify one area where you've been posturing or competing. Practice staying quiet and letting God be your defender this week.

Closing Discussion (5 minutes)

Question: The sermon said God is bringing us "from the corners of the field to intimacy with the Groom." Where do you sense God inviting you into deeper intimacy right now? What might you need to let go of to move closer?

Prayer Prompts (10 minutes)

Pray together as a group:

- **Repentance** - For areas where we've been unfaithful or distracted from God
- **Humility** - Ask God to help us serve without needing recognition
- **Guidance** - That we would consistently consult the Holy Spirit before acting
- **Faith** - To make declarations about who we are in Christ regardless of circumstances
- **Eyes to See** - That we would recognize God's hand in the "random" details of our lives

For Next Week

Read Ruth Chapter 2:14 through Chapter 3 and consider:

- How does the relationship between Ruth and Boaz develop?
- What does this teach us about Christ's pursuit of His bride?
- Where do you see God's redemptive plan unfolding?

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to those who may be in a "Naomi season" of bitterness or loss
- Encourage vulnerability but don't force sharing
- Remind the group that conviction is different from condemnation - the Holy Spirit convicts to lead us to intimacy, not shame
- If discussing unfaithfulness or idolatry, keep it focused on practical examples (distraction, misplaced priorities) rather than making people feel condemned

