

BIBLE STUDY

# Book of Ruth

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

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A Heart of Wisdom

If you review the lineage of King David you will come across Ruth, the wife of Boaz (David's great grandfather). Ruth's life is interesting as it clearly demonstrates God's power to transform anyone's story regardless of how negative it may be.

This Moabite widow went through some tough times, but God was with her through it all, granting her favour and orchestrating events for her benefit.

God is the same yesterday, today and forever, the one that transformed Ruth is available and willing to help you today.

Stay connected and draw encouragement from this study.



## Day 1 God's Direction

### Short Term Decisions, Long Term Consequences

'In the days when the judges governed [Israel], there was a famine in the land [of Canaan]. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live temporarily in the country of Moab with his wife and his two sons.' Ruth 1:1

Elimelech took his wife and children to Moab to escape a famine and possibly return home when things got better. A reasonable decision made by someone looking out for the best for his family. However, Elimelech died during what was meant to be a temporary relocation and within 10 years of their getting married, his two sons also died. We don't know the cause of the men's deaths, but three widows were now left to fend for themselves.

'When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there.' Ruth 1:6

'Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a while because the famine was severe.' Genesis 12:10

'Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham's time... The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live.' Genesis 26:1a,2

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.' Proverbs 3:5-6

**Reflect:** Everything around us is always subject to change – for better or worse. So we need the grace of God not to fall into the trap of making decisions based on current circumstances or historical patterns. Rather our decision-making process should be based solely on what God is saying to us. And we should be prepared for the possibility that what He says may not tally with what we see.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to trust you with every decision I make and to do Your will, even when I don't see the full picture.

## Day 2

### Faith

#### A Return to the Familiar

“And she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”” Ruth 1:15

Naomi gave her daughters-in-law the opportunity to go back to their homes while she would go on to Judah. Those who have heard Ruth’s story before have the benefit of knowing how things turned out. But for Ruth and Orpah, they were just two young widows headed into an uncertain future with their mother in law.

Orpah may have asked herself, “Do I go forward into the unknown or go back to what I’m used to?” The lure to go back home would have been quite strong. Back to the familiar, back to what she knew and was comfortable with, back to her gods. Things that may not have been perfect but probably were predictable. Her response was quite normal, after all it’s safer to stick to what you know. But the Christian journey isn’t one of looking for comfort or predictability but listening to and following God.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” II Corinthians 5:7

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Psalms 119:105

When God creates an opportunity for us to do something new, He may not necessarily give us the full picture on day one. That’s why we need to walk in faith, trusting Him for guidance for the next steps to take.

**Reflect:** Ruth was ready to move forward and take a step of faith. What action of faith is God asking you take and what are you doing about it? Is the familiar holding you back from experiencing new possibilities? Do you really believe God can move on your behalf?

**Prayer:** Lord, you said in your word that you know the plans you have for me, plans to prosper me and not to harm me, plans to give me hope and a future. Precious Holy Spirit please help me grow in faith so that I may step boldly into all God has called me to be.



## Day 3 Commitment

### Divine Happenstance

'Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.' Ruth 2:3

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth took responsibility for providing food for herself and Naomi by working in the fields. Let us pause here to reflect on something:

'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings (grain left after reaping) of your harvest.' Leviticus 19:9

Long before Ruth was born, the Lord had instituted a rule that would enable poor people in Israel have access to food after landowners had finished reaping their harvest. It was because of this rule that Ruth the Moabite was able to work in Boaz's field to get some grain.

When Ruth decided to stay with Naomi, she made several commitments, the most important being this – "...your God will be my God" (Ruth 1:16). By making that commitment, Ruth changed the game by putting herself in God's hands and God is faithful to keep those who are committed to Him – regardless of where they're coming from. The Lord ordered Ruth's steps so that she ended up in Boaz's field and God granted her favour with him.

'The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.' Ruth 2:12

**Reflect:** Who is in the driving seat of your life? Are you trying to orchestrate events to suit the outcome you want or are you letting God take control of the situation and lead you?

**Prayer:** Lord you are my refuge and strong tower, you alone can cause life's circumstances to bend to your will. I put all that I am and ever will be into your hands and ask that you take complete control in the name of Jesus.

## Day 4

### Destiny Helpers

#### Divine Appointments

'At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"' Ruth 2:10

While Ruth was working in the fields, she ended up on Boaz's portion of the land, and God ordered Boaz's steps to get to the field at the time Ruth was there. The Lord granted Ruth favour with Boaz who gave his officers permission to let her work the fields. But beyond letting her collect the remnants, Boaz also ensured that she was able to harvest good crop, and Ruth left the field with about 40 litres of barley that day.

'Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!" Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said.' Ruth 2:19

Boaz showed Ruth favour in spite of the fact that she was a foreigner he'd never met before because God laid it upon his heart to be very generous to her. As a result, in one day, Ruth went from not having any source of income to being financially empowered. She now had a place to go regularly to get enough grain for her and Naomi to eat and excess left over which she could sell to generate income.

**Reflect:** There are times we go to certain people for help because we expect them to assist us in some way and are left disappointed when they don't. Don't get frustrated or annoyed if this happens. Perhaps they're not the ones God has assigned to help you.

**Prayer:** Lord you said in your word that you know what I need even before I ask you. You also know those you have assigned to help me meet those needs. Father grant me discernment to know those you have assigned to help me and order my steps to connect me to them. Also use me to help others at their point of need, in the name of Jesus.

## Day 5 Breaking Protocol

### God's Purpose Will Stand

"Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?" Ruth 3:1

Naomi understood how difficult things could get for Ruth in that environment being a widow without a child. Once again she showed her desire to seek security for Ruth, this time not by sending her away to her hometown, but putting her in the care of Elimelech's close relative Boaz.

"And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.'" Ruth 3:9

Ruth exhibited great boldness because what she was essentially doing by asking Boaz to take her under his wing was to marry her. Boaz's response showed that he understood clearly what she was proposing, and he was willing to perform that duty.

This was essentially the favour of God in action because Boaz wasn't under any obligation to do this for Ruth, who wasn't even an Israelite, especially as there was a relative who was closer than Boaz. However, from God's perspective it really didn't matter how many kinsmen were closer to Elimelech than Boaz. We must understand that when God has a plan, He will break all of man's protocols to fulfil that plan.

**Reflect:** Are you trying to calculate how things will happen based on the limitations you see around you? Regardless of how many plans we come up with, know that if we put ourselves in God's hands then ultimately it is His purpose that will be fulfilled in His way and in His time.

**Prayer:** Father your word says that the steps of the righteous are ordered by you. Please help me to trust and depend on you to order my steps so that I will always be aligned with your purpose for my life, in the name of Jesus.

## Day 6 Be Still

### Drawing Near

“Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”” Ruth 3:18

Here we see that Ruth and Naomi have played their parts, now they have to be still and wait to see how God will turn things out. We often believe that for something to work out well, we must be actively involved in making it happen so sitting still is one of the most difficult things we can be asked to do. But that’s what God often asks of us.

“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” Psalms 46:10

Stillness does not mean being idle, irresponsible or lazy. It means we are trusting not in ourselves but in God’s wisdom and direction. So for us to be ‘still’ we must be active in seeking God’s direction and listening to the Holy Spirit for His instructions. Therefore daily fellowship with God is critical. Spending time in prayer and personal study of God’s word helps us distinguish His voice from the many other voices vying for our attention because God will never say something that will contradict His word.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27

**Reflect:** In our ever-busy lives, how much of our day do we commit as dedicated time with God? Do we have specific times for prayer and Bible study that we stick to consistently? Not necessarily to ask for things, but to get to know God and develop a personal relationship with Him? This is key for us to be able to ‘be still’ because it’s the knowledge of God we have that will determine how much we depend on Him.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, your word says if I draw near to you then you will draw near to me. Help me precious Holy Spirit to make time with you a daily priority. Help me draw near to you daily and let me recognize your voice when you speak to me and lead me along the best pathway for my life, in Jesus name.



## Day 7 Redemption

### The Selflessness of Love

“Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”” Ruth 4:5

Boaz kept to his word and the Lord ordered the steps of the relative that was closer to Elimelech to come to the city gate while he was there and Boaz wasted no time in bringing up the matter of redeeming Elimelech’s land. While the prospect of buying the land was interesting to the relative, he was not interested in looking after Naomi, neither did he want to take Ruth in either so as not to affect his own inheritance.

The relative’s response shows us how out of the ordinary Boaz’s actions were. He wasn’t motivated by selfish interests, but he genuinely looked out for the good of Naomi and Ruth.

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:13-14

If we look at redemption from a different perspective, we can see how Jesus also came to redeem us. He didn’t have to do so, but out His love for us he left heaven to come to earth to pay the price for our sins and restore our relationship with God. Boaz redeemed Ruth the Moabite widow, she became his wife and the great grandmother of David, in the lineage of Jesus. When Christ redeems us, we are also joined into his lineage this time by the power of the Holy Spirit, giving us access to forgiveness of sins and an eternal inheritance.

**Reflect:** Redemption of the things we can see is good, but whatever we can see with our physical eyes is subject to decay. What is even better is the redemption of our spirit which exists for all eternity.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I thank you for paying the price for my sins for me on the cross. I thank you that your resurrection gives me hope for now and all of eternity and access to a relationship with you. Help me Lord to know you and the inheritance I have in you, in Jesus name.

## Day 8 It's Not Over

### Beauty for Ashes

'You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. Lord my God, I will praise you forever.' Psalm 30:11-12

One of the beauties of Ruth's story is how it captures God's ability to turn things around for us even when we have made choices that appear irreversible. Elimelech and sons died after relocating in search of a better future, leaving Naomi bitter and angry with God. Little did she realise that God wasn't done with her story.

Naomi would never have imagined that Ruth would show her so much love and that God would favour her. It wouldn't have crossed her mind that she would be taken care of in her old age, talk less of have a child to nurse as a grandparent. Ruth also would not have thought she would find favour from her late husband's relative whom she had never met in a land she had never been to before.

Sometimes when we get the point where things appear to be at their worst, it's easy to lose hope and think that is the end of it all. But we really should not limit God.

No matter how bad things appear to be, it's important that we keep our communication lines with God open. Be honest and tell Him how you really feel, how you may not understand what's going on around you. But do not leave it at the level of complaints. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to learn from what you're going through and how Jesus may be glorified.

**Reflect:** Sometimes God will change your circumstances as He did for Ruth. At other times, the change may be internal as He gives you the grace to stand strong through the experience. Whatever the case may be, don't think God has abandoned you.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord I ask that you please give me the grace to know you and to trust you. You said you will never leave me nor forsake me, and you are faithful to keep your word. Help me to stay close to you even when I don't clearly see what you're doing in my life, trusting that You will work all things together for my good, in Jesus Name.

Thanks for completing the study. We'll love to hear from you, so please connect with us on:

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