

Ruth | Week 1 | January 10-16

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-5

Scripture Questions:

1. How did Naomi's life unravel in Moab?
2. What is the impact of the unraveling of Naomi's life? How was she now at risk?
3. What similarities can you see between your world and Naomi's? (politically, culturally, religiously)
4. How might you be experiencing a "famine" of sorts?
5. What are the implications of "famine" – physically, metaphorically, spiritually?
6. Thinking about Naomi's life, what kinds of things cause you to experience or be "left without"? (vs. 5)
7. As Naomi's issues & struggles shape her view of God, how do these things shape your view of God?

Sermon Discussion Questions:

1. Think about a person, a relationship, or a set of circumstances in your life that God used to provide for your needs and/or help you grow. How did you experience God's care and loving kindness in ordinary ways?
2. In what ways can the pressure to be "extraordinary" or do "big things for God" blind us to God's presence and work right in front of us?
3. What really stood out for you about Ruth 1:1-5? Try to put yourself in Naomi's shoes. What do you imagine she was thinking and feeling while suffering so many losses? In what ways is Ruth a "female Job?" What questions does this raise for you about God and his character?
4. Loss is simply part of life. But there are seasons when that loss is more severe and painful. What are some losses that people in our church and community have endured over the past year? What losses have you experienced in your own life? How has that impacted you (and your family)?

5. We all tend to allow other things (work, education, relationships, achievements, abilities, money, etc.) to define us and give us an ultimate sense of security and protection. Even good things can become idols when we turn them into ultimate loves. What might be an idol in your life right now? Is there anything God has stripped you of (or may be stripping you of) in order to help you find your ultimate security, value and worth in him alone?

6. Naomi endured many significant losses, chief among them the death of her husband and sons. But her story will not end in tragedy. God is at work behind the scenes, inviting her into a hopeful future (even if she doesn't know it yet). In order to step into that future, Naomi has to bury her husband and sons and let them go. Is there anything in your life that is keeping you from stepping into the new thing God has for you? What do you need to bury and let go of today in order to move forward? (shame, hurt, self-doubt, resentment, expectations, a plan, control, etc.)

Giving & Receiving Kindness:

To someone you know who is experiencing a “famine” of whatever sorts or feeling “left without” (Ruth 1:5), write a note including a prayer for them. Pray for them each day this week and let them know you are doing so.

At the end of each day, in your own “famine”, look for, remember to receive, and gratefully name God’s kindness to you directly and through others.