

Week 18: Ruth - Loyalty and Providence

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction:

The story of Ruth is a quiet but powerful testimony of God's providence in the ordinary details of life. Set in the turbulent days of the Judges, it begins with famine, loss, and despair, yet moves toward loyalty, redemption, and hope. Ruth, a Moabitess, shows extraordinary devotion to Naomi and faith in the God of Israel. Her choice to cling to covenant love not only changes her own future but also shapes the destiny of God's people, leading to King David and ultimately to Christ. This study invites us to see how faithfulness in small things and trust in God's unseen hand can bring forth blessings for generations.

Scripture Reading: Ruth 1:1–17; Ruth 2:1–12; Ruth 4:13–17 (KJV)

With Commentary Throughout

Ruth 1:1–17

1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6 Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

Commentary:

The book of Ruth opens in the dark days of the Judges, when famine, loss, and disorder filled the land. Naomi's family left Bethlehem, the "house of bread", only to find death and emptiness in Moab. With her husband and sons gone, Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to return to their own homes and gods. Orpah kissed her and left, but Ruth clung to her.

Ruth's vow is more than affection for Naomi; it is the language of covenant. She renounces her past, embraces the people of Israel, and declares her loyalty to the Lord: "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." What Naomi could not provide, husband, children, or security, Ruth entrusted to God. This moment marks true conversion: turning from idols to follow the living God, even at great personal cost.

Ruth's loyalty shines as a picture of steadfast faith, reminding us that covenant love is not built on convenience but on commitment. Through her obedience, God begins a redemption story that will reach all the way to David, and to Christ Himself.

Ruth 2:1–6

1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

Commentary:

Ruth's diligence and humility in gleaning is honored by the unseen hand of God. What looks like ordinary labor and mere coincidence, her "hap" of arriving in Boaz's field, is actually the quiet working of divine providence. The Lord is weaving together a story of redemption through the smallest choices of daily life. By directing Ruth to a kinsman of her late husband, God sets the stage for her protection, provision, and ultimately, for the birth of a legacy that will bless all Israel.

Ruth 2:7–12

7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

9 *Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.*

10 *Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*

11 *And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.*

12 *The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.*

Commentary:

Boaz honors Ruth not only for her hard work in the fields but also for the deeper loyalty she has shown to Naomi and to the God of Israel. He recognizes that she has left her homeland and family to seek refuge under the Lord's wings, a powerful picture of faith and trust. Ruth's reputation as a virtuous woman precedes her, proving that faithfulness, humility, and quiet obedience do not go unnoticed by men, or by God, who rewards those who walk in covenant love.

Ruth 4:13–17

13 *So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.*

14 *And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.*

15 *And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.*

16 *And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.*

17 *And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

Commentary:

God rewards Ruth's loyalty with legacy. From the line of this once-widowed foreigner comes Obed, grandfather of King David, and ultimately, Jesus Christ. This story is a testament to God's

providence in the lives of ordinary people who walk in faith. No act of loyalty is forgotten by the Lord.

Discussion Questions for All Ages

Young Children:

- Who was Ruth loyal to?
- Why did Ruth go to a new land?
- Who took care of Ruth and Naomi?

Older Children & Teens:

- Why was Ruth's decision to follow Naomi so important?
- What does this story teach us about loyalty and trusting God?
- How do we see God's hand working behind the scenes?

Adults:

- How does Ruth's faith contrast with the unfaithfulness seen in Judges?
 - In what areas of life can you show loyalty like Ruth's?
 - How can your family trust God's providence even when the future is uncertain?
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Psalm Reading

Psalm 37:3–7 (KJV)

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Commentary:

This psalm reflects Ruth's life, trusting, doing good, waiting patiently, and ultimately receiving blessing. God honors those who commit their way to Him and remain steadfast in love and obedience.

 **Hymn: "Be Still, My Soul"**

By Katharina von Schlegel (1752), translated by Jane Borthwick

1.

Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: thy best, thy heavenly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

3.

Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.



Family Application Points

- 1. Model Covenant Loyalty:**
Teach children to honor commitments, whether to family, church, or God. Like Ruth, loyalty in small things opens the way for great blessing.
- 2. Trust God in the Mundane:**
Ruth wasn't called to a pulpit, but to a field. Remind your family that God often works through daily obedience in ordinary places.
- 3. Honor the Role of Redeemers:**
Explain Boaz's role as a "kinsman-redeemer" and how it points to Christ, our Redeemer. Fathers can use this to illustrate their calling to protect and provide.
- 4. See God's Providence in Hardship:**
Naomi believed she was forsaken, but God was writing a redemptive story. Encourage your family to trust God's hand even when life feels bitter.
- 5. Celebrate the Generational Blessing:**
From Ruth came David, and from David came Christ. Remind your household that one righteous choice today can shape generations to come

A Sabbath Feast Prayer: (Used later when the Sabbath Meal is Ready)

"Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Sabbath - a holy day of rest, joy, and renewal. As we partake in this meal, may our hearts be lifted in gratitude for Your provision and peace. Let this table reflect the peace of Your Kingdom and the love that binds our household together in Christ. In Jesus' name, Amen."



Closing Prayer

Gracious Father, we thank You for the story of Ruth - a woman of loyalty, virtue, and trust. Help us to walk as she did, clinging to You and choosing what is right even when it is hard. Teach us to recognize Your providence, even when life feels uncertain. May our home be filled with faithful love, quiet strength, and confident hope in Your promises. Bless our work, direct our paths, and build from our lives a legacy that honors You for generations to come. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.