

Ruth Lesson 24

INTRO:

- A. Who is Ruth?
1. Ruth's name means, "friend," "companion," and "comrade."
 - a. As her name suggests, she is truly a loyal friend to Naomi as we will see later.
 2. It is worth noticing there are only two books in the Bible named after a woman.
 - a. The other one is Esther.
 3. Ruth is a Moabite.
- B. A summary of the book of Ruth:
1. In addition to Ruth, the other main characters in the book are Naomi and later Boaz.
 2. Naomi lived in Bethlehem with her husband and two sons.
 3. But the crops failed, and the family moved to the country of Moab.
 4. Naomi's husband died, and her sons married Moabite women.
 - a. Ruth was one of those women.
 5. After Naomi's two sons died in Moab, she decided to return to Bethlehem.
 6. Naomi told her two daughters-in-law to stay in Moab and find new husbands.
 7. Ruth refused to stay and went to Bethlehem with her instead.
 - a. According to the law, Moabites were not allowed to become Israelites. **(Deuteronomy 23:3-4)**
 - b. Yet, we see Ruth became completely loyal and faithful to the Lord and was allowed to be joined to the people of Israel..
 8. One of the most often quoted passages from the book is when she tells Naomi: **(1:16-17)**
 9. In Bethlehem, Ruth met Boaz and they married.
 - a. **NOTE:** Their son is Obed who will become the father of Jesse.
 - b. Obed's grandson is King David.
 - c. Thus, Ruth, a Moabite, became part of the bloodline of the Messiah.
 10. The book is believed to have been written by the prophet Samuel.

I. LESSONS:

- A. **There is Hope Even in the Most Devastating Times of Our Life!**
1. The book of Ruth begins by looking at the life of Naomi.
 - a. After moving to Moab with her husband and sons, she loses her husband and becomes a widow.
 - b. Just 10 years later her sons die, too.
 - c. It seems that Naomi's entire life crumbles in those years.
 - d. In fact, when she returns to Bethlehem, she tells everyone: **(1:20,21a)**
 - e. It's overwhelming to lose a spouse. It's heart-wrenching to lose a child; much less two!
 2. Ruth lost her husband.
 - a. She left behind her family to go with Naomi back to Bethlehem.
 - b. When they both arrive, they are destitute, devastated, and broken.
 - c. Neither one of them knew how they'd survive.

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- d. Yet, both of them had faith that somehow things would work out; they had hope.
 3. Naomi already felt God had “*dealt very bitterly*” with her, yet she continued to hope.
 4. Ruth set aside her pain, left her home and family, and turned to the future with hope as she journeyed to a new home with her mother-in-law.
 5. Both of these women showed great faith and truly believed better days were ahead.
 6. When life brings devastation, it’s not easy to hope and it’s hard to have faith.
 - a. However, it’s when things are most difficult that we need faith and hope the most!
 - b. **Hebrews 11:1** reminds us: “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*”
 - c. Looking at Ruth and Naomi, we can see that even when we can’t see beyond our pain, we can have hope better days are coming.
- B. **God Does Not Play Favoritism!** (Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:17)
1. Ruth is a widow and, as you can imagine, life as a widow is not easy nor was it easy way back then.
 2. When you lose the provider in the family, life is tough and the same is true with Ruth.
 3. There’s nothing really special about Ruth:
 - a. Remember, she is a Moabite; a woman who doesn’t belong to the tribes of Israel.
 - b. She’s not rich.
 - c. She didn’t come from a wealthy family.
 4. We need to be thankful that God does not play favoritism.
 - a. He doesn’t see people according to their wealth, status, or station in life.
 - b. Ruth may have been a nobody in the eyes of society, but she was **SOMEBODY** in the eyes of God.
 5. In the same manner, we are of great value.
 - a. We are the very creation of God and thus, He cares for us! (**Matthew 6:25-34** - He cares for the birds and flowers and are we “*not of more value than they?*” - v. 26)
- C. **Doing The Right Thing Often Requires Great Sacrifice!**
1. Doing the right thing isn’t always easy. In fact, most of the time it’s not easy and it often requires great sacrifice.
 2. Naomi reminded Ruth she was free to leave and go back to her family.
 - a. She was free to go back to her gods and free to search for a new husband to take care of her.
 - b. Even when her sister-in-law chose to go back, Ruth made a different decision.

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3. Ruth chose to go with her mother-in-law, which showed not only how dedicated she was to Naomi, but also her dedication to the God of Israel.
 - a. She decided, "...*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" (1:16)
 - b. Ruth sacrificed her family when she refused to return to them.
 - c. Her decision and commitment to go with Naomi was selfless act but an act that caused Ruth to be in the bloodline Christ.

D. Sharing Our Relationship With God Brings Closeness In Our Relationships With Others!

1. The story of Naomi and Ruth are so blended together their stories are difficult to separate.
2. We know more about the relationship between these two women than we know about them individually.
 - a. These two women shared great sorrow but they also shared great affection for one another.
3. However, we also see freedom in their relationship.
 - a. Naomi loved Ruth, but she was willing to let her go back to her family.
 - b. But it was Ruth's love for Naomi that made her willing to leave her family and go with Naomi.
4. Here's something else to give consideration to: Even though Naomi knew a new marriage for Ruth would change their relationship, she still played an important part in arranging that marriage between Boaz and Ruth.
5. It had to be their faith in God that was at the center of their relationship.
 - a. Through Naomi, Ruth learned about the God of Israel and chose to serve Him.
 - b. Obviously, it was Naomi's ability to be open and honest with Ruth about her relationship with God that caused Ruth to want to serve Him.
6. Do we often feel the need to keep our thoughts and understanding of God and His word to ourselves within the relationships we have with our friends and co-worker or even family members?
 - a. We don't usually share our thoughts and understanding about God with friends or family members?
7. Naomi was open with Ruth about the joy, the fear, the pain, and the anguish that came with her faith in God.
 - a. She admitted that she felt God had dealt with her bitterly.
 - b. And yet, it was that sharing which was the foundation of the deep relationship these two women had.

E. We Must Be People Of Character Even When We Think No One Is Watching!

1. Character – it's who we really are when no one else is watching.
2. Ruth had no idea that millions of people down through the ages, including you and I, would read her story.

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- a. She lived a simple life in obscurity. Yet she showed incredible character.
- b. Even Boaz makes mention of her character: **(2:11; 3:10,11)**
3. Ruth went above and beyond in the way she honored and respected her mother-in-law, and, in doing so, became known in the entire city as a “*virtuous woman*.”
 - a. She worked hard to provide food for her and her mother-in-law.
 - b. Everything she did showed her character, and because of that character, she was honored by God.
4. Like Ruth, we also need to work to be women and men of integrity.

F. **God Uses Unlikely People For His Purpose!**

1. Ruth was a poor, hurting, outcast, widow.
 - a. She grew up in an evil country – an enemy of Israel.
 - b. She was childless.
 - c. She moved to a foreign land where she knew no one but her mother-in-law.
 - d. They struggled with poverty.
 - 1) She had to gather behind the reapers in the fields to get grain so they both could survive. **(2:3)**
2. Anyone who looked at this foreign widow would have never guessed that God would choose her bloodline for the line of the promised redeemer – Jesus.
3. Through the story of Ruth, we learn God uses the most unlikely people for His purpose.
 - a. Just look at the five women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary.
 - 1) Tamar resorted to trickery to bear a son.
 - 2) Rahab was a prostitute whose faith saved her from the crashing walls of Jericho.
 - 3) Ruth was a Moabite and a widow.
 - 4) Bathsheba (referred to as “*Uriah’s wife*” in the genealogy of Jesus, **Mt. 1:6**) became David’s wife after David took her for himself and killed her husband.
 - 5) Mary was a young virgin who was already engaged to Joseph when she became pregnant with Jesus, and she showed great courage in her willingness to bear the scorn and shame that came with a pregnancy that occurred before marriage.
4. Ruth reminds us that no matter what is in our past, and no matter how difficult our circumstances may be, faith and devotion to God makes a big difference.
5. Even so, in our obscurity and in the mess of what we might have made of our lives, faith and a commitment to serve God can enable us to be His children and give us the hope of eternity in Heaven.

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- G. **All Things Work Together For Good To Those Who Love God! Rom. 8:28**
1. The story of Naomi and Ruth started with tragedies, deaths, and loss.
 2. If we focused on how they started, it seems all is lost and hopeless.
 3. However, as we go through the story of Ruth, it ended with blessings and a new life of her son.
 4. In this life, we may go through a lot of trouble, but this thing holds true, "This too shall pass."
 5. Ruth's life story is undeniable proof of how true **Romans 8:28** is: "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*"
 6. No matter how bad our situation is right now, we must hold on to our faith.
 - a. Like Ruth, stay committed!

CONCLUSION:

- A. When we go through tragedy and despair, let's remember the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz.
- B. May they give us hope that no matter what happens in our life, there will still be a happy ending as long as you stay committed with God.
- C. If not in this lifetime, it will surely be a reality in the life to come!

LESSON 25

SAUL

1 Samuel 9-31