



Series:	Reference:	Title:	Date:
Ruth	Ruth Chapter 4	Out of the Jungle	9.24.17
<b>Website Writeup:</b>			
Naomi may've felt lost, but she's come out of the jungle. And blessing erases the sting of suffering. This happens for her in Chapter 4, which led into the healing found in Christ far into the future!			

## Color Changes in text indicate slide changes

**UPG Prayer of the Day...** (replaced by CG Testimony: Adam Schwamburger)

### Sermon...

Outline chapters 1-3 briefly...

*Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.*

*2 Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. 3 Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. 4 I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said.*

*5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."*

*6 At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it." 7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.) 8 So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.*

*9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!"*

*11 Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in*

*Bethlehem. 12 Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."*

*13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Then he went to her, and the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a Kinsman (Guardian)-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."*

*16 Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him. 17 The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

*18 This, then, is the family line of Perez:  
Perez was the father of Hezron,*

*19 Hezron the father of Ram,  
Ram the father of Amminadab,*

*20 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,  
Nahshon the father of Salmon,*

*21 Salmon the father of Boaz,  
Boaz the father of Obed,*

*22 Obed the father of Jesse,  
and Jesse the father of David.*

We end this series on Ruth today asking ourselves, what did God want us to learn? Why did he put this in Scriptures – after all, it's just a love story between two people.

In Indonesia I had a 78 Toyota Land-cruiser Jeep. I could drive it through rivers & over mountains, and did. I got it because the Sultan who'd adopted my wife & I as his children had originated from a very remote part of South Sumatra to where there were no roads. It took a day to get there, and when the road ended it was basically a footpath through the jungle which we blazed in the jeep once. But on the way back upon reaching the road, there was a landslide which blocked our way. We had to double back & four wheel through the uncharted jungle & through rivers for hours to find our way out. I was overwhelmed with the jungle around me, but I had to trust that if I just kept moving, I would reach my destination, it was an act of faith. I have to admit that my bravado at the time was running dry, and I was legitimately scared.

The interesting thing about the book of Ruth is the story starts with Naomi & ends with Naomi. Beginning with her despair & ending with her joy. It's named Ruth, but in many ways, it's about Naomi. We start in Chapter 1 with Naomi overwhelmed with the jungle around her. Setback after setback, she's taken to a foreign land. Husband dies. Sons marry two Moabites who never bear her grandchildren. Sons die & she's left with one foreign daughter in law; she couldn't even support herself let alone another. They'd lose



property, inheritance & risked fading off into oblivion without a Kinsman (Guardian)-Redeemer; the family name in jeopardy of being erased from time. She sees no one to bring her out of this. In her own words, she went away full, only to come back empty; life was bitter for her. She was lost in the proverbial jungle of life.

In Chapter 2 we see a change occur as Boaz steps into the scene - Naomi's a bit excited. The clouds started to part for her as she sees God providing a possible Kinsman (Guardian)-Redeemer. But, there's uncertainty at the end of the chapter since he makes no concrete moves towards Ruth, and we're left wondering what'll happen. The tension is great. And as we read, it's like the children's movie, *The Never Ending Story*, about a kid reading a book, but experiencing the story in real time along with the characters he's reading about. He gets so enthralled he constantly slams the book when he sees the characters making wrong choices, or danger down the road.

In Chapter 3 Naomi urges Ruth to take the step to make her intentions known to Boaz. She does, but Boaz says, there's another guy ahead of me! But we don't want another guy ahead of him! Boaz & Ruth are a good match! It's good story telling - taken along this jungle road with all its twists & turns, not knowing what's around the bend, finding hurdles all the way! And, still we're left wondering again what will happen at the end of chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 Boaz does this dance of negotiating property & the bride-ship of Ruth with the other possible Kinsman (Guardian)-Redeemer at the city gate. In the middle of it the guy says, "Sure, I'll do it," and we slam our Bible shut & say, '*NO! We want Boaz & Ruth together!*' Like in *Bridget Jones Diary* - the whole movie your screaming for Bridget to go to the good guy, but she always chooses the jerk. But then, the other guy changes his tune & we cheer! 'Yay, Boaz & Ruth are together!' And, Boaz is handed the guys sandal, raises it up & shouts, "I'm staking claim!" And they say, "Yeah, land & lady, you go Boaz!"

This should end there right? Happy ending. The name of her dead husband perpetuated. She & Naomi find financial security, Ruth gets married - it's all so romantic. But Ruth still needs a baby - it would just round out the story & make for the perfect Hollywood ending. And, in verse 13 they consummate the marriage & the result is a strapping baby boy, and you want the whole town to scream, 'Yeah Boaz & Ruth!' But they don't....they say, 'Yay Naomi!' The boy's laid on Naomi's lap & taken care of by her! They say a son's born to Naomi, not Ruth!?! Why the focus on Naomi?

In many ways Naomi's the real central figure. She's become the object which teaches not to doubt Gods providence when you see nothing but the jungle around you. The person at the end of the day who's blessed beyond her wildest dreams. If she looks in hindsight on her life over the past decade or more, she can trace a line of blessings directly from God. In the move back, in a foreign daughter-in-law, in a 'chance' meeting of Ruth & Boaz, in the conversation at the city gate, and in the child laid on her lap.



I had a friend whose family took in a homeless woman. They cared for her for years, taking that responsibility on themselves, not knowing what it would bring, or how it would end up. Shouldering a thousand details of hardship this brought them. Husband & wife laying in bed at night having hundreds of conversations wondering if they'd made a mistake. The financial burden, emotional drain, the fears which blossomed when things weren't working out. And as they traveled through that jungle of relationship together, the homeless woman eventually became a nurse, and now that the wife's stricken with a debilitating disease, that homeless woman is a free live-in caretaker.

The women of the town had said to Naomi, your daughter-in-law is better than seven sons! That homeless woman, brought into that home almost two decades ago, is now better than 7 sons to that family. Who knows what God's doing in the midst of the jungle of your life?

So, as we lay there at night saying to ourselves, what in the world have I gotten myself into? Or, I'd be better off dead. Or, how am I gonna ever get ahead? Or, why did she leave me? Or, why did they have to die? Or, did I make the right decision? Remember these stories, because remembering's what sustains us. Remember God's promise to you, his ultimate plan for all things, what He's done for you. Like in Joshua chapter 4 when God commanded him to have 12 men gather 12 stones as a remembrance; stones which reminded Israel how God had stopped the river Jordan for them.

One of your remembrance stones may be Philippians 1:6, "*Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*" God's moving even when you're in the middle of the jungle & the sun's going down! He's carrying you onto completion through your hardships.

Did you ever watch Bear Grylls? Who gets dropped in the wilderness with nothing but a knife & has to find his way out. Whenever he's dropped he always takes the high ground, climbing a tree, or a hill, to see around him. Height gives you an advantage, enabling you to see where you're going.

Scripture seems to be replete with mountaintop experiences; Moses, The receiving of the Ten Commandments, Elijah, The Transfiguration of Christ, The Great Commission & many others. It seems like God throughout Scripture brings his people to a mountaintop saying, "See, this is where we're going together." Notice in the Gospels how many times Christ took a seat on, or a walk up a mountain - quite often.

The birds' eye view can help you say, this isn't so bad; I'm going to get out of this. It gives you direction. That's exactly what remembering does for you. One very good practice in times of hardship is to memorize Scripture; store it in your heart. Let it filtrate through your brain & heart rooting itself in your psyche. When the outside world looks horrible, let the promises of God lift you up over the trees & give you hope.

Listen to Dr. Martin Luther King sharing his Mountaintop view in a speech he gave in Memphis on April 3, 1968. Notice the promises of God from Scripture which **pour out of**

him: *“I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn’t matter with me now, because, I’ve been to the mountaintop. And I don’t mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He’s allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over. And I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land. And I’m happy, tonight. I’m not worried about anything. I do not fear any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.”*

Dr. King was assassinated the next day, but his mountaintop experience lives on with people still struggling to fully realize his dream. A dream expressed in his own words in the rest of that speech which in part read, *“I have a dream...where little black boys & black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys & white girls and walk together as sisters & brothers.”* Dr King led from the mountaintops.

This story of Ruth, or maybe better said, Naomi, doesn’t stop there, because the author raises us up over the trees. He lifts us out of the jungle focusing our eyes on the horizon. He gives us a glimpse of the road which is coming; the destination we’ll finally reach by way of hardship. This story ends, not just with an old woman happy to get a grandson & property redeemed, although that’s good. It ends with the author reminding us of what happened years down the road as the result of a few people back in Bethlehem years before. Obed was the father of Jesse, Jesse the father of David, **which all culminates in the birth line of Jesus Christ - the worlds Kinsman (Guardian)-Redeemer.**

So, this story points us not down to earthly romance, but up to heavenly romance. If we wrapped this series up looking down at the small town of Bethlehem, and a few jubilant Jews, it wouldn’t be complete. This story points us to the sacrificial King who came as a result of the hardships & joys of a few people living in a small town. This story, without saying it, points us in more ways than one, to Christ himself. However, so often we look down at our current circumstances, never lifting our chin to the horizon & future hope! Because, this story doesn’t end there still, what does Jesus point us to?

John 10:10b, *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*

Romans 8:28, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Revelation 21:4, *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

We see Naomi finding life in abundance, her tears wiped away & joy surrounding old age. A prophetic glimpse into the providence of God & his coming provision for us. Future hope. She couldn’t see the greater plans God, not only had for her, but for the world through her. Consider these few verses:





*Psalm 33:11, But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

*Proverbs 19:21, Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*

*Isaiah 37:26, "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass..."*

*Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

That's why God has this story in the Canon of Scripture, to remind us we have a God who plans. We have a God who's not absent from the picture, planning not only situations in our lives, but his ultimate purposes for the world. Martin Luther King knew that. It was his hope with eyes focused on the Promise. We need to be reminded that even over thousands of years, over historical details too numerous for us to grasp, God's hovering & moving in time to orchestrate his great plan of establishing his kingdom in full. This story pushes us to think about the end when Christ will reign over the heavens & earth in full glory! The Scriptures start in a garden & end in a city...Christ is building his Kingdom - the best is yet to come. There's purpose to our suffering, Christ has honored you & I with the burden of being his hands & feet as we seek justice & mercy, all the while loving people into this Kingdom.

*I will end with; Psalm 25:14, "The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."*

We may still be in the jungle, but God's word, including stories like Ruth, lift us up over the treetops letting us see His plan & promises before us. When we walk with God He confides in us, telling us His secrets. Giving us a glimpse into where He's going. Imagine God being so close to you, loving you enough he'd reveal his plan to you! It gives purpose to our suffering & honor to our struggle. Which is all a good transition to our next sermon series which we will begin when I return from Beirut...



## COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

Blued Typeface is meant as notes for CGI's. Don't feel the need to get to all the questions below, just what you feel creates conversation well. You don't need to print these questions out, just use it as your own notes to ask questions & lead discussion. Begin by asking the group to recap the story of Ruth up to chapter 4, let them share...

1. **Icebreaker:** If you were stranded on a desert island, what three items, and three people would you want to have with you? And why?
2. Ruth offers herself to Boaz in marriage. The temptation to take that opportunity & manipulate the other man out of the picture could've been there, but Boaz follows cultural protocol in faith that God will do what's best.
  1. Have you ever stood before an opportunity you really wanted, with the temptation to manipulate it to your own end?
  2. Did you? Or did you take the risk of losing it in faith God would do what's best?
3. Would you say Naomi was blessed? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever felt despairing like Naomi did earlier on, lost in the jungle, not seeing an end to your suffering?
5. How do we live in faith even when we feel lost in the jungle? Are there verses which help?
6. God's made us to be able to withstand so much, the effects of suffering are 'forgotten' when blessing comes. Do you have a testimony to that end? (for instance we see this in childbirth) How did blessing erase past suffering?
7. Have someone read Hebrews 4:14-16, How do passages like this link us with Jesus in the process of our suffering & give hope?
8. Was MLK's speech useless since he got assassinated the next day? Why or why not?
9. Which of these verses makes you most hopeful? **Challenge them to commit at least one to memory this week. You may want to print these out for them beforehand**
  1. **John 10:10b**, *I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*
  2. **Romans 8:28**, *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
  3. **Revelation 21:4**, *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*
  4. **Psalm 33:11**, *But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*
  5. **Proverbs 19:21**, *Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*
  6. **Isaiah 37:26**, *"Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass..."*
  7. **Jeremiah 29:11**, *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*
  8. **Psalm 25:14**, *"The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."*
  9. **Philippians 1:6**, *"Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*