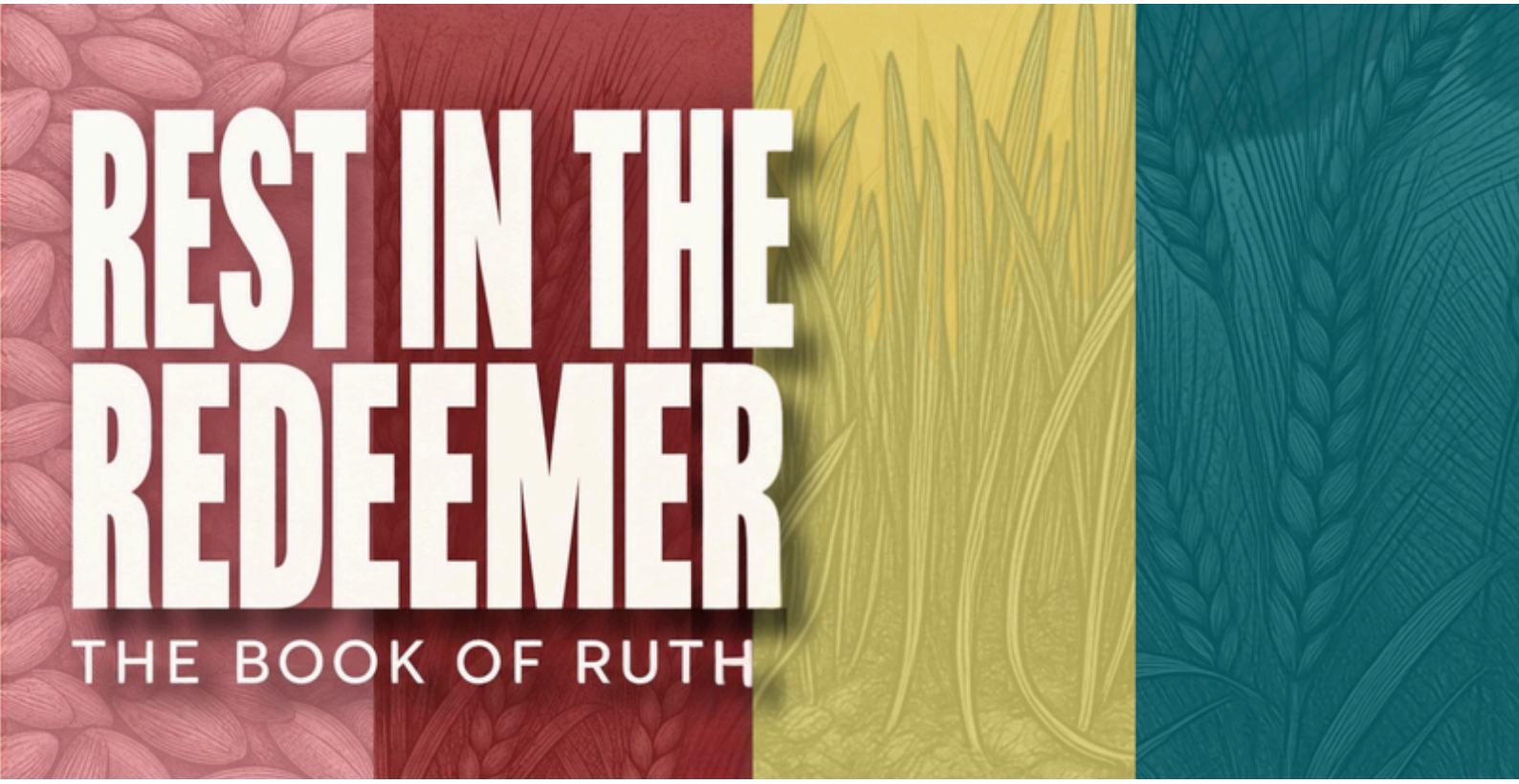
crossroads christian church

GROWTH GROUP

REST IN THE REDEEMER

THE BOOK OF RUTH



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OUR PRAYERS FOR THIS SERIES

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Study 2 Ruth 2	Thank God that nothing that happens in this world escapes his notice and his sovereign care.
Study 3 Ruth 3	Praise God for faithful and godly men and women of the past and especially for the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus.
Study 4 Ruth 4	Thank God for Jesus our redeemer, the one the Scriptures prepare for and point to. Praise him for his redeeming work on the cross.

RUTH - REST IN THE REDEEMER

We pray during this series that we go deep in the word so that the word goes deep in us. Let's pray that we marvel at the unceasing kindness of our sovereign God, who faithfully works out his plans to provide a Redeemer and King.

Introduction

The book of Ruth picks up the thread of the Old Testament's over-arching story of God fulfilling his age-old promises to Abraham in the life of his chosen people, Israel. Throughout the preceding book of Judges, Israel, now settled in the land of promise, is in crisis. Judges describes a seemingly endlessly repeating cycle in which God's people:

1. Abandon the LORD worshipping other gods
2. The LORD hands them over to their enemies who oppress them
3. The LORD then raises up deliverers (judges) who deliver them from the hand of their enemies
4. Turn aside from the LORD once again soon after the judge dies

In the book of Judges the downward spiral leads to the nation descending into civil war (chapter 20) during which one of the 12 tribes (Benjamin), is all but wiped out. The book of Ruth is tied closely to Judges (Ruth 1:1 "In the days when the judges ruled....). It is a wonderful answer to the preceding chaos and gives us great hope: Yahweh's plans have not failed. His deep commitment to the future of His chosen people is wonderfully expressed in this short, finely crafted and quietly unassuming book. Not only is it personal and intimate, it is also subtle and finely balanced. The final verses of the book show us that the LORD has been at work throughout. His sovereign purposes to save will ultimately and supremely find their fulfilment in the coming of the Lord Jesus, David's greater son.

STUDY 1 - RUTH 1

Engage

Have you yourself (or someone close to you) been in a situation when it felt the world was unravelling? Did you find hope in an unexpected place? Share what happened with your group.

Returning

In Ruth 1:1-7, we hear the simple facts of Naomi's story so far. In 1:8 Naomi speaks for the first time and the real action of the book starts.
Naomi - whose name means "pleasant ness" or "delight", finds herself in deep distress. Why?

A key theme of this part of the book is that of returning.

What triggers Naomi's decision to return?

List all the verses in chapter 1 in which the idea of returning is present.

Israel and Moab

Moabites and Israelites were sworn enemies dating back to the time of Abra ham. See Genesis 19:30-37. The conflict between them continued during Israel's desert wanderings resulting in the ban of Deuteronomy 23:3-6.

List the reasons that Naomi gives as she seeks to persuade her daughters-in-law Ruth and Orpah to return to the families of origin and to stay in the land of Moab.

Ruth has other ideas. How does she respond to her mother-in-law?

Why is this so exceptional?

The arrival of the two women in Bethlehem causes quite a stir.

How would you describe Naomi's emotional state at this moment?

Imagine what Ruth might have been feeling about her as she heard Naomi utter these words.

Looking back on the whole chapter, where do we see even the faintest glimmers of hope for the future?

Kindness

Notice the word "kindness" here in 1:8. This is a key concept in the book. We'll see it develop profoundly as the story unfolds.

At this point in the story, Naomi seems blind to Ruth's continuing kindness to her and to the promise that it holds. Why do you think this is the case?

It seems like Ruth, the foreign daughter, is expressing greater faith in Israel's God than does the Israelite woman.

Why is this so remarkable?

Drink it in deeply

"*.....in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*", is the promise that YHWH makes to Abram in Genesis 12:3

How does this promise find expression in Ruth 1?

How amazing it is that this same promise applies to us if we put our trust in Jesus!
See Ephesians 2:11-22

The vision of maturity in Christ
Why we're reflecting and planning?

For the next 3 weeks, we're going to take 10 minutes to reflect on our growth in maturity in 2026, and plan ahead for 2027.

We love our Growth Groups. Under God, they help us grow more like Jesus as we:

- learn from the Bible in repentance and faith;
- pray for God to change us; and
- love & care for each other.

God is at work amongst those who trust him, growing us all into the maturity of Christ (Eph 4:13). We want to take stock of how he has done that this year, in Growth group and beyond because:

1. He deserves praise for all he does!!!!
2. That we'd be encouraged.
3. That we'd make the best use of the time God has given us to be walking in step with his Spirit, being transformed into the likeness of his Son (Galatians 5:25, Romans 12:2).

If we aren't growing in our maturity, we need to change something. And so over the next few weeks, our prayer is that this time with your group would help you to glorify God, to be thankful and to make decisions for next year that would help you grow and be a blessing to others.

So what does growth look like, and why should we seek it out?

Read Hebrews 5:11-14 **or** Romans 12:1-2, 9-13.

STUDY 2 - RUTH 2

Engage

"I'm living life to the full.", "I'm living the dream." What do people mean when they say things like this?

Fulness and a not-so-chance meeting

Chapter 2 begins with 2 symbols of fulness - the harvest and the person of Boaz. He's described as a worthy man of the clan of Elimelek (2:1).

At this point in the story, Naomi passive and almost shut down. Ruth however, steps up and is full of initiative. As the chapter progresses, Boaz, already introduced to us, is going to enter into direct contact with Ruth. Even though we are given no visual description of either of them, we learn all about them from their actions and their words.

Digging deeper

What impresses you about Boaz as a person?

What are your impressions of Ruth?

The dialogue between Boaz and Ruth in 2:8-14 is well worth a slow read. In this section Boaz speaks of reward (2:12) and Ruth speaks of grace and favour. (2:13).

Why the difference and what might it signify?

Compared with the chaos of the book of Judges, life described in the book of Ruth seems quiet and idyllic. Beneath the surface however all is not as calm as it looks.

Where in this chapter do we see evi dence that danger is lurking ?

For the background to gleaning in the Old Testament see Leviticus 19:91-10 & Deuteronomy 24:19

Undercurrents

An undercurrent running throughout the whole book is Naomi's blindness to how valu able Ruth is to her. Boaz praises Ruth for actions that Naomi has failed to recognize. His prayer for her in 2:12 is stunning.

How has Ruth been displaying the 'taking refuge' that Boaz is speaking about in verse 12?

What indications are there after Ruth returns home and reports to her mother-in-law that Naomi is becoming revived?

In contrast to the book of Judges where YHWH actively intervenes to save his people, in the book of Ruth, YHWH does so only twice (see 1:6 and 4:13). Nevertheless the LORD is equally at work in both books.
"In the kindness of Boaz, Naomi perceives the kindness of Yahweh and knows herself to be the object of it." Barry Webb. See 2:19-20

List any of the ways that you've seen God's sovereign kindness to you today particularly through Christ.

Drink in the mercies and kindness of our God

1 Peter 1:3-5 Is a joyful celebration of the incredible blessings that are ours in Christ Jesus. Spend some time thanking God for the goodness that He has shown us in Jesus Christ.

How has God matured you, praise him!

How could we think about past growth?

Under God, our Growth Groups help us grow more like Jesus as we:

- learn from the Bible in repentance and faith;
- pray for God to change us; and
- love & care for each other.

Let's use the next 10 minutes to look through the lens of the Bible at our growth in 2026.

Read Ephesians 3:7-13
According to the passage: what is God's purpose for the world now?
Reflect: How have your prayers, decisions, words, actions and attitude aligned or departed from God's purposes now?

How does Paul reflect on his past?
Reflect: If you looked at 2026 in a similar way, what has God done in your life and the lives of those around you, and in your growth group?

Take a moment to pray in repentance and thankfulness about 2026.

Leaders: now is a great time to share your plans for 2027, next week we'll dive into how to make plans that glorify God.

STUDY 3 - RUTH 3

Engage

In our last study from Ruth 2:20 we noted,
"In the kindness of Boaz, Naomi perceives the kindness of Yahweh and knows herself to be the object of it."
What does this tell us about extent of the LORD's sovereign rule over human affairs?

Seeking rest

Where in chapter 3 do you see 'rest' mentioned?

Naomi is "marvellously aroused from her emotional torpor by the news that Ruth has met Boaz, for Naomi knows something about him that Ruth does not." He is not just a relative but a close relative. "It is one of those crystallizing moment in a story in a story when the plot changes gear, and the latent possibilities rise to the surface." See 2:19-20

"Naomi has been energized by the news that Ruth has met Boaz and quickly devises a plan to capitalize on the possibilities this presents." Webb p264

What do you think about Naomi's instructions to Ruth in verses 2-5? [1]

Is there any hint of impropriety here?[2] (see also verse 14)

What is Ruth actually asking Boaz to do in verse 9? Notice the link to 2:12.

What have we observed in the previous chapters about Boaz' character? (see 2:1)

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1. Reaping at the end of the barley and wheat harvests now gives rise to winnowing and that brings the threshing room floor into focus as the men will have worked late into the night and would be up again early to restart their work.
2. The threshing floor scene is handled delicately. Some have thought that this is a highly charged love scene. Given what Boaz says in 10-13 however, this is questionable. Certainly the possibility of scandal is present however the only misconduct that the couple could be justly accused of is "of pursuing their relationship so far without first consulting the nearer kinsman." Barry Webb



Fulness

How do we see fulness expressed in the close of the chapter?

Both chapters 2 & 3 finish in a similar fashion. Ruth returns abundantly provided for and reports back to Naomi. In what ways do the two chapter endings differ?

Drink it in

How is your heart lifted by what you've read together in chapter 3?

How does this lead you to praise our God and Father?

How could you aim to grow, or mature others in 2027?

What could be best for next year?

Under God, our Growth Groups help us grow more like Jesus as we:

- learn from the Bible in repentance and faith;
- pray for God to change us; and
- love & care for each other.

If you are staying together as a group, what is one thing you can change as a group to work on the above next year?

If you are changing groups, how will you pursue the above in deciding which group to join? (We'll publish 2027 Growth Group lists and online sign-ups forms from 29 November 2026.)

What is one thing you could do (and receive accountability for from your group) to grow next year?

1. Maybe you realized last week that your plans weren't lining up with God's plans, what will you change?
2. Have you planned for how you might be a blessing to someone else's growth next year
3. What could that look like?

E.g. Is there someone in your group who is irregular at church or at Growth Group that you can encourage to be more regular?
Is there someone younger you could intentionally pray for, and open God's with (in a program or individually)

As a group, take a moment to go around and briefly share what you're thinking about for Growth Group next year.
Pray together for wise decision making and a fruitful 2027.

STUDY 4 - RUTH 4

Engage

Have some fun sharing !
How important is it today for a young man seeking a young woman's hand in marriage to follow a strict protocol? What do you think are the necessary steps he should take and in what order? What is required of the young woman?[1]

The farmer wants a wife

Boaz plays his cards here very carefully. 4:1-10.

List the different steps that he takes to secure Ruth's hand.

The first redeemer says that he will impair his own inheritance if he marries Ruth? verse 6.

What does this tell us about how much he values Ruth?

What is the significance of Mahlon's name not being cut off from Israel in verse 10. Why is it important to avoid this happening?

The book's climax

The climax outlined in this chapter is a complex one. It depends on who we think is the principal character of the story. Is this Ruth or Naomi? Share your answers.

The climax of the Ruth-Boaz plot is 4:13

The climax of the Naomi story is 4:16-17

But then, beyond these, emerges a climax which may, in a sense, be seen to surpass both of them: 4:17. Here the author really breaks the frame and casts the story on a much bigger canvas.

1. For background to the kinsman redeemer buying land see Leviticus 25:23-28. For the responsibilities of a close relative see Leviticus 25:47-54. For the responsibility of marrying, called Levirate marriage, see Deuteronomy 25:5-10.
2. He will have to support both Ruth and Naomi. And any children coming from this union are born will inherit the field should Ruth predecease him, thus removing it from his own inheritance.
3. In saying this, we're not implying that Ruth's value is found simply in the fact that she bears chil dren. That said, in the overall flow of the of the narrative, particularly given the opening verses of chapter 1, the birth of a child to Ruth is a true climax

Blessings

The book begins in the same way that it began - with a flourish of names. Com pare the final verses of the book with the genealogy of Matthew 1. What do you notice?

What is the significance in the prayer of 4:11-12 of linking of Boaz and Ruth with the great figures of Israel's patriarchal past?

The figure of Yahweh, the builder is key. "As he built up Israel through the patri archs, so he is continuing to build it up through the union of Boaz and Ruth." "The building that Yahweh has been do ing here has had David in view."

What do you find surprising about the blessing of the women pronounce on Naomi in 4:14-17?

"Obed is the final element in the filling of Naomi's emptiness. He will renew her life and sustain her in her old age, and he is Yahweh's gift to her." Obed is him self a redeemer.

Throughout the book we've observed the relationship between Naomi and Ruth changing. What do you notice in the blessing of the watching women in 4:15?

Drink it in

Praise our heavenly Father for the way that we see Him at every moment at work behind the scenes. In the book of Ruth, He saves, He blesses, He fills those who are empty and moves forward his great redemption plan which is ultimately fulfilled in coming of the Lord Jesus. Praise Him for His wonder and His grace.

1. "...rather sadly, it is the watching women who have to rescue Ruth from her neglect. At the beginning of the story Naomi was too consumed by her bitterness to acknowledge Ruth's presence; here she is too satiated with her contentment. Against this background, the closing words of the blessing are in effect a mild rebuke to Naomi. The silent daughter-in-law by her side is worth more to her than seven sons - a remarkable statement in a society where sons were so highly valued." Barry Webb

2. "It is here in the final blessing that the word 'love' is used for the first and only time in the story." 4:15. "The characteristic term for describing the loyal, caring relationships between the characters in the story....has been 'kindness'." "This kindness which has had an element of legal obligation... goes beyond the letter to the spirit of the law....." But love here is located, "...somewhat unexpectedly, not in the understandable - and in that sense natural - love between a man and a woman, but in the extraordinary love of a foreigner, a young Moabitess, for her aged Israelite mother-in-law, who never fully appreciates it. At the same time, it merges the human and divine planes of the story together by encapsulating this insight in a blessing invoked in Yahweh's name, whose providence is the ultimate source of all that has come to pass. Here indeed is a supernatural, loving kindness to be wondered at." B. Webb

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