

LEAD SHEET

RUTH : WEEK 3 BOAZ'S LOYALTY TO RUTH FEBRUARY 26, 2017

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL: SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY

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

GETTING STARTED

We have been studying the book of Ruth for a few weeks now. In the first couple of chapters, we talked about Ruth's loyalty to Naomi as well as Boaz's loyalty to tradition. Today, Boaz and Ruth's relationship is defined with loyalty once again at its center.

DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 3:1-6

Discussion Questions:

1. Why does Naomi send Ruth to Boaz? *(She wants to find someone who will take care of Ruth.)*
2. What advice does Naomi give Ruth? *(Get dressed up and go visit Boaz.)*
3. Do Naomi's advice and instructions seem odd to you? Why or why not? *(Yes, as we don't have a custom like this in our modern times.)*
4. How does Ruth respond to her mother-in-law's instructions? *("I will do whatever you say.")*

Read Ruth 3:7-13

Discussion Questions:

1. According to verse 7, what does Boaz do after a hard day's work? (*Goes and lies down.*)
2. In verse 9, what startles Boaz? What does he ask? (*He finds a woman at his feet and asks "Who are you?"*)
3. Ruth identifies herself, but then says more. What does she ask of Boaz? (*"Spread the corner of your garment over me."*)
4. Why, according to Ruth, is this an appropriate request of Boaz? (*He is the guardian redeemer of her family. This sounds kind of strange, but the idea of covering Ruth with a corner of the garment was a symbol of the intent to marry. Ruth is boldly asking Boaz to care for her.*)
5. Boaz is willing to do what is asked, but what does he propose first? (*There is another man who is a closer relative and therefore should have the first shot as the guardian redeemer.*)
6. If the other man chooses not to be the guardian redeemer, what does Boaz vow in verse 13? (*"As surely as the Lord lives, I will do it."*)

This idea of being the guardian redeemer is central to this chapter. Boaz has an obligation to take care of his family. Ruth returned from Moab with Naomi, her mother-in-law. Some people would have chosen to disregard her as she was not a blood relation and she was a foreigner. Boaz does not do so. Instead, he shows great loyalty to her. He is willing to do what she asks.

Read Ruth 3:14-18

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Boaz insists Ruth leave under the cover of darkness? (*She is a woman of noble character, and he doesn't want her reputation to be damaged.*)

2. Boaz sends Ruth home with a gift. What is it, and why does he do so? *(Six measures of barley. He is caring for her and making it clear that he is serious about his intentions. He may also be giving her an excuse to have been at the threshing floor that would not invite suspicion. In other words, she arrived very early to collect grain.)*

3. What does Ruth report to Naomi upon arriving at home? How does Naomi respond? *(It's a good report, and Naomi assures Ruth that she will have someone to take care of her by the day's end.)*

MAKING IT REAL

This all sounds fantastic, but think about what Boaz is signing up for here.

General Discussion:

- What responsibility goes into having a spouse? *(He no longer thinks of his own interests, he has an additional mouth to feed, he has to provide for her, she will be an heir to his property, they may end up raising kids together, etc.)*

- What other considerations must Boaz make here? How might the community view this? How will he be personally affected? *(He is much older than Ruth, he will likely die before her, the community may view it as scandalous because she is a Moabite, etc.)*

- Why do you think Boaz does it anyway? *(It's the right thing to do. Ruth is of noble character. It was commanded in the law, etc.)*

Often in the book of Ruth, Boaz serves as a foreshadowing of Christ's role with the Church. In the New Testament, the people of God are called aliens. We were separated from God, alienated from Him. We are not worthy. We are corrupt. We are enemies of God, according to some

passages. We are sort of like Ruth. Still, Jesus sees fit to love us, rescue us, redeem us, and call us His own. And this redemption comes at a great cost, just as Boaz faces great personal costs when he contemplates redeeming Ruth.

General Discussion:

- How are Jesus' loyalty to us and Boaz's loyalty to Ruth similar? (*Boaz takes responsibility for Ruth even though she is a Moabite and therefore perceived as undeserving of him. Similarly, Jesus takes responsibility for His followers even though we are undeserving of Him. Both Boaz and Jesus take on this responsibility at great personal cost.*)
- When you think about how you approach Christ, undeserving and imperfect but with great faith, can you sort of begin to understand Ruth's position here? (*Yes, she was making herself very vulnerable to rejection, being misunderstood, etc.*)
- Having experienced the things she had already experienced in life, do you think this was difficult for her to do? (*I think so, she suffered great loss and is putting herself on the line with this bold request.*)
- What range of emotions do you imagine her feeling when Boaz swears to care for her? (*Relief, joy, gratitude, thankfulness, worth, etc.*)

Boaz says, "I will do it." It is interesting how big "it" was. It involved acquiring land (as we will see in chapter 4), and marrying a foreign women who he barely knew. He was loyal to the law, to his tradition, to his people and, above all, to Ruth. It will cost him, but it will be worth it.

General Discussion:

- What is "it" for you? What might God be calling you to do that will cost you something, but will be worth the sacrifice? (*Allow students to share.*)

- Why do you think we shy away from difficult responsibilities? (*Allow students to share.*)

- So here is the biggest would-you-rather question of them all: would you rather spend your life in comfort and not contribute anything that matters, or would you rather spend your life in discomfort but make a difference in the world for Christ? Why? (*Allow students to answer honestly, and don't shame those who pick comfort.*)

One of the marks of spiritual maturity is when we are able to give up things for ourselves so others might benefit. Boaz is a great inspiration for us to do just that. His loyalty drives him to sacrifice, and that sacrifice pays off big time. We will get to see just exactly how much when we wrap up our study next week.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for your students to discover a big purpose for their life. Even though it costs them, pray they jump in with all their heart and obey God's calling.