



The Jesus Way: The Way of Family

We are in a discipleship conversation about following Jesus, who is the Way. In John 14.6, Jesus brings this into focus, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." It is when the Jesus truth is organically joined to the Jesus way do we experience the Jesus life. The way of Jesus was anticipated by 1800 years of men and women who endeavored to live in the ways of God. This week we look to Ruth as our guide. Ruth knew God as her refuge, (Ruth 2: 12) it was from a place of rooted belonging and protection of God as father, that she determined to care for Naomi through pain, loss and adversity. Ruth chose to journey with her embittered mother-in-law risking the people, places and gods she had always known, to walk in the way of Jesus, the way of family.

Ruth's life reveals that in the way of Jesus, the way of family is not only born but chosen and provided. Jesus says in Luke 8 that his mother, brothers and sisters, are those who hear his father's words and put them into practice. We are invited into the family of God when we live out the Word that God has called us to. As a woman from Moab, outside of the Israelite nation, Ruth shows us that in God's family, PEOPLE ALWAYS take priority over place, nationality, skin color, gender. It is when we step out of our narrow view of family that God ignites our hearts for those most marginalized and in need of welcome into the Family of God, including ourselves!

Ruth lived the way of Jesus, by her determined loyalty and purposed love. Ruth was not just determined to journey with Naomi to a destination, she was determined to care for her once they arrived. Purposed love in the way of Jesus is always practical physically and transformative emotionally. The law of God that provided for Ruth to glean the fields, to provide food for herself and Naomi, is the heart of God the Father for his family. (Deut.24:19-21)

Ruth's story of family is ultimately one of shared redemption. When God transforms our souls and redeems our lives in the way of Jesus, our redemption is not only for our good but the good of others, for the family of God. We were created to belong, we were imaged in the way of family, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Evil wants nothing more than to convince us of our self sufficiency. We need to be people rooted in the way, the truth, the life and family of Jesus Christ and we need to choose to participate in the shared redemption story of God, where ALL are welcome, and where no one is without choice to experience God as our refuge.

In the way of Jesus, we like Ruth, can find refuge, provision, protection and redemption. We are the family of God.

Here is a link to Sunday's Message – <https://vimeo.com/363928983>

Discipleship Questions:

- 1) How does Ruth's story speak to you about the "Way of Family"? Have you, like Ruth, experienced God as your refuge? (Psalm 18:30-31)
- 2) What changes might God be calling you to make in your thinking and in your living in order to follow Jesus in the "Way of Family"? What keeps you from connecting to the family of God?
- 3) Where do you most need God's transforming work in your life in order to live more intentionally connected with others? After reflecting on Ruth's story, how might God change you if you lived with determined loyalty and purposed love? How can you specifically come alongside someone this week to love them purposely?
- 4) How would your decision to follow Jesus in the "Way of Family" lead to life and renewal for those around you? What has God redeemed in your life that you long to share with others?