

Ruth 

Study Guide

Weekly Reading

The verses below relate to the kindness we saw in the book of Ruth this week. Try to find time every day this week to read one of these verses, look through the questions below each verse, and spend some time thinking through the answers.

Mark 6:34 - “When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they are like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.”

- Jesus saw the people and he had compassion on them. What does it mean to have compassion on someone?
- Why do you think Jesus has compassion on them? What does it mean that they were a sheep without a shepherd?

Colossians 3:12-13 - “Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so also must you forgive.”

- Paul tells the people to have compassionate hearts towards others. Would the people around you say that you have a compassionate heart?
- How does the forgiveness of Christ help us to have forgiveness for others?

1 John 3:17 - “But if anyone has the world’s needs and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him?”

- How are we supposed to handle the needs of those around us?
- Where is the balance between caring for our own needs and the needs of others?
- How would God’s love abiding in us help us to care for others in need?

Luke 9:25 - “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.”

- How does knowing God has compassion for us help us feel closer to him?
- Do you think God’s compassion for us encourages us to have compassion for others?

Romans 12:10 - “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

- Does it help to know Jesus understands our struggle and is sympathetic?
- Is it encouraging to know his strength, which found victory, is available to help us?
- How can we be sympathetic and encouraging to the people around us who are struggling?

Digging Deeper.

Chiastic Structure:

In Hebrew literature there is a form of structure called chiastic structure. It's used in all different forms of narrative to express a subtle point of interest. Chiastic structure is using a repetitive and symmetric themes to highlight the center point.

Chiastic structure looks as follows.

A Theme 1

B Theme 2

C Theme 3

D Theme 4

C Theme 3

B Theme 2

A Theme 1

In a Chiastic theme, the author book ends a particular theme to highlight it and let the audience know that this is the most important part of the story.

So in the above diagram, all the themes prior to theme 4 are important, but they are not the central and most important theme. They can be taught, learned, valuable, and edifying, but theme four would be where the author hopes that we would find our greatest value.

The reason or talking about this is because the book of Ruth is designed as a chiasm. It is built to highlight and promote a particular passage. The author, while wanting us to glean and learn other parts of the text, wants us to pay special attention to the center of the story. In the book of Ruth we're to pay special attention to the third chapter. It is here that we see the story of Ruth humbling herself, even in a broken manner, and asking for help from her redeemer.

The beauty in this passage is that it highlights for you and I our own need for mercy and redemption from our savior. We come to him, humble in our brokenness, hoping that he too might redeem us. As the thief on the cross came to Jesus, we come as well. Our theology doesn't have to be perfect, we don't have to have all the answers, we simply need to repent and ask. Just as the one their mocked the other humble requested "remember me in your kingdom."

Jesus response to this was not "make sure you know all about Christology and how the trinity works." He didn't stop to hound the thief about the romans road to salvation or the four laws for salvation. Jesus responded to the broken man's humble repentance and said "today you will be with my in paradise."

The book of Ruth, while containing a number of different themes, most importantly points us to a God who, when we humble ourselves before him, is willing to great things in our midst. He is willing to go to unheard of lengths to rescue us. He is willing to die in our place that we might have life.

Jesus told his followers, some time before his crucifixion, that there was no greater love than when someone would lay down their life for another. Jesus shows us the greatest love in that he died for our sins, in our place, for our salvation. All we need to do is, like Ruth, humble come before him and ask.



