

Ruth, Chapters 1-2

Wednesday, 12/12 – 11 AM & 7 PM

Second Wednesday in Advent – 2018

During Advent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Today and next Wednesday, we will focus on the book of Ruth, *which begins and ends in Bethlehem and covers about 12 years.*

1. The book of Ruth: It took place ¹ **In the days when the judges were ruling...** About 1380 to 1045 B.C. The book begins with a family, consisting of Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons. They lived in Bethlehem; however, due to **a famine**, they went to stay in Moab, *a neighboring country* (Genesis 19:36-37).
2. While in Moab: ³ **...Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left alone with her two sons.** ⁴ **These married two women of Moab, one named Orpah, the other named Ruth. They lived there about 10 years.** ⁵ **Then [Naomi's two sons] died too, and Naomi was left alone, without her two sons and without her husband.** *Always, but especially when our circumstances are difficult, let us trust in the Lord!*
3. Returning to Bethlehem: ⁶ **...while still in Moab [Naomi] heard the LORD had blessed His people and given them food.** Therefore, **she and her daughters-in-law started on the way back...** So Bethlehem, *the house of bread*, had again been blessed *with bread* and they were returning!
4. Naomi's unselfishness: Even though her daughters-in-law could have helped her, *she thought about them*, so she said to them: ⁸ **"Please go back, each of you to her mother's home. The LORD be kind to you as you were kind to the dead and to me.** ⁹ **The LORD help each of you find security in a home with**

a husband!” As you think toward buying gifts, are you deciding what to buy based on what is best for those people?

5. Naomi’s encouragement: Initially they both refused to return; then Naomi reasoned with them: ¹¹ **“Why should you go with me? Do I have any more sons in my womb who could marry you? ¹² Go on back, my daughters, go! I’m too old to be a man’s wife. Even if I did say, ‘I still have hope,’ even if I were a man’s wife tonight and gave birth to sons, ¹³ would you then wait till they grew up and stay single for them?”**
6. Her daughters-in-law response: Orpah decided to return to Moab, *but Ruth said to her mother-in-law*: ¹⁶ **“Don’t urge me to leave you, to go back and not be with you... I will go where you go and stay where you stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ I will die where you die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD punish me if anything but death separates you and me!”** As Naomi tried to do what was best for Ruth – *by sending her back*, so Ruth tried to do what was best for Naomi – *by staying with her*.
7. The two went to Bethlehem: It was small in *Jesus’ time* (maybe 300), smaller – *around 700 BC* – when Micah wrote these words, **“you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are too little to be among the clans of Judah... (Micah 5:2 ESV)**, and smaller yet – *hundreds of years earlier at the time of Ruth*. That is the little town Naomi was from, *everyone knowing everyone else*, and a place to which Ruth had never been. The Bible says: ¹⁹ **“...When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about them. “Is this Naomi?” the women asked.** Remember, she left with her husband and two sons, and had been gone about 10 years.
8. Naomi expressed her true feelings: ²⁰ **“Don’t call me Naomi [Pleasant],” she answered them. “Call me Mara [Bitter], because the Almighty has made life bitter for me. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD brought me back empty. ...the Almighty has hurt me?”** Such feelings are natural; have you ever thought the same (Rom. 8:28)?

9. God was in control: ²² **...They came to Bethlehem when people were starting to harvest the barley.** Coming up now, in chapter 2, *we will see the barley-related blessing!*
10. Poor and hungry: Naomi and Ruth, both widows, were in need. ¹ **Naomi's husband had a relative, a wealthy man of Elimelech's family; his name was Boaz.** Today, *people might expect help from their wealthy relative*; however, back then, people tried to do what they could to get by – *and should do the same today, for all who are able.*
11. Ruth went to work: ³ **...she went... and gleaned in the field after the reapers. She happened to be in the field that belonged to Boaz, who was of Elimelech's family.** *What do you think? Coincidence or God's Plan*
12. Boaz sees Ruth: The Bible says: ⁴ **Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem.** Possibly from the *town proper*, to where they were gleaning in the fields outside of town. *What do you think? Coincidence or God's Plan*
13. Boaz asked his servant regarding Ruth: ⁵ **“Whose girl is this?”** Boaz may have been immediately attracted to her. Then and now – *God is in control and His plan is unfolding!*
14. The servant explained: ⁷ **“She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the bundles after the reapers.’ She came and has been on her feet ever since daybreak...”** So Ruth was polite – *saying please*, and a very hard worker!
15. Boaz liked Ruth: ⁸ **...Don't go to glean in any other field or leave this one. Stay here with my women.** ⁹ **...I will order the servants not to touch you. And when you're thirsty, go to the jars and drink...”**
16. Ruth's humble response: ¹⁰ **...“Why are you so kind to me as to be interested in me? ... I'm only a foreign woman.”** We should say similar things to God: *Why do you love me, why did You send Your Son? I'm just a poor miserable sinner.*
17. Boaz responded to Ruth: ¹¹ **“I was told about everything you did for your mother-in-law after your husband died, ...how**

you left your father, your mother, and the country where you were born and came to a people you didn't know before.” *Ruth lived her faith!*

18. **Ruth was grateful:** ¹³ **“You’re kind to me... you... encourage your maidservant...”** Let us *be thankful* for God’s kindness!
19. **God continued to bless Ruth:** ¹⁴ **...Boaz told her, “Come here and have some food...”** As Ruth was not deserving, neither are we; *God blesses us every day – because He loves us!*
20. **Boaz went even further:** ¹⁵ **...Boaz ordered his servants, “Let her glean even among the bundles, and don’t embarrass her.”** As Boaz delighted in Ruth, *so the LORD delights in us and sent His Son to save us!*
21. **Naomi was surprised:** ¹⁹ **“Where did you glean today?”** Ruth answered: **“The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz.”** Naomi responded: ²⁰ **...“May the LORD... bless him! The man is our relative... He’s next to our nearest relative [literally, next to our kinsman redeemer].”**
22. **What is a kinsman redeemer?** He **“was responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of the extended family”** (CSSB, 366). Naomi had been filled with despair, *but now she had hope for redemption*. As we despair over our sins, *let us rejoice in God’s redemption through Jesus!*
23. **Naomi said to Ruth:** ²² **“It is best, my daughter... that you go out with his women. Then you’ll not be in a strange field where you may be mistreated.”** As Naomi showed love for Ruth, *so let us show love for others!*
24. **Ruth took the advice:** ²³ **She stayed with the women of Boaz and gleaned till all the barley and the wheat had been harvested.** *Let us be wise and take the good advice of others!*

Today’s text is from the AAT (An American translation) version of the Bible.

Let Us Pray: Dear Jesus, our redeemer, we thank You!

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