

## “Love Story”

In the hot summer months before air-conditioning was readily available in many of our homes, people would head to the movie theatre to escape the heat and, perhaps, view a favorite movie. Some people enjoy comedies, dramas, thrillers, horror, musicals, or even biographical movies. This may be hard to swallow, but it is the fiftieth anniversary of the movie “Jaws.” My question for us today is, what is your favorite type or genre of movie? Do you have a favorite movie? Take ten seconds and think about it. Now, if you’re feeling comfortable, please get up or turn to share your response. I can give you two minutes. Would anyone like to share your response?

I tend to like biographies, comedies, and musicals. Biographies give you an opportunity to learn about someone, even if the interpretation is in the hands of the screenplay author and director. Comedies entertain us and often blend some other genres in such as a love story, drama, or even some thrilling moments. Musicals tend to do the same but often tend toward love stories.

If you like love stories or romance novels, the Book of Ruth could be for you. We have read the first part two chapters today and learned of the love of Ruth and Orpah for their respective husbands. Upon their deaths, we learned of the love of Ruth and Orpah for Naomi. We have also learned of the budding love of Boaz for Ruth. This is just the first two chapters! I hope that you all take an opportunity to read the rest of the Book of Ruth. Spoiler alert: I am going to give you a synopsis right now of what happens.

Ruth senses that Boaz has feelings for her as she does for him. She shares this with Naomi. Naomi gives her instructions to lie near his feet when he is asleep. This could have been a dangerous move as Boaz could have taken advantage of her as they were alone in the threshing

barn. Instead, Boaz protects her and gives her even more barley. Boaz shows his love in food! Indeed, Boaz is smitten with Ruth and also as he protects her and her reputation.

Boaz discovers that there is another man who is closer in “kin” to Ruth than he. He gathers the elders in the community to witness a meeting between the two. Boaz guessed that the next of kin would not want to claim Ruth and, with the witnesses being present he can claim Ruth as his wife. This way the “next of kin” cannot say that Boaz did something inappropriate or against the norms of the time.

The short version is that Boaz does take Ruth as his wife. He also realizes that Naomi comes along as part of the package deal and so that she will be in good care for her remaining years. Ruth bears him a son, somehow named “Obed” by the neighbors, and Naomi becomes his nursemaid. Obed would become the father of Jesse, and the grandfather of David, thus extending the line to the House of David for the Savior.

The Book of Ruth is truly a love story. When we look at the various relationships, it is easy for us to circle back to the love that we have for God and the love that God surely has for us. We are called to love one another with the love that Ruth showed Naomi. We are definitely called to that love when we commit through marriage or to a relationship that, “Wherever you go, I shall go. Wherever you live, so shall I live. Your people will be my people. And your God will be my God, too.” Oh yes, we have to remember that not everyone at the time worshipped in a monotheistic manner. This would have been a big deal for anyone of that time.

The Book of Ruth teaches us many things. Naomi teaches us Kindness is a great gift in times of sorrow; stubbornness is a sign of strength. Sometimes we need others to stay alive. We may think God has abandoned us but we should always have hope. And Sometimes our real children are not the ones we birthed. Also, there are times when we find the way home only after

time in the wilderness. Ruth can also teach us that it can pay to listen to your elders or mother-in-law. Sacred Kindness is a gift to others. Grief can be turned to joy when our focus turns to the survival of others. Faith, hard work, obedience, and kindness can bring good fortune.

The biggest and most important thing that I think we learn from these women is that love helps us through all kinds of challenges. If we take that love and turn it to God, we will be in good stead. Also, if we can begin to truly realize that love is offered to us by God with no conditions, it will guide us in what we need to do.

Each one of us has a love story in us that can play out in so many ways. Let us each see if, this summer, our blockbuster feature will be the love story that we create with God.