

BE A CHANGEMAKER: BE SELFLESS

MAY 14, 2023

WORSHIP

My Worth Is Not in What I Own, Great Things, We Praise You, Yes and Amen, Way Maker

WELCOME

What three words will you use to describe a mother's value or significance to their children, their families and the world?

WORD

RUTH 1:6-22
 (READ CHAPTERS 1-4 FOR
 CONTEXT)

⁶ When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. ⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹ May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰ and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." ¹¹ But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—¹³ would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!" ¹⁴ At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." ¹⁶ But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." ¹⁸ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

We meet in Ruth chapter 1, Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and how they escaped the famine in Israel to Moab with their two sons. The sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. We also read how Naomi became a widow, and lost both her sons also, leaving her with only her daughters-in-law and with no means to support themselves. When Naomi heard that the Lord has provided food for His people in Israel, she decided to go back home. Today we are going to look at a different kind of Change Maker. We are going to look at three characters in the Book of Ruth that impacted one life at a time in significant ways.

1. THE PERSEVERANCE OF NAOMI

As Naomi was about to return to Judah, she tells her daughters-in-law to go back to their own families (v.8). Naomi's concern was for Ruth and Orpah to be provided for by new husbands in their own land (v.9), but she also just like us, struggled when circumstances hit even if she knew God is good and loving. She gave a pragmatic solution for their dire situation when she told her daughters-in-law to return to their former gods (v.15). Naomi felt that God's hand was heavy upon her—she saw her situation as more hopeless than

that of the two younger women (vv.12-13). Naomi was a very human person, and she gave a human-centered solution to their situation. But despite all this, Naomi still believed in and returned to God. She acted in the human but not Godly best interest of her daughters-in-law...but God still used her to attract Ruth to believe in Him. God uses imperfect people!

2. THE SACRIFICE OF RUTH

Selflessness is not a walk in the park—it is hard! We see this in Ruth's response to Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17). She made an oath to stay with Naomi no matter what. This shows loyalty and sacrifice because she's going to Israel not with the prospect of being welcomed as a foreigner or get married again since Israelites would not want to intermarry. Ruth also chose Naomi's God, Yahweh to be her God.

Now back in Israel, Ruth 2:2-3 shows how God was at work taking care of Ruth, who went to glean in the harvest fields. Though God does not speak directly in the book of Ruth, we see Him showing how He wants us to care for the poor, to help those among us who are needy (Leviticus 19:9-10), He wants His people to be generous. Ruth "ended up" working in a certain field owned by Naomi's relative and while God isn't mentioned, we can see His guiding hand clearly.

Boaz was the owner and noticed Ruth (Ruth 2:4-7). Boaz showed graciousness to Ruth not expecting anything in return or even expect to see or talk to her again. He addresses Ruth as "my daughter", as he could be much older than she is and made sure she would be protected while she worked with his servants (Ruth 2:8-10). When Ruth wondered why Boaz would extend such kindness to her, Boaz tells her how what she has selflessly done for Naomi was well-known.

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Ruth decided to follow Yahweh when she went with Naomi; now Boaz tells Ruth that it is Yahweh who will repay her and richly reward her for what she has done for her mother-in-law. Boaz did not say he will be the one who will reward her. Boaz did not have any hidden motive for his graciousness towards Ruth.

Ruth worked hard until evening; sacrificial work can be meaningful work if you do it to serve God and to provide for those you love (**Ruth 2:17-18**). When Ruth tells Naomi about her experience, she helped change Naomi's perspective about God (**vv. 19-20**). Because Ruth was selfless and "happened" to glean in Boaz' land where God led her, Naomi began to have hope. We can bring hope to people who are discouraged to persevere in difficult times!

Naomi told Ruth how to approach Boaz as a "kinsman-redeemer" (**Ruth 3:1-4**) and Ruth obeyed (**vv. 5-13**). Ruth asked Boaz to be the one to rescue her and Boaz told Ruth that by doing this, she showed great kindness. Ruth gave up her people and gods to follow the one true God and be with Naomi. She worked very hard to provide for Naomi and was obedient regarding matters of the heart.

3. THE GRACE OF BOAZ

Boaz reveals that there is a closer relative who can redeem Ruth but promised that if the other man does not, then he will redeem (**Ruth 3:12-13, Leviticus 25:25**). He basically tells Ruth that he got it covered, and he will do it God's way. Boaz was so noble, so amazing and gracious! Naomi tells Ruth to wait because Boaz will surely do what he said he would (**Ruth 3:16, 18**). Boaz talked to the closer relative and when he refused to redeem Ruth, Boaz became her kinsman-redeemer, and Ruth became his wife (**Ruth 4:1-10**).

Boaz was kind to his workers in the Lord, Boaz followed and went beyond the Lord's instructions on providing for the poor. He showed great compassion and generosity to Ruth not expecting anything in return. As Christians, we must be kind to those who are the least in our society. When you come across people who are poor, how do we treat them? It is much easier to be kind to people that we need but for people who won't be able to do anything for you, are you like Boaz? Boaz redeemed Elimelech's legacy at the expense of his own; he did not "shortcut" but followed God's ways. The story is not complete without the happy ending—Ruth was truly valuable not only to Naomi but to Israel as king David's ancestor and to all of us because out of her lineage came Jesus (**Ruth 4:13-22, Matthew 1:5-6a**). God is our real Redeemer and we can come to Jesus to redeem us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What difficulties have you faced in loving selflessly? How did you persevere through those?

2. Setting It Right.

What specific things do you think you can commit to doing sacrificially to fulfill your duty in a person's life (ex. family, friends, disciples/disciplers)?

3. Living It Out.

What selfless actions can you do to someone to point him/her to JESUS this week?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for those who need to experience the persevering, selfless and gracious love of our Redeemer, Jesus. Show selfless acts to one or two people this week and take the time to share God's greatest selfless act of love towards us—the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort for the Sudanese people caught in violence and conflict.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; tension in East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, dleaders, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

RUTH 2:12

¹²"May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."