Life Connections
Small Groups – Big Impact

Ruth
Love, Risk and Redemption

Life Connections Devotional Guide
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Week One

Monday, June 29: Spiritual Dryness

Read Judges 17:1-13

Ruth arrived on the scene in the period when the judges ruled in Israel. The children of Israel had occupied the land for some time. But the peace and prosperity that had been theirs disappeared after Joshua's death, when the people returned to their evil and disobedient ways. The condition of Israel at the time Ruth appears was, as our text for today points out, that “everyone did as he saw fit.” As a direct consequence of this rebellion there was famine in the land - physical and spiritual. When men and women turn from God and persist in doing what is right in their own eyes, barrenness and dryness follow - as surely as night follows day. Am I talking to someone right now whose spiritual life is empty and dry? You read the Bible dutifully every day but its words do not speak to you as once they did. There is always a reason for spiritual dryness. It doesn’t just happen. A sense of spiritual dryness can arise from a poor physical condition. More usually, though, it comes about because something has gone wrong spiritually. If you are feeling dry and barren in your spirit at this moment, and you are convinced it does not stem from a physical condition, then ask yourself: Is there some disobedience in my life that needs to be recognized and repented of? The saying “He who will not heed the helm must heed the rocks” is certainly true. Unless we live in obedience to Christ and His commands, then we will have to settle for a life that is less than the best.

O God, I know that Your way always leads to fruitfulness, sparkle and joy. In the hour of spiritual dryness help me to track down its cause and then turn to the cure - real and radical repentance. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Tuesday, June 30: The Danger of Expediency


As the famine of which we spoke yesterday continues to ravage Israel, Elimelech and his little family make the decision to emigrate to the land of Moab. Was this a right decision - or a wrong one? Bible students have debated this question for centuries. The Moabites were the result of the incestuous union between Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:29-38). They appeared to be a bad bunch who always opposed Israel. On one occasion they refused the Israelites bread and water, and hired Balaam to curse them. Because of this, God forbade the Moabites to come into the presence of the Lord, and told the Israelites not to seek their peace or their prosperity (Deut. 23:3-7). Elimelech's decision to move his family into Moab may have appeared to be a good choice economically, but I believe it was a bad choice spiritually. He went directly against God's commands. Of course it can be argued that when one considers the positive things that came out of the move - the book of Ruth for example - then what they did was right. But when we see good coming out of something, we must never assume that God willed it that way; rather, He works through the bad to make all things contribute to His glory. Christians should never try to foresee the results of an action and thus justify going against God's commands. Instead, it should be the constant practice of every Christian to decide everything on the basis of God's will as displayed in His Word. We live dangerously when we allow expediency, and not the clear guidelines of Scripture, to determine our actions and our directions.

O Father, burn into my consciousness the things I have read today so that I will never be directed by expediency but by the clear directions that come out of Your Word. In Jesus' Name I ask it. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Wednesday, July 1: Putting God First

Read Ruth 1:3-5
Although Elimelech’s decision to care and provide for his family must be applauded, there can be little doubt that in moving to the land of Moab he went against the will of God. Everything seemed to go well at first, and no doubt the improved economic conditions were to their liking. One day, however, tragedy strikes. Elimelech is taken ill and dies. Naomi, his wife, now faces the devastation of bereavement. Later, her two sons - both of whom had taken Moabite wives - also die, and she has to bear the pain of this further tragedy. These circumstances reinforce the point we made yesterday about the folly of making decisions based on expediency rather than on the will of God. How prone we are to allow materialistic or economic values to influence our judgment. A man and his family emigrated, lured by the appeal of financial security. He wrote: “Would to God I had thought of the spiritual implications before I made the move. My life and family are in ruins.” This is why it is always wise to pray over a move to another town, city or country, as there may be unseen dangers that are revealed only through prayer. A change of circumstances will not necessarily solve our problems. We think if we had a new home, a new church, a new husband or wife, a new minister, or a new job, that all our difficulties would be over. As Christians, every major decision we make ought to be set against God’s perfect will. We owe it to God to bring Him into our decision making. Otherwise we may find we have gained economically but lost out spiritually.

My Father and my God, help me never to allow economic or personal considerations to influence my judgment when making life’s major decisions. Grant that I might subject all my decisions and movements to Your perfect will. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Thursday, July 2: Where is God?

Read Ruth 1:1-2

When our son Nathan was barely two, he’d squeeze his eyes shut and say, "I can’t see, I can’t see!" He thought that if he couldn’t see me, then I couldn’t see him either. Playing hide-and-seek was a breeze. I never had to run and hide; I’d simply whisper, "Close your eyes, Nathan, and count to ten," and I was hidden as far as he was concerned! There are times as an adult when I’ve made a similar mistaken assumption about my heavenly Father. If I don’t “see” God, perhaps He can’t see me or my inappropriate behavior. What about you? Have you ever thought that since God is invisible, maybe your actions were too? The reality is that God in His providence sees everything, even before it happens. You can run, but you can never hide from His view. The word providence comes from two Latin words: pro meaning “before” and video translated “I see.” Scripture says, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (2 Chronicles 16:9). Have no doubt—though you may not see Him in your darkest night, He can always see you! Throughout the book of Ruth we see God’s providential care. It was a dark time for the nation of Israel, and tough circumstances had obscured the people’s view of God. In the midst of foreign oppression and famine one family asked, "Where is God?" Instead of opening their spiritual eyes to see Him, they went their own way and ran to the land of Moab.

Running away from your problems or from your heavenly Father will only make things worse. Instead of running, try my philosophy: When the going gets tough, the tough get closer to God, because forgiveness is just a prayer away.

Most people spend more time and energy going around problems than in trying to solve them.

Father, please help me keep my eyes on Jesus today, and to be willing to endure the hardships of life. Continue to mold me to the image of Jesus. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Friday, July 3: Down and Out

Read Ruth 1:3-5
Fidel Castro’s oppressive dictatorship has forced thousands of Cubans to seek asylum in the United States. Castro has crushed his people’s rights to free speech, freedom of the press, and the pursuit of economic prosperity, leaving them helpless, hopeless, and hungry. Impoverished Cuban refugees risk their lives sailing aboard unsafe boats over treacherous waters to reach the shores of America. The Cuban residents are down, and they want out.

Elian Gonzalez, a five-year-old Cuban boy, was found on November 25, 1999, clinging to an inner tube off the coast of Florida. He and several other Cuban refugees had boarded an overloaded powerboat that sank on its way to the U.S. His mother and ten others died on the tragic journey. After his rescue, the boy became the subject of a custody battle between his father in Cuba and relatives in Miami, which ended with a dramatic predawn raid during which the boy was taken at gunpoint. For Elian’s mother, getting out of Cuba resulted in death. For Elian, getting out resulted in a tug-of-war between families and nations.

It would have taken the wisdom of Solomon to determine the best for this little boy. It takes God’s wisdom to know what is best for you when you are in difficult circumstances. When you feel down and think you want out, stop and ask yourself two questions: What am I running from? and Where am I running to? Running to human solutions will leave you down and out. Running to God’s answers will take you up and away.

By Henry Ford (Women’s Bible Journal - Heitzig, L and Rose, P R)

Father, draw me close to you. Fence me in. Place a hedge around me; not only to protect me, but also to keep me running from you. Holy Spirit, remind me to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)

Weekend, July 4-5
Review this week’s devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?
Week Two

Monday, July 6: Forgive Yourself

Read Ruth 1:6-13

After Naomi has recovered from the shock of losing her husband and two sons in the land of Moab, she hears that Israel is once again a flourishing land and she makes up her mind to return to her people. When she announces her intentions to her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, they decide to accompany her on the journey home. As the three make their way out of Moab, Naomi feels it necessary to point out to the young women that their chances of finding someone to marry in Canaan would be very remote. What mother in Israel would allow her son to marry a woman from Moab? Naomi makes it clear that if she had other sons who were eligible for marriage, she would gladly give them to her two bereaved daughters-in-law, but as this is not so she encourages them to return to their own homes. At this point Naomi seems saddened and overwhelmed by all that has happened and utters these solemn words: “It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord’s hand has gone out against me” (v. 13). We must be careful not to read too much into this statement, but I feel that there were some feelings of self-recrimination reverberating beneath that remark. Naomi, being an Israelite, would have known how to approach God for forgiveness. However, it would appear that she has not yet forgiven herself. Self-pity and self-contempt are always signals that say one has not really received the divine forgiveness. Whenever you are in need of forgiveness, open your soul to receive it, and then make sure you do not short-circuit the spiritual system by failing to forgive yourself.

Heavenly Father, I see how easy it is to allow sorrow for my sin to become self-reproach or self-pity. Help me, whenever I am in need of forgiveness, to receive it from You, and then to forgive myself. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Tuesday, July 7: Fork in the Road

Read Ruth 1:8-15

With her head held high (and just a glimpse of a tear in her eye), a young girl kissed her mom and dad good-bye and climbed aboard a train for the first time. She was traveling alone to visit her grandmother. Along the way the train needed to cross several rivers. As they neared the first river, the girl looked out the window and saw a wide, flowing body of water. She didn’t understand how the train could cross the river and imagined the train plunging into the fast-moving current and quickly sinking. Desperately she thought, Maybe I should jump off! As the train drew closer to the river, she spotted the bridge that would provide safe crossing. After several rivers and several bridges the young lady breathed a sigh of relief, “Someone has put bridges all the way!” Life’s journey often seems treacherous and full of hazards. There are times when we can’t see the way out and just know we’re going to crash! Then we see the bridge and know that God has provided safe passage. There comes a time when we reach a fork in the road concerning faith too. We must decide: Will we stay on the train and trust God to build the bridges, or will we jump off and try to make our own way?

Heavenly Father, many times my sight is dimmed by doubts and fears. Sometimes, I am filled with an urge to make my own way. Help me to remember to seek your wisdom, to wait on your plan, to trust you in the journey. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Wednesday, July 8: Poisoned Well

Read Ruth 1:16-17

One of the most beautiful concessions of love in all of literature is the one Ruth made to Naomi. In vowing to return to Israel with her, Ruth pledged, "Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried" (Ruth 1:16, 17-note). But suppose Naomi had said to herself, "Ruth's just a gold digger. What she really wants is to get into Israel to marry a wealthy Hebrew. I'm just her passport in." If Naomi had doubted Ruth's good intentions, and rejected her kindness, she would have lost out on blessings she never could have imagined.

But that's exactly what we do when we fail to trust God's goodness. We stop believing He will do what is best for us. And as the saying goes, once the well is poisoned, all the water is contaminated.

James 1:16, 17 (notes) states, "Do not be deceived … Every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father." Once we doubt God's goodness, some of His best gifts-- like trials that help us to mature-- will seem like bad ones.

Don't doubt God's goodness and poison the wellspring of blessing He has for you.

- Haddon W. Robinson (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Prayer for Today:

Drink deep of God’s goodness, His faithfulness too,
Leave no room for doubting and fear;
His Word is the Water of Life pure and true,
Refreshing and cooling and clear. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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Thursday, July 9: Choose Wisely

Read Ruth 1:15-18

Indiana Jones, the handsome adventurer of the silver screen, searched the globe to find the Holy Grail, the sacred cup of Christ, believed to give eternal life to the one who drank from it. But the quest was filled with pitfalls, leading Indy and the enemy Nazis to Jordan. In a dark cave an old Crusader knight guarded an array of chalices. Anyone entering was forced to choose which cup he would drink from. Only one goblet would give life, all others would bring excruciating death. The Nazi grasped the most ornate goblet of gold and greedily guzzled the drink. As he died a gruesome death, the knight said, "He chose poorly." Indiana Jones chose the plainest cup, one of simple clay, meekly filled it with water, and slowly drank. As Indy's strength was restored, the solemn Crusader proclaimed, "You have chosen wisely." While the mythical grail does not offer eternal life, it does represent the crucial choice we must all make. Will we drink from the cup of blessing offered by God or the cup of sorrow offered by the world? Orpah chose poorly—she decided to accept what the world had to offer. Ruth chose wisely and followed the path to life everlasting.

Heavenly Father, life often presents me with options. I ask the Holy Spirit to guard my heart, so that I walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Give me wisdom to choose wisely, according to your Spirit. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Friday, July 10: Leap of Faith

Read Ruth 1:14-18
As discussed yesterday, after Naomi's advice to her daughters-in-law that they should stay in Moab, Orpah, albeit reluctantly, prepares to return home. So deep however is Ruth's love for her mother-in-law that she begs to be allowed to accompany her to Israel, in one of the most moving passages in the Old Testament. Ruth is well aware that great problems will face her when she arrives in Israel - national, cultural and religious. But her determination to remain at the side of her mother-in-law is so great that she pours out her feelings in these words: "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay." Such is her love for Naomi that the possibility that they might have no permanent home makes no difference whatsoever. "Your people will be. my people." Imagine giving up your friends and family to settle in a land where you know you could well be ostracized. "And your God my God." Ruth had evidently seen and heard enough from Naomi to realize that the God of the Israelites was Someone worth knowing. What a magnificent picture this is of a true conversion. Ruth and Orpah stand at the crossroads. Orpah draws back to end her days in the darkness of heathen idolatry, while Ruth moves on to a new land and a new future, and to have her name inscribed forever on the sacred record. How sad that so many can appear to be deeply religious, travel for a time with God's people, yet fail to make that "leap of faith" that entrusts all one has and all one is to the Savior. If you have not done so, make the leap of faith today.

Gracious and loving Father, help me understand that keeping company with Your people is not enough for salvation. I must make that determined leap of faith. I do so now. Receive me and make me Yours. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

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Weekend, July 11-12
Review this week's devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?
Week Three

Monday, July 13: What Does “Naomi” Mean?

Read Ruth 1:19

Ruth is a story that turns from tragedy and disaster to triumph and delight. Elimelech and his wife Naomi chose to leave their homeland, which was ravaged by famine, and settle in foreign parts. They set out on their journey at a time in Israel’s history when everyone did what was right in their own eyes, with little consideration for the will of God, and less desire to carry out His plans and purposes.

As the story unfolds, we find our little family had settled in the land of Moab. Ignoring God’s command, which prohibited Israelites from marrying Canaanites, both Naomi’s sons took pagan wives - Orpha and Ruth. Following the deaths of both her husband and her two sons, Naomi found herself in a distressing situation - a widow in a foreign land with no means of support, separated from kith and kin, and without hope in the world.

News reached Naomi that the famine in Israel was over and God was once again blessing His people. In bitter distress she decided to return to her roots. and Ruth, one of her daughters-in-law, chose to return with her.

Unbeknown to both women, God had planned to use their desperate situation to demonstrate His grace towards them and to forward His perfect plan of redemption, and as the story unfolds, we are increasingly aware of God’s providential work in their lives -

Although Naomi had tried to dissuade the girl from leaving her Moabite roots, Ruth begged to be allowed to go with her mother-in-law and declared, "wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God'.

And so, we read “they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?'"

It was no doubt an arduous journey for these penniless widows and the shocking circumstances in which she found herself caused Naomi to become resentful of her poverty-stricken state and very bitter towards God.

Although many years had passed since she and Elimelech had set out in search of a better life, she was still recognised by the women in Bethlehem, who appeared to be shocked at her changed appearance and asked with incredibility - "Can this be Naomi?'"

“Naomi” means sweetness and pleasantness, but in response to the shocked excitement that greeted her, the first thing Naomi said to the people of Bethlehem was, "Do not call me Naomi. Call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me”.

[Source: https://dailyverse.knowing-jesus.com/ruth-1-19.]

Heavenly Father, sometimes I allow discouragements and hardships to change my countenance. Please guard my heart so that I reflect the glory of your Name. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Tuesday, July 14: What Does “Mara” Mean?

Read Ruth 1:20
So she spoke, as many have spoken since, not knowing that God’s ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths peace, when they are not isolated from the plan of our life, but considered as parts of the whole. We cannot pronounce on any part of God’s dealing with us until the entire plan has been allowed to work itself out. How grieved God’s Spirit must be, who is lovingly doing his best, when He hears these words of murmuring and complaint! Let us lift the vail, and notice the pleasant things in Naomi’s life.

True, her husband and sons were dead; but their deaths in a foreign land had left her free to come back to her people and her God; to nestle again under the wings of Jehovah; and to share the advantages of the Tabernacle.

True, Orpah had gone back. Mahlon and Chilion were both buried in Moab; but she had Ruth, who was better to her than seven sons.

True, she had no male child to perpetuate her name; but the little Obed would, within a few months, be nestling in her aged arms, and laughing into her withered face.

True, she was very poor; but it was through her poverty that Ruth was brought first into contact with that good man, Boaz; and, besides, there was yet a little patrimony which pertained to her.

Yes, Naomi, like thousands more, thou must take back thy words. Thou didst deal bitterly with thine own happiness in leaving the Land of Promise for Moab; but God dealt pleasantly with thee in thy return and latter end. “Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in his mercy.”

[Source: F. B. Meyer, “Our Daily Homily”]

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for neglecting the many ways you have blessed me. You have called me to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus rather than my circumstances. While life can be bitter, You remain sweet. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Wednesday, July 15: I Went Out Full

Read Ruth 1:21
An irresistible desire forced Naomi from the heathen Moab, to which she had been driven by hunger years ago with her husband and her two sons, to the beautiful Bethlehem, where she had spent the years of her youth, so that there were countless lovely memories tied to it for this lonely woman. She had to leave behind in that strange country three graves, one of her husband, one of her Mahlon, and one of her Chilion. Besides this, Orpah, one of her daughters-in-law, had left her at the borders of Moab, and she returned only with the faithful Ruth. No wonder that the passers-by, who barely recognized the lovable Naomi in that bent-down posture, asked whisperingly: "Is this Naomi?" and that she urged them to rather call her Mara, that is bitterness, because the Almighty One had dealt very bitterly with her; yes she complained: "I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty!"

Countless times has this word been repeated in a tone, not of murmuring complaint, but of quiet melancholy, at the reflection upon a path that had almost ended. Naomi is not the only one whose way was marked with graves, and whose home had been made empty by the hand of the Almighty One, but many exchange their name with that of Mara, because they have been robbed of that which brought light and joy in their lives. It is paramount for all tried ones whether there is an acknowledgement of the hand of the Lord in their bereavements. It is absolutely no mercy in itself to belong to the broken hearted and the abandoned ones, but it reveals itself in the respectful confession that it was the Lord who dealt bitterly with us!

Jesus promised, “A thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.” (John 10:10) Perhaps the reason we feel empty is because we are attempting to fill our lives with things that will never satisfy. Only Jesus can fulfill our deepest needs.

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to save me from sin and give me an abundant life. Jesus, I am sorry that I often fail to recognize the fullness I have in you. I choose today to empty my life of everything that stands in the way of experiencing the abundant life you desire for me. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Thursday, July 16: There’s No Place Like Home

Read Ruth 1:19-22
Naomi had a bitter, pessimistic outlook on life. She had fallen into the pit of despair. It reminds me of the story about a man who fell into a pit and couldn’t get himself out. A self-pitying person wandered by and said, "That ain’t nothin’. You should see my pit."

A Christian Scientist happened by and encouraged him, "You only think you’re in a pit."

Confucius murmured, "If you had only listened to me, you would not be in that pit."

Buddha explained, "Your pit is only a state of mind."

A psychologist stated, "Falling into the pit is your mother’s fault."

An evolutionist said, "You’re a rejected mutant destined to be removed from the evolutionary cycle. It's survival of the fittest and you aren’t fit—that’s why you’re in the pit!"

An optimist saw him and said, "Things could be worse."

The pessimist came by and predicted, "Things will get worse!"

Then Jesus walked by. When He saw the man, He took him by the hand and pulled him out of the pit.

If you’ve dug a pit of bitterness that you can’t seem to get out of, hold out your hands to the Savior—He’s ready, willing, and able to lift you up. You’ll be able to say, like the psalmist, "He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along" (Psalm 40:2, NLT).

It is not the experience of today that drives men mad—it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened yesterday and the dread of what will happen tomorrow.

[Source: Unknown]

Heavenly Father, Thank you for making your home with me. I praise you that you are always present to pull me out of every life pit, when I repent and cry out for help. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

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Friday, July 17: Legacy

Read Ruth 1:1-22

Bible teachers have used many favorable adjectives to describe Ruth, the faithful young woman from Moab who became the great-grandmother of David. This fact alone is enough to show why Ruth needs to be included as we discuss God’s preservation of His righteous line. One writer comments that meeting Ruth is like finding a rose growing in the middle of a garbage dump. Another says Ruth “gleams like a beautiful pearl against a jet-black background.”

The reason for these and other comparisons becomes clear when we compare Judges 21:25 to Ruth 1:1. The era of Israel’s judges was a time of spiritual unfaithfulness and foreign domination interrupted only by a few brief victories. It was also a lawless time of Israel’s disobedience to the law of God. The last verse of Judges sums up the situation: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”

But then came Ruth, who lived “in the days when the judges ruled” (v. 1). Typical of the times, this great story of faithfulness to God began with an act that expressed little faith. A man named Elimelech from Bethlehem left home with his family to escape a famine. He chose to go to Moab, about fifty miles east, on the opposite side of the Dead Sea.

By doing this, Elimelech abandoned the place of God’s blessing (v. 6) to live among the descendants of Lot’s immoral union with his oldest daughter (Gen. 19:36-37). The child was named Moab, and his people were often hostile to Israel. Later, the prophet Amos pronounced judgment on Moab (Amos 2:1).

What was meant to be a brief time in Moab for Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons turned into ten years (1:1-5), during which time all three men died. Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

One value of our lessons in Ruth is to remind ourselves that we also come from a spiritual line, people in our past and present who have helped bring us to Christ.

Heavenly Father, I praise you for the legacy of faith that you have provided for my life. I acknowledge, that standing in this great line of faith, I have a responsibility to keep the legacy alive by my own faithfulness. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)

Weekend, July 18-19

Review this week’s devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?
Week Four
Monday, July 20: Guidance Behind the Scenes

Read Ruth 2:1-3
Ruth has no difficulty in finding a task to gainfully occupy her for, as we read in Ruth 1:22, they arrived in Bethlehem “as the barley harvest was beginning.” At harvest time there was always work to be found in the fields, even if it was only gathering up after the reapers. When the workers went through the fields reaping the harvest, often, because of the speed at which they worked, they would leave behind small unreaped sections. These unreaped areas were then covered by “gleaners,” who would walk behind and reap the grain that was still standing. Jewish law stated that the gleanings must be left for the poor, and the grain collected by the gleaners became theirs (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19). During the harvest, all the fields were open to be gleaned. No employment agency. No special selection system. No union cards. Those who had the need and desire to glean simply went and worked wherever the inclination took them. As Ruth takes up the role of gleaner, she happens to find herself reaping in one of the fields which belonged to Boaz. The term used in the second half of our text for today, “as it turned out,” is filled with deep spiritual meaning. Divine guidance was at work here. Ruth might not have realized it or sensed it, for most divine guidance takes place when we are not conscious of it.

Father, forgive me for the times I have thought things have happened to me because of luck, when really it has been the Lord. How glad I am that I am being guided not by the stars but by the Savior. I am truly thankful. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
**Tuesday, July 21: Under His Wings**

**Read Ruth 2:5-12**

As Boaz makes his way through the field, talking to his workers, his eye falls upon the figure of Ruth. "Who is she?" he asks. His workers quickly inform him that she is the widowed daughter-in-law of Naomi, a Moabite by birth. We cannot be sure that it was love at first sight, but Boaz certainly shows all the signs of it. He walks over to Ruth and says: "Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here – I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled" (vv. 8-9). Isn’t that the language of a man in love? This protective care and concern prompts Ruth to ask: "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?" (v. 10). Clearly, Boaz already knows of the return of Naomi and how her daughter-in-law Ruth has stayed at her side. He sums up his feelings in the words: "May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (v. 12). Some of you have stood for God despite great criticism from your families and friends. He has seen all your tears, all your heartache and all your sacrifices. And He promises you a perfect reward one day. Draw close to Him now and nestle beneath the shelter of His great wings. Look up and see how easily they cover you. Under His wings there is no further need for tears - just trust!

*O Father, how marvelous is Your timing. Just when I need it, You find a way of bringing me the greatest encouragement when all other doors are closed. You find a secret stair into my soul. Thank You, dear Father. I take this word from You. Amen.*

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

**Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:**

**Examine** what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (*Your values, your thoughts, your actions*)

**Apply** what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (*Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships*)

**Do** what God has said to you. (*What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?*)
Wednesday, July 22: Handfuls of Blessing

Read Ruth 2:13-17

Today we see how his protective concern leads Boaz to invite Ruth to join him during a meal break. "Come over here," he says: "Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar" (v. 14). A little later he offers her some roasted grain. Gets more interesting, doesn’t it? Once Ruth has completed her meal, she returns to her gleaning. Yet again, Boaz intervenes on her behalf by instructing his servants to let fall whole handfuls of grain so that she has plenty to gather. I love the way the Amplified Bible describes this moment: "And let fall some handfuls for her on purpose." "Handfuls – on purpose." What a beautiful expression. It is a picture of how God goes before each one of His toiling servants and lets fall "handfuls on purpose" - some tokens of His goodness, some special encouragement, some evidence of His care, that serves to keep us moving forward and keep our hearts bent on the divine task. Has there not been a time in your life when, overcome with the weight and burden of the day, you were about ready to give up the task God had given you, and suddenly He let fall some “handful on purpose”? Have you not experienced such a moment of divine encouragement? Perhaps it was a word in a sermon, a word from Scripture which was quickened by the Spirit to your heart, or perhaps a line in a devotional commentary. How gracious and loving is our Lord. Today He drops before you once again a “handful on purpose.” Be glad for it.

O Father, how easy it is to remember the discouragements and forget the encouragements. Forgive me for my proneness to do this. Thank You for every “handful on purpose” that comes my way. I bless You for them. In Jesus’ Name.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Thursday, July 23: On Reflection

Read Ruth 2:18-21

It is not difficult to imagine the kind of thoughts that may have been going through Naomi’s mind as she dwells on Ruth’s first day in the harvest field. How will she fare? What will the men say about her - a foreigner? Will she be successful in bringing home enough grain to help keep body and soul together? If Naomi had such fears then they are quickly laid to rest when Ruth returns with a whole ephah of barley. An ephah is no small measure. In today’s terms it is nearly ten kilograms. I can picture Ruth recounting the events of the day with great excitement - her whole being tingling with delight as she reflects on the way God has provided for her. Naomi’s questions come fast and furious: “Tell me everything! Whose field were you in? Where did you glean?” As soon as Ruth mentions the name of Boaz, Naomi’s heart leaps within her, and she begins to focus on the Lord in a way she has not quite done before. “The Lord bless him!” she says, referring of course to Boaz, “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead” (v. 20). She senses that Ruth’s meeting with Boaz has a providential feel about it. Boaz was a close relative who had the right to redeem Ruth and take her to be his wife. Together, Ruth and Naomi look back over the day and give thanks to God for the evidence of His guiding hand. They find, as you and I have found, that the evidences of the divine design are certainly there as we look back.

Father, I confess I am better at looking back and thanking You than I am at looking ahead and praising You. Forgive me for that. Help me learn from what I have experienced of Your guiding hand to trust You more in the future. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Friday, July 24: If We Only Believed

Read Ruth 2:22-23

Ruth continues to glean in the field of Boaz, secure in the knowledge that when the barley harvest is over she will be able to stay on and participate in the wheat harvest as well. Naomi is equally elated as she senses that Ruth's meeting with Boaz is no accident, but part of God's wonderful provision and care. One can imagine Naomi musing to herself: "How strange that Ruth should alight on the field owned by Boaz and that she should become the object of his personal interest and concern. And to discover, too, that Boaz has the right to redeem her and may well take her to be his wife."

Deep down in her heart Naomi knows that God is at work. Each one of us must recognize that in the ebb and flow of life's circumstances, an eternal God is quietly pursuing His purposes. Little, if anything, happens by chance in the God-ordained life. The Almighty is seeking to work out His purposes in the life of each one of us, and He is there in every emergency or situation that arises. He is there in the ups and downs, the ins and outs, the comings and goings. When you become aware that in the life of every one of His children God is bent on bringing to pass His perfect purposes, then that thought most certainly reduces anxiety and fear. If only we could grasp the truth of Romans 8:28 (KJV): "All things work together for good." Hardly a fear would then arise in our hearts. Our trouble is not that we do not believe God's Word; our trouble is we do not believe it enough.

My Father and my God, grant that Your Word might move from my intellect right into my heart. I don't want just to hold Your Word; I want it to hold me. "I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." In Jesus' Name I ask it. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)

Weekend, July 25-26

Review this week's devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?
Week Five

Monday, July 27: Good Advice

Read Ruth 3:1-5

During the time of the winnowing of the grain, it was customary for the workers to sleep on the threshing-floor. Naomi’s carefully formulated plan was designed to work precisely at this point. Her first piece of advice to Ruth is: “Wash and perfume yourself, and put on your best clothes” (v. 3). I am not sure that I know how to interpret her second piece of advice: “Don’t let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking” (v. 3). We are all familiar with the saying: “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach.” But this advice seems more in line with another proverb: “Never come between a man and his table.” Her third piece of advice is this: “When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do” (v. 4). Naomi knew that according to the laws of Israel, a widow was entitled to approach the nearest male relative and remind him of his obligation to take care of her. What a delightful picture this gives us of the relationship that exists between each one of us and our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Ruth was within her legal rights in approaching Boaz, so we, as God’s children, have a legal right to approach the throne of grace and avail ourselves of God’s obligation to meet our every need. We must be careful, however, that we do not mistake a need for a want. God is not under an obligation to give us everything we want, but He is under an obligation to give us everything we need.

Father, the thought that I have a legal right to approach Your throne and claim Your provision for my needs is awesome and breathtaking. Yet it is so. Help me to appropriate the rich inheritance I have in Christ. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Read Ruth 3:8-9

At midnight Ruth moves in quietly to where Boaz is lying, gently uncovers his feet, and proceeds to lie across them. Boaz is somewhat startled by this act and inquires anxiously: "Who are you?" "I am your servant Ruth," she replies, "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer" (v. 9). By this simple custom of lying at Boaz's feet, Ruth was really saying: "I belong to you and I want you to take care of me." Boaz is seemingly thrilled to be approached in this way for his response is certain and positive: "The Lord bless you – don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask" (vv. 10-11). We can safely assume from these words that at that moment he acceded to Ruth's request to cover her with his garment - the sign of his willingness to protect her and meet his obligations as a redeemer. The custom of covering a bride with a *tallith*, or fringed garment (Ezek. 16:8), is still part of Jewish matrimonial ritual to this day. What spiritual lesson can be drawn from this beautiful and inspiring picture of Ruth lying at Boaz's feet? This - the Church, though surrounded at this present moment by a deep and dense darkness, is nevertheless resting safely and securely at the Savior's feet. But this is not all. His covering of us by the robe of righteousness is also the pledge that one day He is going to join us to Himself in a marriage that will last for all eternity. And that marriage is destined never to end in divorce.

O Father, just to live with You in eternity would have been enough to delight my soul forever, but to be joined to You, to be one with You, to be part of Your Bride, is more than I deserve. Yet that is Your promise. I am eternally grateful. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

**Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:**

**Examine** what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (*Your values, your thoughts, your actions*)

**Apply** what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (*Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships*)

**Do** what God has said to you. (*What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?*)
Wednesday, July 29: “Moonlight Sonata”

Read Ruth 3:10-13

The more we get into the story of Ruth and Boaz, the more it appears that his heart was set on her right from the very start. He seems greatly relieved that she has approached him in this way, and the passage that occupies our attention today is a kind of “moonlight sonata” in which Boaz bears testimony to Ruth’s virtue, courage, and character. It would appear from his statement that there was a little age difference between them: “You have run after the younger men, whether rich or poor” (v. 10). We cannot be certain about this, but most commentators make that deduction from these words. One problem, however, faces the couple as they contemplate marriage. There is a closer relative than Boaz. Jewish law specifically required the next of kin, if he was single, to take on the responsibility of marrying a widow, but Boaz is second in line. He vows before the Lord that he will seek a settlement of the matter as quickly as possible, and then encourages Ruth to rest contentedly until the morning. Here we must ask: If there was a kinsman nearer than Boaz then why did not Ruth present herself to him? And why did not Naomi, who must have known there was a nearer kinsman than Boaz, steer Ruth in his direction? The answer will become clear as we reach the end of the story. For the moment, let us recognize in this the guiding and planning of the Almighty. The fate of most things precious is to grow familiar and lose their first bewildering thrill. May it never be so with the guidance of God.

O Father, give me, I pray, an ever increasing consciousness of the wonder of divine guidance. Let the fact that “nothing is too trivial for Omnipotence” continually amaze and astonish me. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Thursday, July 30: Wait!

Read Ruth 3:14-17
Boaz was well aware that Ruth’s visit to him at midnight could be misinterpreted. Anxious to preserve her good name, he encourages her to return to her place before the rest of the workers awaken and the general activity of the day begins. Before she leaves, however, he invites her to hold out her shawl, which he fills with six measures of barley. This was not something for which she had labored, the result of her gleaning, but a special gift. A later comment by Ruth indicates that the gift was intended not only for her but for Naomi as well: “He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed’” (v. 17). When Ruth finally reports to Naomi all that has happened in the night, and particularly the fact that there is a kinsman nearer than Boaz, Naomi gives her this advice: “Wait – For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today” (v. 18). It is not easy to wait, especially where matters of the heart are concerned. But no Christian is mature until he or she has learned to wait. Perhaps this is the word the Lord has for you today - wait. Are you feeling spiritually restless at the moment, straining at the leash and anxious to press ahead on some point that needs further thought and prayer? Well, here is His word again - wait. A purpose far wiser than you can ever conceive of is being worked out for you. A heart infinitely more loving than any other you will ever know is caring for you. A mind greater than yours is planning for you. So - wait!

Father, forgive me that so often I move ahead when I should wait, and rush around when I should be standing still. I have so much to learn in this matter. Help me, dear Father. Teach me the art of waiting. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Friday, July 31: Confident Trust

Read Ruth 3:18
We spend another day considering Naomi’s advice to Ruth following the latter’s midnight vigil with Boaz. Yesterday we focused on the fact that Naomi’s advice to Ruth centered on the word “wait.” Now we consider the basis on which that advice was given: “— the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.” Clearly, Naomi is convinced that Boaz will leave no stone unturned until the matter is brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Scripture does not tell us how much Naomi knew about Boaz, but we can safely assume that she would have known a good deal about him. It would be rare in Israel, where even today family life is still close and intimate, for near relatives not to know almost everything about one another. As we shall see, Naomi’s reading of the situation was quite correct for Boaz truly was a man who would do everything in his power to keep his promise and act according to his word. Who can fail to see in these words a picture of Christ, our heavenly Boaz, who at the beginning of time set about the task of overcoming every obstacle that stood in the way of our salvation? Such was His commitment to us that He endured the most horrifying experiences to woo us, and win us to Himself. I am reminded of an old preacher who was expounding the difficulties which Christ overcame in order to bring us safely to heaven. He put it in this quaint but intriguing way: “God thought it, Christ bought it, the Holy Spirit wrought it - thank God I’ve got it!” With all my heart I say - Amen!

Gracious and loving Father, when I contemplate the tremendous obstacles and difficulties which my Lord Jesus Christ overcame to save me, there are just no words to express my gratitude and praise. Thank You, dear Father. Thank You. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

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Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)

Weekend, August 1-2
Review this week’s devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?
Week Six

Monday, August 3: A Temporary Setback

Read Ruth 4:1-4

Ruth, the Gentile widow from Moab, is to become the bride of the wealthy Boaz of Bethlehem. Before the marriage can take place, however, a special meeting has to be arranged with Naomi’s next of kin so that the matter of redemption can be satisfactorily settled. The meeting is held at the gate of the city, the usual place for the elders to meet when resolving civic matters. Whatever was decided there usually became law. Boaz waits until the kinsman arrives and then proceeds to go into the details of Naomi’s situation. Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, had owned a field which Boaz wants to purchase. The next of kin has first claim, but Boaz asks if he wants to buy it. For a moment it appears that Boaz’s plan might be thwarted for the kinsman says: “I will buy it.” If the nearest relative bought the dead man’s land, Jewish law stated that he then had legal rights over the family. Should this happen now, Boaz would not be able to claim Ruth as his wife. Some might have turned away at this stage and said: “I have done all I can - there is nothing more I can do.” But not Boaz. In his heart burned a love that would not be dampened by difficulties. This is the wonderful thing about true love - it leaps over all obstacles, opposes every argument, and moves on relentlessly until it possesses the object of its affection and makes it its own. Our Savior’s love was of this kind also - but infinitely greater. He has argued the case on our behalf and won! Now we find ourselves owned by Him - forever.

O loving Savior, how can I sufficiently thank You for pleading my case in the courts of heaven and winning on the Cross my eternal freedom and redemption. What I feel is impossible to put into words. I love You Lord Jesus. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

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Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Tuesday, August 4: Ceremony of Redemption

Read Ruth 4:4-8

The ceremony through which a man passed when he was unwilling or unable to redeem something, and thus lost his legal claim, was both colorful and dramatic, and could be unpleasant. A widow, for example, who faced a hostile kinsman who did not want to fulfill his obligations under the law, would sometimes spit in his face and say: "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line" (Deut. 25:9). The law required that the man who was transferring his legal right should take off his shoe and hand it to the other person as an act of completion, and that such a transaction should take place in the full view of the public. Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done. How reminiscent this is of the work of Christ on the Cross. Paul says: "This thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26, KJV). He meant that our Lord was not put to death in one of the back streets of Jerusalem, away from the eyes of the multitudes, but was crucified on a hill for all to see. There was a divine purpose behind this. If Christ had died at the hand of a footpad in some quiet corner then His death would have exposed the evil of only one man - a criminal type of individual. The fact that Christ was officially put to death - the "best" people of the nation sought it - meant that their condemnation of Him was representative of the wishes of the whole human race. In the uplifted Cross we have a revelation of the real character of humanity.

Father, I see that the Cross exposes not just the sins of a few but the sins of all humanity. This means my sins are there also. But men did not take Your life away from You; You laid it down of Yourself. I am so grateful for this saving truth. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Read Ruth 4:9-12
After Boaz has called upon the assembled group to witness that he accepts the full responsibility of kinsman-redeemer to Naomi which, of course, involved taking Ruth to be his wife, the elders respond by reciting the traditional blessing: “May the Lord make this woman, who has now come into your home, as fertile as Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended!” (v. 11, Living Bible). If the elders had had any doubts about Boaz marrying a woman from Moab, then clearly those doubts had all been swept away. Their wish for Ruth is that she will be as blessed as were Rachel and Leah. Rachel and Leah were the two wives of Jacob, whose names are used in the Bible as a byword for fruitfulness. Rachel was regarded by the Jewish nation as one of their most illustrious personages, and to this day she is held in the highest esteem. It seems most strange that the elders should wish for Ruth to become as honored and revered as Rachel, especially when we remember that Ruth was a Moabitess, born in a land that was under God’s curse. What was it that produced this strange turn of events? Just one simple factor - Boaz. By linking himself to Ruth he brought about a change in her identity, recognized by all. This is precisely what Christ has done for us. Though we were classified as "children of wrath" and "excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise" (Eph. 2:3, KJV, 2:12), Christ has joined Himself to us and given us His own identity. We are no longer aliens - we belong to Him.

O God, how can I ever praise You enough for plucking me out of the world and giving me a new heart, a new identity, and one day a new name? Eternal praise and glory be unto Your precious Name. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Thursday, August 6: Wedding Day

Read Ruth 4:13-18

The last few verses of the book of Ruth inform us of the birth of Obed, and tell how Naomi cares for the child as Ruth and Boaz continue a normal family life in the agricultural setting of Bethlehem. Where was Ruth while the arrangements to redeem her were being made? She was waiting patiently in the house of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Remember Naomi’s words: “Wait — until you find out what happens” (3:18)? We have no reason to suppose that Ruth waited with anything other than absolute confidence in the ability of Boaz to accomplish what he promised. Where is our Savior at this present moment? Yes, of course - in heaven. And what is He doing there? Many things, but one thing in particular - He is attending to the arrangements for the wedding which is one day to take place between Himself and His Church. While this is being done, we, the bride of Christ here on earth, are expected to wait patiently for the day when He will come to receive us to Himself. Just as Ruth waited patiently to hear the voice of the maidens who, as was the custom, came to accompany the bride to her wedding, crying out “Behold the Bridegroom cometh,” so we too wait for that same cry that will herald the return of our Lord. We are going to a wedding in the skies which, by the way, is not called the wedding of the Church, but the wedding of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). And why? Because, as the old hymn so beautifully puts it: “The Lamb is all the glory, in Immanuel’s land.”

Lord Jesus Christ, help me wait for your coming down here on earth as You wait for it in heaven. Help me remember that the only reason You delay Your coming is that more might be gathered in. I wait with patience - but also with eager anticipation. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

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Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)
Friday, August 7: A Mess to a Message

Read Ruth 3:18

What is the book of Ruth really saying to us? This - through all the mistakes, blunders, heartaches, problems and difficulties of life, God is continually at work, guiding, governing, and controlling all our days. We have seen this thrilling truth illustrated in the life of the little family who, after leaving Bethlehem during a time of famine, made their way to Moab where they met with tragedy and disappointment. When, at last, Naomi, the only survivor from that original family, returns to Bethlehem in company with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, it is to discover that God is able to bring joy out of sorrow, delight out of disappointment and good out of evil. “Many things,” said Thomas Erskine, “appear irretrievable to us, but there is nothing irretrievable with God.” So learn to drop your anchor into the depths of this reassuring and encouraging revelation - out of every mess God is able to make a message. Never forget that the God and Father of Ruth, Boaz and Naomi, is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through our Kinsman-Redeemer has become our God as well. In heaven He is preparing for us a new home where we will abide with Him forever. Surely the four short chapters of the book of Ruth reveal so much to us of the goodness and sovereignty of God that our lives cannot help but be enriched. God’s way is always best; take it and you will obtain its rewards. Take another way, your own way, and all you will get are consequences.

Father, thank You for showing me in such great detail the truth that You have the power and ability to turn a tragedy into a triumph. Help me keep the truths I have learned ever before me. In Jesus’ Name I ask it. Amen.

[Source: Selwyn Hughes]

Journal your thoughts about this passage, and your response to God:

Examine what God has said to you and the condition of your heart. (Your values, your thoughts, your actions)

Apply what God has said to you and your walk with Jesus. (Decisions, plans, daily life, ministry, relationships)

Do what God has said to you. (What do you need to repent? What actions do you need to take?)

Weekend, August 8-9

Review this week’s devotional pages and your journal entries. What do you sense God is saying to you this week?