

LEAD SHEET

RUTH : WEEK 4 GOD'S LOYALTY TO HIS PEOPLE MARCH 5, 2017

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL: WORSHIP WITH YOUR LIFE

If you want to know God better, give back to Him!

GETTING STARTED

Last week's lesson had a dramatic ending. Ruth boldly approached Boaz at night and asked him to take care of her. He agreed but first acknowledged that another man—according to their law—rightfully had first claim to the property of her deceased husband, i.e. Ruth. Chapter 3 ended with Ruth returning to Naomi where she assured Ruth that Boaz would not rest until the matter was settled. That very day, Ruth receives the answer about her future. Let's see how it turns out.

DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 4:1-8

Discussion Questions:

1. With whom does Boaz meet? Where does this meeting take place? (*He meets the guardian redeemer and ten town elders by the gate of the city.*)
2. What does he inform the guardian redeemer of first? (*That the land needs to be redeemed.*)
3. Does the next-of-kin agree to redeem the property? (*Yes.*)

4. What does Boaz tell him in verse 5? (*That Ruth comes with the land.*)

5. Is the man willing to take Ruth as well? Why or why not? (*No, he is not. The answer he gives is because "he might endanger his own estate."*)

The prospect of having more land is desirable. However, taking Ruth as his wife (and potentially having more children) would hurt the inheritance of his future generations.

When the guardian redeemer refuses, Boaz jumps at the chance to marry Ruth. The two seal the deal in the next few verses.

Read Ruth 4:9-12

Discussion Questions:

1. How do the men agree to terms? (*They remove their sandals and the witnesses testify to having seen it take place.*)
2. How do the elders of the town speak of what they have seen? (*They pray a blessing over the deal.*)
3. What specifically do they pray happens in verses 11-12? (*They pray that Ruth will give Boaz many sons and like Leah and Rachel "built up the family of Israel."*)

With Boaz legally joined with Ruth at last, the book of Ruth comes to a close, but not before a surprising twist.

Read Ruth 4:13-22

Discussion Questions:

1. Boaz and Ruth have a son. What is his name? (*Obed.*)
2. Obed later has a son. What is his name? (*Jesse.*)
3. Jesse also has a son, who becomes quite famous in Israel. What is his name? (*David.*)

Ruth's surprising conclusion is that she is King David's great-grandmother. This is likely the reason that her story appears in the Old Testament. It preserves the ancestry of David. However, there is more to Ruth's legacy than being King David's great-grandmother. God uses Ruth in an even more impactful way centuries after she dies.

Read Matthew 1:2-6

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the same between this passage and the end of Ruth 4? (*It is basically the same genealogy, plus a little more.*)
2. Whose genealogy is this? (*It is the genealogy of Jesus.*)

As we see, Ruth is used in a big way. It is remarkable when you think about it. It also shows that God is a loyal provider; nothing stops Him from taking care of His people.

MAKING IT REAL

When the story begins, Ruth is a Moabite woman with whom an Israelite man falls in love and marries. By the end of the story, she is the great-grandmother of King David and in the ancestral line of Christ. That is quite a turnaround! We have seen how loyalty played a part all the way through—Ruth's to Naomi, Boaz's to his people's traditions, and Boaz's to Ruth. However, it is at the end of the book of Ruth that we discover the greatest loyalty of all—that of God's to His people.

General Discussion:

- Is it surprising to you that Ruth is in the genealogy of Christ? Why or why not? (*It is strange. She is not even a Jew, but a Moabite from the family line of the disobedient Lot.*)
- What other women are in Christ's genealogy? What do you know about them? (*Tamar tricked Judah into sleeping with her; Rahab was a prostitute who ended up hiding spies for Israel and then marrying an Israelite; Boaz is Rahab's son.*)

- Why do you think Matthew includes Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in Christ's genealogy? (*In part, at least, to show that Christ is for all people.*)
- Do you think Ruth had any clue how her life was being used by God? (*Doubtful.*)

It is very difficult to imagine that Ruth had any clue how God would use her life. However, God used her in a big way even if Ruth was unaware of it at the time.

General Discussion:

- What are some things that likely distracted Ruth from thinking about how God might use her? (*She was from Moab and did not even worship God at first. She was widowed and grieving. She lived during a famine where she worried about how to get food, etc.*)

In the book of Ruth, Ruth's actions can be interpreted as acts of great faith, but they are also acts of desperation and survival. While it is true that Ruth demonstrated great loyalty towards Naomi, it is also true that she was a grieving widow picking up leftovers in a field to ensure that Naomi and she would survive. It is unlikely that she was thinking, "I just have to keep picking up barley and someday I'll be in the genealogy of the Messiah."

General Discussion:

- What are some things that distract YOU from realizing that God is using your life? (Trials, hardship, disappointment, busyness, etc.)
- Do you even view your own life as one that points to Jesus? Why or why not? (*Allow students to share.*)
- Do you ever feel like a stranger in a foreign land just trying to survive? When have you felt like that? (*This is a sensitive question, but do not rush past it. Many kids feel rejected, neglected, and lonely. It could prove to be powerful conversation.*)

- How does our view of ourselves sometimes limit our contribution to the Kingdom? (*Our fears or insecurities can hinder us from a life of faith.*)
- Which matters more in terms of our contribution to the Kingdom of God—how we see ourselves or how God sees us? (*How God sees us.*)

I am sure many people in Bethlehem saw a Moabite when they saw Ruth. God saw the great-grandma of King David. I am sure some saw a poor widow. God saw one of only four women mentioned in the genealogy of His only Son, Jesus Christ.

In a way, the book of Ruth is representative of all our lives. None of us belongs to God at first. The Scriptures tell us that we are enemies of God because of our sin and selfishness. Because of the grace of God and His loyalty to His people, we are no longer enemies of God. Instead, we have been adopted into His family. His plans intersect with our lives.

Regardless of how we view ourselves, God sees the potential in each of us. We just have to allow Him to employ us in His vision and understand that we may not see the result. There are many lessons in Ruth, but none more important than this—God is loyal to His people.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for your students to take to heart the lessons of Ruth and to live their lives in the knowledge they have gained from the book of Ruth. Pray that they trust God to put their potential to work within His plans.