

SMALL GROUPS

This week's sermon walked us through Ruth chapter 2, where we see the providential hand of God quietly at work in the lives of two ordinary women who had experienced great loss. As Ruth stepped out in faith and went to work in the fields, she "just so happened" to end up in the field of a man named Boaz -- a man of standing, character, and integrity. This session invites your group to reflect on God's behind-the-scenes work in your own lives, the qualities that matter most in relationships, and what it looks like to leave "Moab" behind in order to walk into what God has prepared.

Key Takeaways

- When you turn away from Moab, you will find God's blessings in Bethlehem. To get to the right place, you have to leave the wrong place.
- What looks like coincidence may be God working behind the scenes. His providence uses natural circumstances to bring about supernatural plans.
- Do not let your past talk you out of God's plan for your future. Ruth had a complicated past, but she did not allow it to define her.
- If you want something different, you have to become something different. Ruth's character -- her faithfulness, loyalty, work ethic, and moral integrity -- set her apart before Boaz ever noticed her.
- God desires us to seek Him for who He is, not only for what He can do for us. He is holy, righteous, faithful, merciful, and generous -- and that alone is enough.

Opening Question

Take a few minutes to get the conversation started before diving into the deeper discussion.

- Think of a time in your life when something seemed like pure coincidence but later turned out to be far more significant. What happened?

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Leaving Moab Behind

The sermon reminded us that Ruth and Naomi could not begin to experience God's provision until they left Moab and returned to Bethlehem. Moab represents the places, habits, relationships, or mindsets that keep us outside of God's best for our lives.

1. What does "Moab" represent in your own life right now? Is there something God has been asking you to walk away from that you have been hesitant to leave?
2. The sermon made the point that we cannot expect God's blessings while remaining in a place He has not called us to be. How have you seen this principle play out -- either in your own life or in the life of someone you know?
3. Ruth 1:16-17 describes Ruth's decision to leave everything familiar and follow Naomi and her God. What makes that kind of commitment so difficult? What makes it so powerful?

Section 2: The Providence of God

Ruth 2:3 says that Ruth "just so happened" to end up in the field belonging to Boaz. The sermon described this as the providence of God -- using ordinary, natural circumstances to accomplish extraordinary, supernatural purposes.

4. Romans 8:28 tells us that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. How does that promise change the way you view the painful or confusing chapters of your own story?

5. Have you ever looked back on a season of your life and realized that God was working behind the scenes in ways you could not see at the time? Share what that experience was like.
6. The sermon pointed out that the book of Ruth contains no burning bushes, no parted seas, and no fire falling from heaven -- just a woman walking into a field. Why do you think we sometimes struggle to recognize God's work when it comes through ordinary, everyday moments?

Section 3: Character Over Circumstance

Boaz noticed Ruth not because of her background or her circumstances, but because of her character. The sermon highlighted four qualities that stood out: she was faithful to God, loyal to her family, a hard worker, and morally honoring to God.

7. Of the four qualities observed in Ruth -- faithfulness to God, loyalty to family, a strong work ethic, and moral integrity -- which one do you feel is most countercultural today? Why?
8. The sermon said, "If you want something different, you have to become something different." In what area of your life is God currently calling you to grow or change in order to become the person He wants you to be?
9. Boaz was described as a man who honored Ruth, protected her, provided for her, and prayed for her. Whether you are single, dating, or married, how does this picture of godly character challenge or encourage you in your own relationships?

Section 4: Seeking God for Who He Is

The sermon closed with a powerful challenge: Are we seeking God for what He can do for us, or are we seeking Him simply for who He is?

10. Pastor Mack asked, "If God did nothing else, would you still say you just want Him?" How would you honestly answer that question right now?
11. What is the difference between bringing your needs to God and making your relationship with God conditional on Him meeting those needs? How do you personally navigate that tension?

12. The sermon compared Boaz inviting Ruth to his table to Jesus inviting us to His. Regardless of your past or your present circumstances, how does it affect you to know that God extends that invitation to you?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice this week.

- Identify your Moab. Spend time in prayer this week asking God to show you clearly if there is a place, habit, relationship, or mindset He is calling you to walk away from. Write it down and take one concrete step toward leaving it.
- Pray for someone else's future. If you are a parent, begin praying specifically for your children's future spouses and relationships. If you are single, begin praying for the character God wants to build in you before He brings the right person into your life.
- Look for God's providence. Keep a simple journal this week and write down moments that seem like coincidences. At the end of the week, look back and ask God to show you where His hand may have been at work.
- Evaluate your character. Reflect honestly on the four qualities seen in Ruth -- faithfulness to God, loyalty, work ethic, and moral integrity. Pick one area where you want to grow and share it with a trusted person in your group who can encourage and hold you accountable.
- Worship without an agenda. Set aside time this week to worship God with no prayer requests, no agenda, and no list of needs. Simply thank Him for who He is and for what He has already done.

Closing Reflection

Before your group closes in prayer, give everyone a moment to reflect silently on this question:

What chapter are you currently in, and do you believe God is still writing your story?