

Ruth S.O.A.P.

Bible Project Video Summary:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/ruth/>

5 Day Video Devotional:

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/22620-lessons-from-ruth/day/1>

Chapter 1

Ruth 1:1-5 (NLT)

“In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and sons with him. The man’s name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there. Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.”

- As you read what happens to this family in verses 1 through 5, what’s the general mood or theme you feel?
 - *Tragedy...the first verse talks about a severe famine, followed by the death of Elimelech and then the death of his two sons. Naomi was probably feeling very hopeless and alone.*
- What familiar location do you notice in this story?
 - *Bethlehem in the land of Judah*
- Have you ever experienced a time of hopelessness, tragedy, despair? How did you handle that?
 - *When things feel out of my control, the hopelessness sets in. When things seem to be happening TO me, and I feel helpless to change my circumstances, I begin feeling anxiety and despair. Struggles with pregnancy, and then pregnancy loss are examples I can think of where I felt absolutely helpless to do any more than I*

had already done, but the circumstances still didn't change. When I am in those moments, it's very hard to see past my despair and try to view it through God's eyes, and remember that he has a bigger, better plan for me. But in hindsight, I am thankful for those moments because all I could do was drop to my knees. In those moments I am desperate for my Savior. I wish I could live in a way where I surrender everything to Him every day, not only when my circumstances feel hopeless. But I'm grateful for the way He uses those moments to bring me closer to Him.

Ruth 1:15-17 (NLT)

““Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.” But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”

- What does Naomi tell Ruth to do?
 - *Go back to her people and her gods*
- What is Ruth’s reaction?
 - *She refuses! She swears her loyalty to Naomi and her God until death.*
- Have you ever pledged your loyalty to someone? What weight does that promise carry?
 - *Anyone who is married has pledged loyalty to her spouse. That type of loyalty couldn't exist with differing religions and beliefs, in my opinion. So when Ruth pledges her loyalty to Naomi's God, our God, she is really giving her life to Him, which as we'll see later in the book, sets the course for eternity!*

Ruth 1:21 (NLT)

“I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”

- What words does Naomi use to describe her circumstances?
 - *Empty, suffer, tragedy*
- When you are in the middle of suffering, do you also find yourself asking God “why?”?

- *I believe it's natural for us as humans, with our very finite perspective, to beg God for clarity when we don't understand the tragedy of our circumstances. When we're in these moments of time, it feels like our worlds are crumbling, but we have to remember that these moments are so small compared to the eternity God has planned for us. I believe it is by the constant practice and discipline of praying, reading His word, and connecting with fellow believers that make it more natural for us to react with His perspective. It's like muscle-memory in a way; the more we work out our faith and trust muscles, the better prepared those muscles will be in times of tragedy or confusion.*

Almighty God, thank you that you are bigger than any circumstances I face in this life. In the moments when I feel hopeless and alone, please hold me closer to you and remind me of your presence. Thank you that the more I study, pray, and learn about you, the more strength and faith you give me. Help me to never stop wanting to grow towards you and your Son. Thank you that You are in control of everything, and I can rest in that truth and surrender all to you. I love you Jesus, Amen.

Chapter 2

Ruth 2:1-3 (NLT)

“Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech. One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.” Naomi replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.” So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.”

- Who did Boaz have a family connection to?
 - *Naomi’s husband, Elimelech was a relative of Boaz*
- What comes after “And as it happened,”?
 - *“She found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.”*
- Have you ever experienced something in your life that seemed to happen by chance, but looking back you can recognize God’s hand in it?
 - *I love stories that illustrate God’s constant work in our lives. Stories of His faithfulness in my life, and the lives of friends and family, are endless. Even when I think I’m making choices on my own, God is guiding and/or intervening, like He does in Ruth, to keep His purposes moving. I find so much comfort in the fact that His purposes are so much bigger and better than mine, yet they still INCLUDE me!*

Ruth 2:10-12 (NLT)

“Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. “What have I done to deserve such kindness?” she asked. “I am only a foreigner.” “Yes, I know,” Boaz replied. “But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers. May the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done.””

- How does Ruth describe herself in verse 10?
 - *As “only a foreigner”*
- Do you see any parallels between what Ruth did and what Jesus does in these verses?
 - *They both left their own “land” to live among complete strangers*
- What is the definition of “refuge”?
 - *A condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble*
- When you are struggling to move forward after heartbreak, do you seek refuge under the wings of our living God?
 - *In Bettye Nicole’s devotional on Ruth, she says “God’s plans are always ahead, never behind us.” I think we seek refuge in many different things of this world—food, drink, material things—anything we feel we can control after experiencing unexpected heartbreak. But Boaz reminds Ruth in this verse that she did the right thing by seeking refuge in God, because only with Him can we move forward. If we’re still alive, He still has a plan for us and He is still working and moving to complete His plans, so we don’t want to get stuck in our emotions and be left behind, we have to keep moving forward with the strength only God provides.*

Ruth 2:19-22 (NLT)

““Where did you gather all this grain today?” Naomi asked. “Where did you work? May the Lord bless the one who helped you!” So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, “The man I worked with today is named Boaz.” “May the Lord bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers.” Then Ruth said, “What’s more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed.” “Good!” Naomi exclaimed. “Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you’ll be safe with him.””

- What does Naomi exclaim twice in these verses? Why do you think this is significant?
 - *“May the Lord bless [him].” I think it’s important to see that through the hard times as well as the good times, Naomi is giving recognition and praise to the Lord, who she knows is in control of all circumstances.*
- In the previous passage, we hear about Ruth “seeking refuge”; how does this section end?
 - *“But you’ll be safe with him”*
- How do you see God’s hand in Ruth’s story so far?
 - *We have already seen Ruth’s conversion to following God when she follows her mother-in-law back to Bethlehem. By surrendering her life to God’s hands, and trusting in Him during all trials, we can see how clearly He is working. Boaz is provided by God as the refuge she was seeking. Boaz looks to Ruth with favor because God is redeeming their family and keeping His plans in motion. It’s interesting how even though God is not directly mentioned much in this story so far, His presence and work is still very evident. Bettye Nicole states, “When you can’t see a trace of God, you must continue to trust Him. Do what you can and trust that God will do what you can’t. Keep moving forward.”*

Almighty God, thank you for the story of Ruth and the evidence of Your sovereignty and faithfulness that is so clear in it. Thank you that you continue to be faithful in my life, even when my circumstances seem hopeless and painful. Help me to remember to seek you first, even when I have a hard time feeling your presence. I know you are always at work keeping Your perfect plans moving forward. I am so grateful to have the honor of being used by You, the King of the universe, to further Your kingdom. I love you Jesus, Amen.

Chapter 3

Ruth 3:5, 10-11, 18 (NLT)

5 "I will do everything you say," Ruth replied." 10-11 "The Lord bless you, my daughter!" Boaz exclaimed. "You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. Now don't worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman." 18 "Then Naomi said to her, "Just be patient, my daughter, until we hear what happens. The man won't rest until he has settled things today."

- What words are used to describe Ruth in this verse?
 - *Loyal, virtuous, daughter*
- How do Boaz and Naomi encourage and reassure Ruth in these verses?
 - *"Don't worry about a thing", "Just be patient"*
- Have you ever needed to hear these words? When you hear them during challenging times, how easy or difficult are they to obey?
 - *All of Ruth chapter 3 seems to be a narrative of loyalty, faithfulness, and virtue. Ruth lives a pure and blameless life, and God uses her faithfulness despite her circumstances to carry out His perfect plans and work for her good. When my circumstances seems hopeless, my tendency is to grasp for control, instead of "not worry about a thing, or just be patient." Ruth is such a good example here of patience and obedience; even though in the moment she may feel helpless, like her life will not amount to anything, but she continues to listen to the wise words of her elders.*
- Just as Boaz is the redeemer of Ruth and Naomi, how is Christ the redeemer of our lives?
 - *I love how the end of the chapter is Naomi almost guaranteeing Ruth that Boaz will not let this matter go unsettled; he will redeem their family. Ruth and Naomi are able to rest that evening because they know their fate is in the hands of a faithful servant of the Lord; they are able to surrender control to him. Just in this way, we can rest in the truth that Jesus is our redeemer, and he has already redeemed our lives through His death and resurrection. We don't have to control our own circumstances anymore because He's already defeated sin and*

death for us. We are free now to have a relationship with Him, and live in loyalty and obedience to Him.

Almighty God, Thank you for redeeming me. I'm sorry for grasping for control when my circumstances seem hopeless; help me to remember to surrender all to you, so I can rest in your faithfulness and loyalty. Thank you for loving me and wanting a relationship with me so much, that you died for me. Thank you that as you promised, you did not let death defeat you, but YOU defeated death itself, so that I can live freely in loyalty to You. I love you Jesus, Amen.

Chapter 4

Ruth 4:16-17 (NLT)

“Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.”

- Who does Obed become a relative of?
 - *Jesse, then David*
- To fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah, Jesus was to be a descendent of King David, so who was Ruth and Boaz's child a relative of?
 - *Jesus*
- As we look back at the story of Ruth and Naomi, and the seemingly impossible circumstances, there's a chance Obed would have never been born, ending the line leading to David and eventually Jesus. But what does this story reveal about God's plans and purposes?
 - *The book of Ruth barely mentions God at all, but it's a remarkable story because without it, we would not see how close the line of Jesus was almost ended by human circumstances. From the beginning of this story we read about the misfortune of Naomi and Ruth, but on the other hand God unveils His perfect purpose for the entire situation! Without the circumstances occurring as they did, the women may not have met Boaz, the family redeemer may not have declined the marriage to Ruth. In these small details, despite no mention of God, we can clearly see God's hand at work to accomplish His plans that He set forth long ago.*
- How does this story encourage you when you are in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances, and may be feeling God seems distant or absent?
 - *Ruth's story is an encouraging reminder that God's plans will always prevail! When things are not going the way I plan or I expect them to, I can think of*

Ruth, the great relative of Jesus, and be reminded that her circumstances once seemed so dire, but she is now an everlasting part of Jesus Christ's story.

Heavenly Father, Thank you for your perfect plans, and your power over all of our circumstances. Thank you for delivering us in ways that are better than we could ever ask or imagine. Forgive me when I struggle to let go of control and surrender fully to you. Please help the story of Ruth be a reminder when my circumstances seem dim, to trust in Your perfect ways. I want to follow and obey you in every aspect of my life; please make it clear to me where you are leading, and give me the courage to follow you there. I love you Jesus, Amen.

Ruth

During your study, read and re-read the chapter several times. As you go through each passage of scripture, take some time to observe all that is happening. Ask and answer questions such as who is speaking, who is the primary audience, when did this story take place, what stands out to you, what characteristics of God do you see in this passage? Next, list out ways in which this passage might cause you to think differently, is there anything you need to confess and repent? Is there anything that you need to change in your life?

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- As you read what happens to this family in verses 1 through 5, what’s the general mood or theme you feel?
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- What does Naomi tell Ruth to do?

- What is Ruth's reaction?
- Have you ever pledged your loyalty to someone? What weight does that promise carry?

Ruth 1:21 (NLT)

"I went away full, but the Lord has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?"

- What words does Naomi use to describe her circumstances?
- When you are in the middle of suffering, do you also find yourself asking God "why?"?

Pray

Chapter 2

Ruth 2:1-3 (NLT)

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- Who did Boaz have a family connection to?
- What comes after “And as it happened,”?
- Have you ever experienced something in your life that seemed to happen by chance, but looking back you can recognize God’s hand in it?

Ruth 2:10-12 (NLT)

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- How does Ruth describe herself in verse 10?
- Do you see any parallels between what Ruth did and what Jesus does in these verses?
- What is the definition of “refuge”?

- When you are struggling to move forward after heartbreak, do you seek refuge under the wings of our living God?

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- What does Naomi exclaim twice in these verses? Why do you think this is significant?
- In the previous passage, we hear about Ruth “seeking refuge”; how does this section end?
- How do you see God’s hand in Ruth’s story so far?

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- What words are used to describe Ruth in verse 11?
- How do Boaz and Naomi encourage and reassure Ruth in these verses?
- Have you ever needed to hear these words? When you hear them during challenging times, how easy or difficult are they to obey?
- Just as Boaz is the redeemer of Ruth and Naomi, how is Christ the redeemer of our lives?

Pray

Chapter 4

Ruth 4:

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- Who does Obed become a relative of?
- To fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah, Jesus was to be a descendant of King David, so who was Ruth and Boaz’s child a relative of?
- As we look back at the story of Ruth and Naomi, and the seemingly impossible circumstances, there’s a chance Obed would have never been born, ending the line leading to David and eventually Jesus. But what does this story reveal about God’s plans and purposes?
- How does this story encourage you when you are in the midst of seemingly impossible circumstances and may be feeling God seems distant or absent?

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