

JANUARY 7, 2024

2.1

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God cares about every need in our lives.

TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will share God's love with those in need.



SERIES 2: GOD IS FAITHFUL

RUTH AND THE REDEEMER



FOCUS VERSE: Ruth 3:11

And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

LESSON TEXT: Ruth 2:11-13; 3:8-14; 4:9-12

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: Ruth 2:11-13; 3:8-14; 4:9-12

The Book of Ruth exists as an anomaly among the other Old Testament books. Its titular character is a Gentile widow. In most Old Testament contexts, Ruth would not have garnered much attention, if any. However, Ruth is held up as an example of individual faithfulness and steadfast love and also as an example of God's generous faithfulness and steadfast love toward humanity. Regardless of a person's God-given gender, ethnicity, national origin, or marital status, God is faithful to those who place their trust and hope in Him.

Several textual threads run through the Book of Ruth. One thread is the Hebrew word *hesed*, found in Ruth 1:8; 2:20; and 3:10. This word is translated as "kindly" or "kindness" in Ruth, but the word encompasses generally the concept of mercy (found 149 times in the KJV), lovingkindness, goodness, and favor (*Strong's Concordance*). In Ruth, her *hesed* toward Naomi and Boaz was demonstrated, but ultimately God's *hesed* toward all the major characters in Ruth was demonstrated. God was faithfully kind toward Naomi in providing for her through a hardworking daughter-in-law; toward Ruth in providing her a home, family, and descendants after losing her husband in a devastating manner; and toward Boaz by providing him a virtuous wife and family. These characters all stand as testimonies to God's tender care and kindness toward the needs in our lives.

A textual connection also exists between Ruth 2:12 and 3:9. The word translated "wings" in the first verse is *kenafim* and is commonly used in Hebrew writing to refer to God's protection of Israel. Examples of this term can be found in Exodus 19:4 and Psalm 17:8; 36:7; 61:4; 91:4. In Ruth 3:9 a similar word *kanaf* is translated as "skirt," which Boaz used to cover Ruth. The Hebrew reader would have noticed the intentional play on words, which indicated Boaz's care and sheltering of Ruth was similar to Jehovah's sheltering protection of Israel (*Apostolic Study Bible*, note for Ruth 2:12).

REGARDLESS OF A PERSON'S GOD-GIVEN GENDER, ETHNICITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, OR MARITAL STATUS, GOD IS FAITHFUL TO THOSE WHO PLACE THEIR TRUST AND HOPE IN HIM.

DAY 1

Ruth 2:11-13

¹¹ And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

¹² The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

¹³ Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

Biblical Insight

Boaz recognized the work Ruth had done for Naomi, specifically her loyalty, kindness, and faithfulness. Such steadfast love must have been rare, especially by foreigners such as the Moabites. Ruth's actions made her more favorable in the eyes of those living nearby, evidenced by Boaz blessing her and instructing his men to supply her needs generously (2:14-17). Ruth was faithful to Naomi, and God was faithful to both Ruth and Naomi. This passage demonstrates that God honors and cares for those who care for widows and those less fortunate, even those who are widows and less fortunate themselves.

Daily Devotion

Ruth and Naomi both knew what it felt like to lose someone and to grieve deeply. These life events helped them to love others well and in a way not everyone could. They had empathy and could speak to the loss the other was feeling and give it a name. The two women personally understood the heaviness that came with heartache.

Maybe life events have caused you sorrow and are hard to fathom. Others need to hear your story. They need your empathy. They are longing for someone to invite them to the table, look them in the eyes, and say, "I've been there too. You are not alone. There is hope." You may feel broken, but you are needed. God has a place and purpose for every story.

In what ways can you use what God has brought you through to help others?

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

Ruth 3:8-10

⁸ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

⁹ And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

¹⁰ And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

Biblical Insight

Interestingly, all Naomi told Ruth to do was lay down at Boaz's feet and obey whatever Boaz told her. Ruth did more than she was asked and boldly requested Boaz act as her kinsman-redeemer. Boaz noted her kindness toward him in verse 10, paralleling the kindness she showed toward Naomi. Just as Ruth was kind toward Naomi (an older widow of a different nationality to whom she had no legal obligation), Ruth was also kind toward Boaz (also an older individual to whom she had no legal obligation and who had no legal obligation toward her).

Daily Devotion

Have you ever asked a favor of someone, only to hear the response, "What's in it for me?" This reply can be unnerving. It certainly does not portray the kindness shown by Ruth.

One true mark of Christians is how they serve others without expectation. Ruth and Naomi exhibited this sort of servitude. They were not obligated to help the other, but they did so out of the goodness of their hearts. Their reward was much greater than they could have dreamed up on their own. They served, not for what they could get, but for what they could give.

Take an inventory of your own life. Are there selfish ambitions within you? Do you help others in hopes of getting something in return? Not one act of kindness goes unnoticed by our Savior. Let Him keep score, not you.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

Ruth 3:11-14

¹¹ And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

¹² And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

¹³ Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

¹⁴ And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

Biblical Insight

Ruth was called a “virtuous woman,” which reminds us of the virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31:10–31. Proverbs describes the selfless and tireless nature of a virtuous woman—an excellent descriptor. This similarity is especially striking in the order of the books from the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, where Proverbs immediately precedes Ruth. Therefore, Proverbs concludes with a descriptor of a virtuous woman, and the very next book is an example of a virtuous woman.

Daily Devotion

The twenty-first century has distorted what a woman should be like. Billboards and magazines paint a distorted picture of a perfect woman. Young ladies and older women alike starve and disfigure themselves in an attempt to fit in and feel beautiful.

The good news is that the world does not get to define loveliness. A perfect height, weight, hair color, or outfit does not exist. Each person is wonderfully and beautifully made just as God intended. Proverbs 31 and Ruth's life are biblical examples a female life should be based upon.

Men are called to respect and appreciate their counterparts. Women are God's creation. We are all called to show the love and acceptance of Christ toward one another.

The standard of beauty is not what the world deems, so be who God made you to be. You are needed, valued, and loved the way God made you.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

Ruth 4:9-10

⁹ And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

¹⁰ Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

Biblical Insight

Boaz, being an honorable and upright man, diligently followed the legal custom of the time to allow the nearer kinsman the first right to redeem the property and Naomi and Ruth. Since that unnamed kinsman declined, Boaz gladly took upon himself the ownership of the property and the responsibility of raising up an inheritance for the family. Even though Ruth and Boaz's future child, Obed, was their biological son, he was legally the son of Ruth's deceased first husband, Mahlon (*Apostolic Study Bible*, note for Ruth 4:10).

Daily Devotion

Obed may have had a hard time figuring out where he fit into the story. His family was not the kind with a white picket fence in a suburban neighborhood. He likely felt a little out of place, but Jesus knew where Obed belonged, as He does with you.

All throughout the Bible, God used children who came from blended families. He used a stepson named Joseph to help save the world in the middle of a worldwide famine. God used an adopted son named Moses to lead God's people out of slavery into freedom. God called a sweet, Jewish girl named Hadassah, who lost both of her parents and was raised by her cousin, to save the Jews against genocide. God even came Himself as the son of Mary but Son of God, brought up in Joseph's house but not biologically Joseph's son.

God does not use you based on who your parents or aren't. He looks at your desire to know Him and be used by Him. You are part of the family of God. You have a place. You do not have to wander any longer. You belong here.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

Ruth 4:11-12

¹¹ And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD made the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem:

¹² And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

Biblical Insight

The elders played two important roles in this scenario. First, they confirmed the redemption by their collective witness. This step was important for legal reasons; the Torah demanded at least two witnesses affirm legal actions. (See Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15.) Second, the elders also blessed the redemption and even prayed Ruth would be like Rachel and Leah—two matriarchs in Israelite history (*Apostolic Study Bible*, note for Ruth 4:11-12). Praying such goodness upon a foreigner was highly uncommon, further demonstrating the divine stamp of approval upon her and her lineage.

Daily Devotion

God's favor is essential in our lives. One way He speaks and exhibits His approval is through His people, which is one reason pastors and elders are so important. We need these people in our lives to point us in the right direction and help us along the journey. To glean godly wisdom from someone, we should search out those who walk closely with God. These individuals cannot fix our problems, but with God's help, they can teach us, train us, and help us become stronger.

Make a point to prayerfully choose someone you can learn from and grow with. Remember the words of Proverbs 27:17: "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." Your life will never be the same when you heed the counsel of the wise. From them and through Christ, you will learn, mature, and be what God has called you to be.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
