

LEAD SHEET

RUTH : WEEK 2 BOAZ'S LOYALTY TO TRADITION FEBRUARY 19, 2017

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL: SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY

If you want to know God better, tell other people about Him!

GETTING STARTED

General Discussion:

- Which was harder, focusing on the ball or focusing on the names?
- How do you feel when no one knows your name?
- Is it hard for you to remember people's names?
- Anyone have an embarrassing story of a time when you forgot someone's name or your name was forgotten or even confused with someone else's name?

We are continuing our study of Ruth today. She was a "nobody" in some ways, a foreigner in Israel and among its people. Today, we're going to discover how she was noticed and cared for by a man named Boaz. We are also going to see how we can be loyal and faithful to the needy among us, just as Boaz was to Ruth.

DIGGING IN

As you may remember, Ruth is Naomi's daughter-in-law. They met in Moab, Ruth's homeland, where Naomi, her husband, and her two sons had fled to find food during Israel's famine. While there, Naomi's husband died. Her sons each married a Moabite woman, but then the two sons also died.

This left Naomi with her two daughters-in-law. When she decided to return to Israel, one daughter-in-law remained in Moab. Ruth, showing great loyalty to Naomi, left her own homeland for Naomi's. Today, we will study chapter two of this book.

Read Ruth 2

Discussion Questions:

1. How does Ruth meet Boaz? *(She is harvesting in his field and he shows up.)*
2. When Boaz meets Ruth, what does he tell her? *(Stay here and you'll be safe, drink from my water jars, etc.)*
3. How does Ruth respond? How do you think she felt? *(She bows with her face to the ground. She may have felt humbled, honored, and perhaps embarrassed.)*
4. In his words, what is Boaz's reason for being kind towards Ruth? *(Verse 11 says he saw Ruth's loyalty and is asking for the Lord to reward her as she takes refuge in Him.)*

From the beginning, Ruth and Boaz have an interesting relationship. Ruth is a foreigner, seeking the scraps of Boaz's field. However, Boaz welcomes her. She works hard, gleanes barley, and takes her harvest home to share with Naomi. Let's focus on verse 19 and afterwards when Naomi discovers what has been occurring between Ruth and Boaz.

Discussion Questions (continued):

5. When Naomi sees and shares in Ruth's harvest, what is her question to Ruth? *(Where were you today? Blessed be the man who took care of you!)*
6. When Ruth mentions Boaz, Naomi lights up with excitement. What does she say of him? *(“He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.”)*
7. What kind of man does Boaz sound like to you? *(Someone who is well-respected.)*

8. Naomi reveals something about Boaz that Ruth does not yet know. What is it? (*That he is a close relative, a “guardian redeemer.”*)

9. By the end of Ruth 2, what is Ruth’s commitment to Boaz? (*She stays close to him and works his land.*)

In chapter 1, we read of Ruth’s loyalty to Naomi. Now, we are seeing Boaz show some loyalty toward Ruth. He is not just repaying kindness for kindness. Instead, he is honoring Israel’s traditions in two really important ways. He shows his faithfulness to foreigners and his faithfulness to family redemption.

Boaz is Faithful to the Tradition Regarding Foreigners

Read Deuteronomy 24:19

Discussion Questions:

1. What does this verse say a harvester should do when he or she is overlooking grain to harvest? (*Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow to share.*)
2. What will God do in return? (*Bless the work of your hands.*)
3. Is Boaz honoring this command? (*Absolutely.*)
4. What character traits do you think this demonstrates? (*Generosity, obedience, integrity, faithfulness, compassion, etc.*)

I’m confident that Boaz knew this command—and others like it—that advised taking care of those in need of aid. But something else is going on here too. We’ll begin to see this development in chapter two.

Boaz is Faithful to the Tradition Regarding Family Redemption

Read Leviticus 25:47-55

The idea of a family redeemer is rooted in Leviticus 25. The law allowed for foreigners and the poor to be provided for in this way. Essentially, the closest relative took responsibility for his or her family members who needed care.

Discussion Questions:

1. Practically, how does Boaz demonstrate loyalty to this command? (*Communicates with Ruth, promises to share with her, invites her to stay in his field, provides bread, etc.*)

2. In Ruth 2:16, Boaz does more than is required. What does he do? (*Instead of just allowing her to glean what is accidentally left behind, he instructs the harvesters to leave some for her on purpose.*)

3. Naomi learns of this and rejoices, calling Boaz their kinsman redeemer. What does she say in verse 22? (*It will be good for you to stick with Boaz, you'll be safe, etc.*)

4. What character traits do you see Boaz displaying in his care for Ruth? (*Loyalty, responsibility, faithfulness, kindness, compassion, nobility, etc.*)

In this chapter, it is clear that Boaz is a loyal man. It would have been easier and more convenient if he had neglected his responsibilities and gone about his business pushing Ruth and Naomi from his mind, but instead he steps up and does the right thing. Generally, he fulfills his obligation in caring for the poor foreigner. More specifically, he steps into his role as a kinsman redeemer of the family and cares for Ruth, who married into his family.

We're not all the way through the story—there are two more chapters to go—but we've come far enough to learn from Boaz.

MAKING IT REAL

Boaz's faithfulness and loyalty are commendable. These character traits prompt two really interesting questions that we must ask ourselves: Towards whom are you a Boaz? and who is your Boaz?

Read Matthew 25:40

In this passage, Jesus talks to those who have provided help for those in need.

General Discussion:

- When we help those in need, who are we really helping? (*Jesus.*)
- How is Boaz's generosity demonstrated? (*He takes interest, he is generous, he goes above and beyond what is required.*)
- This is a tough question, but I want to wrestle with it out loud: Who are some people around you who you may need to act as a Boaz toward? (*The homeless, a single parent, an ignored kid at school, etc.*)
- None of you are a farmer harvesting barley, but what could you give? How could you give? (*Noticing people, interacting with the lonely, providing a meal or a service, etc.*)

Boaz demonstrated great loyalty to “foreigners.” We honor God when we act as he acted.

General Discussion:

- Do you see this same kind of kindness in the Church today? (*Allow students to share.*)
- How might the Church improve its attitude toward people unlike its members? (*Be more welcoming, be more generous, etc.*)

- Since we are the Church, how can we work toward seeing more generosity among us? *(Allow students to brainstorm.)*

- Let's be specific. Share out loud the name of someone whom you can take a step toward being a Boaz to today? *(Encourage students to share.)*

General Discussion:

- In what ways spiritually are we like Ruth in this story? *(We are all in need of help, protection, redemption, etc.)*

- Who has been a spiritual help to you similar to the way Boaz helped Ruth? *(Parent, teacher, small group leader, coach, mentor, etc.)*

- This “redeemer” language foreshadows a bit of what is coming to those who trust in Jesus. How does Boaz hint at Jesus-like qualities? *(He steps in when he didn't have to, he's loyal to his people, he's able to provide and deliver, he loves unconditionally, etc.)*

Ultimately, our redeemer is Jesus. Though we may be able to help the helpless among us from time to time, we are also “foreigners, widows, the fatherless.” We need protection. We need salvation. We need someone to rescue us. Jesus does that.

Read Ruth 2:12

Discussion Questions:

1. Boaz commends Ruth for what? *(Her loyalty to Naomi and for finding refuge among Israel and their God.)*

2. How do we find refuge similarly? *(We take shelter under the salvation of Jesus. We run to Him for protection and provision.)*

We can be a Boaz but we also need a Boaz. Our redeemer is Jesus.

In Ruth 2, loyalty is on display as Boaz remains faithful to the traditions of his people. Sometimes, we may scorn past traditions or believe them to be outdated. After today's lesson, it is clear that sometimes these traditions are not old-fashioned but in fact useful models for our lives.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray that your students become loyal just as Boaz was. Pray that they fully grasp the loyalty of Jesus towards His followers as well. Pray that they allow themselves to take shelter under His wings.