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RUTH:
Finding Your Redeemer in Relationships
Amidst Tragic Loss

Ruth 1:1-22

Opening: How do people typically deal with “loss” in their life?

Observation

1. List the people in this story.

2. What geographic locations are involved in the family’s move?

3. When did these events take place and how long?

4. What tragedy happened in the family?

5. What did Naomi tell Orpah and Ruth after the tragedy?

6. What did Naomi say about God after the tragedy?

7. What did Ruth say to Naomi regarding going back to Bethlehem with her?

8. What time of the year did Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem?

Interpretation

9. Why did Naomi tell the people in Bethlehem to call her “Mara”?

10. Compare and contrast Ruth and Orpah’s relationship to Naomi.

11. What is the significance of Ruth 1:14 “...but Ruth clung to her” ?

12. Why did Naomi stop trying to convince Ruth not to stay with her?

Application

13. Where might there be a type of “loss” in my life and who or what do I tend to I cling to?

14. Honestly, how have I viewed the LORD’s hand in my life? Has it is gone forth against me? Where am I bitter? Write down a summary of what you perceive about God in your life past and present.

Ruth 2:1-23

Opening: “The people in my life that I believe God speaks to are _____
because _____.”

Observation

1. What does this passage say about Boaz? Who exactly is he?
2. What was Ruth doing in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz?
3. What did Boaz tell Ruth to do and not do?
4. What did Boaz say to Ruth regarding the LORD’s reward of her work?
5. What did Boaz do to serve Ruth?
6. After Ruth returned from the fields, what did Naomi say to Ruth regarding the LORD?
7. What instructions of Boaz did Naomi agree with?

Interpretation

8. Did Naomi’s perspective of God’s hand in her life change when Ruth encountered Boaz? Why or why not?
9. Find the word “bless(ed)” in this passage and explain how and why it is used.
10. Why was Ruth encouraged to stay near the servants of Boaz?

11. Do the characteristics and actions of Boaz in this passage describe God's design for male leadership? Why or why not?

12. Naomi saw the introduction of Boaz into Ruth's life as _____

Application

12. As in the case of Naomi, how might God be speaking to me or blessing me through another person(s)?

13. In what way does Ruth 2:12 apply to my life? What is my view of God and wealth?

14. Like Ruth, how can I stay "close to the maids of Boaz" (2:23)?

Ruth 3:1-18

Opening: Has anyone given me instructions that were questionable? Explain.

Opening: Place a check next to the statements that seem truthful about the text.

- ☐ 1. Naomi gave Ruth instructions to wash, anoint, and put on her best clothes in order to lay next to Boaz.
- ☐ 2. Ruth was instructed to uncover the hand of Boaz when lying next to him.
- ☐ 3. When Boaz discovered that Ruth was lying at his feet, he said he would do whatever she asked and called her “a woman of excellence.”
- ☐ 4. Boaz would allow another relative to “redeem” Ruth before he would.
- ☐ 5. Another person saw what Ruth had done in lying next to Boaz.
- ☐ 6. Naomi believed Boaz would not settle down until he resolved whether he or the other relative would redeem Ruth.

Interpretation: Place a check next to the statements that seem truthful about the text.

- ☐ 7. Naomi gave Ruth specific instructions to seek out Boaz and her words were from God.
- ☐ 8. Boaz was drunk with Alcohol and that is why he didn’t notice Ruth lying at his feet at first.
- ☐ 9. Ruth consecrated herself before going to Boaz as she saw this as a step in following Naomi’s God which had become her God.
- ☐ 10. Ruth’s action at night toward Boaz was questionably ungodly.
- ☐ 10. Boaz was much older than Ruth.
- ☐ 11. By allowing for another relative to redeem Ruth, Boaz demonstrated an openness to God’s will.
- ☐ 12. Naomi knew Boaz personally and thus knew he wouldn’t sleep well until he settled the matter of who would redeem Ruth.
- ☐ 13. Ruth 3:6-15 reveals that Ruth had sexual relations with Boaz.

Application

14. In Ruth 3:11, Boaz told Ruth that “all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.” What would/do people in my community call me? Why?

15. In Ruth 3, God’s will for Ruth is worked out by Naomi’s instructions, Ruth’s own obedience to those instructions, and Boaz’s openness to redemption and the Law. How might God be using the people and things in my life so that His will is worked out in my life?

Ruth 4:1-22

Opening: Have you ever made a decision and then backed out of it at the last moment? What happened?

Observation

1. Who did Boaz sit down with?
2. Who were the ten men who acted as witnesses?
3. Read Genesis 38:8, Leviticus 25:25, and Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and summarize what the Pentateuch or Law says.
4. What was the closest relative willing to redeem and what was he not willing to redeem?
5. What was the custom in Israel concerning the redemption and exchange of land to confirm a matter?
6. What reason did Boaz give for acquiring Ruth to be his wife?
7. Who did the people and elders desire Ruth to be like?
8. What did the LORD do for Ruth after she became Boaz's wife?
9. What did the women say about Ruth in relation to "seven sons."
10. Who is the father of Jesse?

Interpretation

11. How close is the account in this passage to the instructions given in Deuteronomy 25:5-10? Are there differences? Why?

12. In your opinion, why wouldn't Naomi's closest relative redeem the land but not her? Why was Boaz so willing to redeem her?

13. How does Naomi's tragedy play into the redemption of Ruth?

14. Does Boaz represent Christ our Redeemer today? Do others in the story carry representation? Why or why not?

15. What is the significance of the author writing down the lineage at the end of the story?

Application

13. Similar to the Ruth's kinsman redeemer who decided to not redeem her, who has ignored responsibility regarding my life? Like Boaz, who has taken responsibility and "saved the day"?

14. Boaz desired to redeem Ruth but still submitted to God and other men before carrying out the responsibility. In other words, he yielded to the "process" of God's plan being worked out. In what areas is God calling you to yield to the "process" of His plan?

15. Like Ruth, how can I be faithful to God by blessing others and maintaining a lifelong commitment?

15. Like Naomi, how has the LORD blessed me through others in an unpredictable way and what is or could be the impact in the future? Why?

HIGHLIGHTS

To think about:

- The genealogy given in Ruth would place the events of this story somewhere around the end of the 12th century B.C. during the time of Jephthah and Samson.¹
- The town Bethlehem was dependent on climate as no true Spring exists and it relied on wheat, barley, olives, and grapes.²
- The following words in *The Book of Ruth* have significant meaning. Note them and reflect on their significance:
 - Naomi means “my delight”, “pleasant” or “sweetness”
 - Elimelech means “my God is King”
 - Bethlehem means “house of bread”
 - Obed means “servant”
- Traditionally, *The Book of Ruth* was read by Jews, and then Christians, during the time of Pentecost each year. How would this relate to the early days of the Church and accounts in *The Book of Acts*?
- Boaz was the son of Rahab who was once a prostitute in pagan Jericho (see Joshua 2:1 and Matthew 1:5) and Ruth was a Moabitess. What does this say about the providence of God and how He works in history and relationships? How does this relate to Jesus Christ?
- In this little book, the reader gets an amazing angle from the person being ministered to (Naomi), the person who acts as God’s vehicle of a minister (Ruth), and the person who depicts God’s hand of redemption as the minister (Boaz). No one person keeps the total focus of the reader.
- The geographical location of field near Bethlehem was probably the same area where an angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds and announced Christ’s birth (Luke 2:8-14)

¹ Walton, John H., Matthews and Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. p. 277

² Ibid. p. 277.

Scripture to Sharpen My Sword:

¹⁶But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷“Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me.”
-Ruth 1:16-17

¹²“May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.” ¹³Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”
-Ruth 2:12

¹³So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. ¹⁴Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. ¹⁵“May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”
-Ruth 4:13-15

RUTH ANALYSIS

On the last page, you will find what is called a “Circle of Relationship”³ from *The Book of Ruth*. It will help you recap what the text is all about – God working in and through relationships. If prayerfully and thoughtfully done, you will see Scripture on a deeper level. Go to each character or small circle and relate the person to each of the others. Ask yourself each of the following three questions and sketch a few notes next to each person if you like:

1. What was the expected relationship?

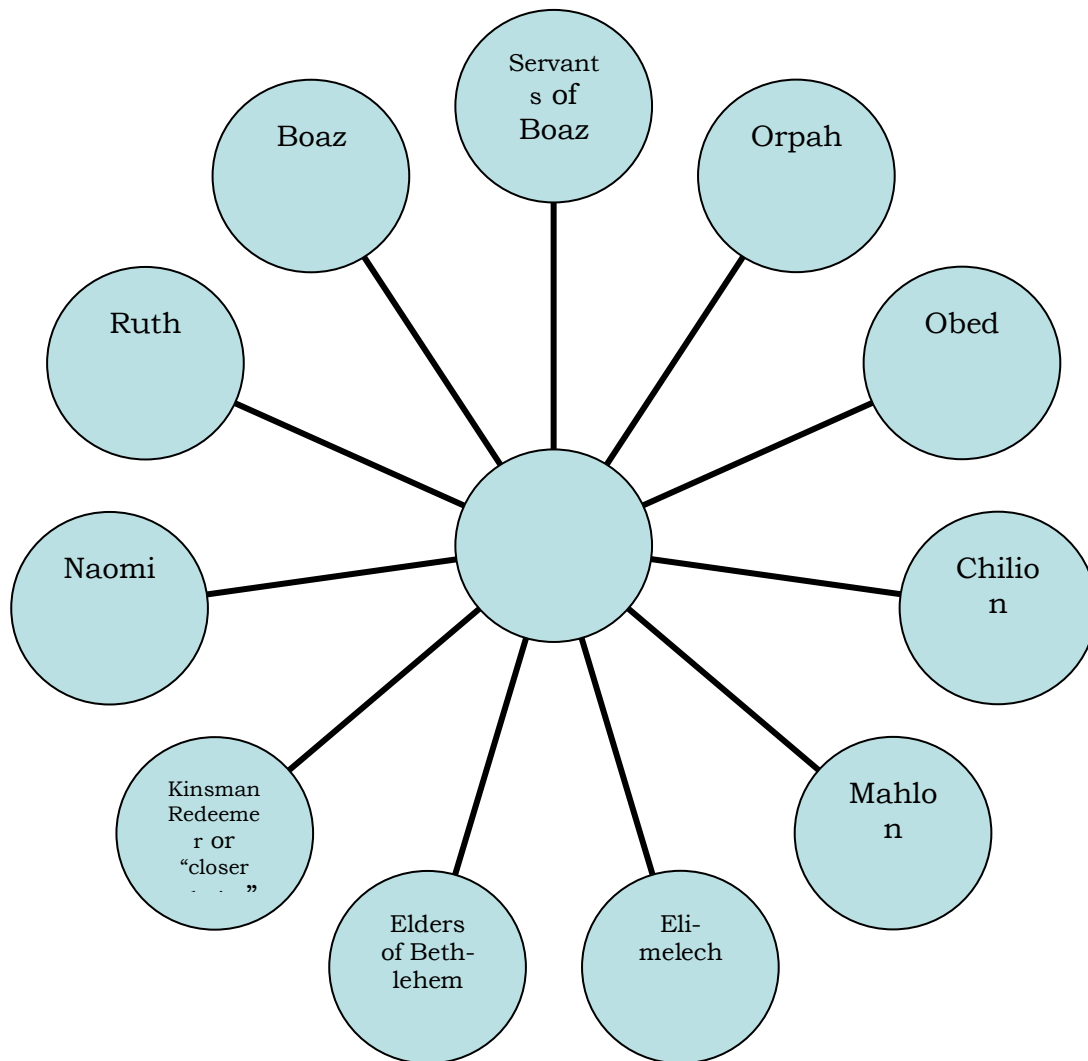
2. What changes in relations?

3. What is the actual relationship to begin with and what happened?

4. What relationship can I identify with most at this time in my life? Why?

³ Liid, Dale, Lecture 12/3/02

CIRCLE OF RELATIONSHIP



MY ACTION POINT

After doing the "Ruth Analysis" and working through each lesson, particularly the Application sections, I believe the main thing I learned is:
