

The Promised Land



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 11: May 29– June 2, 2017

Day 1

May 29



Pray | Praise God for empowering us with His unchanging love

We are called to reflect God's unchanging love in the good times and the bad.

In the story of Ruth and Naomi we see beautiful images of God's love reflected in the behavior of the people in the story. The first image comes from Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law. Both women have recently lost their husbands, and Naomi is very vulnerable as a widow in a foreign land. Despite her mother-in-law's insistence that she return to her own family, Ruth refuses, and passionately devotes herself to her mother-in-law. As you read this first part of the story today, note the depth and completeness of Ruth's love for Naomi. As God's children we are loved with an even deeper and more unchanging love. We are called to demonstrate that love to everyone around us – family, friends and enemies.



Read | Ruth 1:1-18



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

How do you deal with stressful situations – situations when you are vulnerable? Do you react more like Naomi, Orpah or Ruth? Reflect on why.

How does God reveal his unchanging and unfailing love to you?

Who has God put in your life that needs to be “loved” back from bitterness, sorrow or isolation? What concrete step can you take to start that process?

Day 2

May 30



Pray | Ask God for the strength and desire to love generously

God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others.

God's plan for Naomi and Ruth begins to reveal itself immediately as they transition to life in Israel. They arrived at the time of the barley harvest, so Ruth immediately set out to work in the fields to gather grain to provide for herself and Naomi. The Bible, almost humorously, says that Ruth *happened* to come to the field of Boaz (Ruth 2:3), who was a family relative. God clearly put Ruth in that field. God also clearly prepared the heart and mind of Boaz, because he was unusually engaged and generous with Ruth, a woman and a foreigner. Boaz provided Ruth with protection, food and drink; everything she needed to overcome her vulnerabilities and care for herself and her mother-in-law. In Boaz we see a man who recognized that blessings from God were to be used to bless and care for those in need. We are called to continue this cycle of blessing – and bring greater glory to God through it.



Read | Ruth 1:19 – Ruth 2:23



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

God's law for the Israelites set the bar high when it came to caring for the less privileged in the community. Honorable people honored people in need and Boaz proved himself most honorable. Our society and our human nature promote the desire to bring honor and recognition to ourselves. How can you ensure that your efforts to help people in need produce greater glory to God – and not yourself?

How can bringing a community of believers together to serve those in need make the effort and investment even more effective?

Proverbs 16:9 says, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps". We see the truth of these words in the lives of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. How does the truth of these words encourage and empower you to be generous and act courageously?

Day 3

May 31



Pray | For the protection of the millions of refugees in our world

God calls us to take special care of the vulnerable and those in need.

In Naomi's day and part of the world, the situation for widows without sons was bleak. Widows in that situation basically became beggars. Naomi's decision to move back to Israel was wise for many reasons. The primary reason was that she was much less vulnerable in Israel because the God of Israel has a heart for the vulnerable and His law reflected that. In Lev 25:23-28 we see God making provision for the poor by giving a close relative, a kinsman redeemer, the right to buy land back on their behalf. In Deut 25:5-6 we see God making provision for widows, by requiring the brother of a dead man to marry his widow, and help her to have sons to care for her. That same God calls us to reflect His heart for the vulnerable by making special efforts to love and care for the poor, sick, orphans, refugees, and prisoners around us.



Read | Ruth 3, Lev 25:23-28, Deut 25:5-6



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Caring for family is right and good, but God calls us to go beyond that and care for others in need around us (Matthew 25:31-46). How are you reflecting the heart of God and caring for those in need around you?

The church of Jesus Christ is His hands and feet in the world today. How is your church doing at caring for the vulnerable in Jesus' name? How might you be able to help your church step it up?

In so many ways, the refugee crisis in our world is bringing the world to our front door. Do you see the path from caring for these refugees in Jesus' name to sharing your story and the gospel of Jesus Christ? Reflect on this unprecedented opportunity and how you can get involved.

Day 4

June 1



Pray | Give thanks to God for the sacrificial gift of His Son

We are called to reflect God’s sacrificial love – restoring those in need.

Through a series of courageous actions, Naomi and Ruth have laid two big challenges at the feet of Boaz. First, that he act as their kinsman redeemer and acquire the land that belonged to Elimelech, Naomi’s husband. Second, to marry Ruth in order that the family line of Elimelech could continue, and Naomi and Ruth could eventually have sons to care for them. Boaz demonstrates his true integrity and alignment with the God of Israel by following through on both requests – giving hope to Naomi and Ruth, where no hope had existed before. The hope provided by Boaz foreshadows the hope that Jesus brings to all humans through His death and resurrection. Our primary purpose on this earth is to share this gospel message of hope with our world, which often seems to have no hope. We are called to sacrificially consume every blessing from God to bless the world with this message.



Read | Ruth 4:1-13



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

God has blessed you with skills, time and money. Take a minute to reflect on where and how you're using those resources. Are they being consumed bringing glory to God or glory and security to you? What changes might be needed to better align with God's purpose for your life?

Think back to a point in your life when you were "redeemed" like Naomi and Ruth were redeemed by Boaz, or when you were the "redeemer" like Boaz. What emotions are experienced in a situation like that? How can a situation like that bring both parties closer to Jesus Christ?

Is the hope provided by Jesus' redeeming death and resurrection real to you – does it shape the priorities and activities of your life? If not, be assured that Jesus loves you and that this hope is for you, if you choose to accept it. If this hope is already real for you – give God praise and recommit your purposes and priorities to sharing that hope with others.

Day 5

June 2



Pray | Ask God to help you to live with an eternal perspective

Eternal joy and peace is the inheritance of all of God's children.

Can you imagine the overwhelming joy, happiness and peace that must have filled the heart of Naomi as she held her first grandson? Despite her bitterness and doubt, God did not desert her and her family. God provided redemption for Naomi in the form of two people who acted with courage and integrity – Ruth and Boaz. Through those same two people God also provided redemption for the world – as Jesus was born to this family line. The same joy, happiness and peace that Naomi experienced are promised to everyone who makes Jesus Christ their Lord. On the path to that eternal joy we too will be called to act courageously and with integrity – reflecting the heart, and living out the priorities, of our Lord. It will not always be easy, but God promises strength for the journey and the ultimate reward in the end. Praise God!



Read | Ruth 4:13-22, Matt 1:1-6



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on the following questions.

Notice in Ruth 4:14 that the women that surrounded Naomi first gave God the credit for Naomi's redemption – not Ruth or Boaz. What is the significance of this in your life?

What does living a life of courage and integrity, in alignment with God's purposes look like in your mind? Are you living that life? Why / why not?

Who has God put in your life that needs to be redeemed? What steps do you need to take to begin/continue that process?

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