

Redeemed

The Worst of Times
Ruth 1:1-18
August 2, 2015

In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab... **-Ruth 1:1**

I. ISRAEL IN THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

- A time when “everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 21:25).
- A time of distress and testing, when a cycle of rebellion, judgment, cries for mercy, and deliverance was the order of the day (Judges 3:7-11).
- Judges 17-21 demonstrate that the Israelites had comprehensively lost their way and were now no better than the nations they had displaced in the Promised Land.

II. A WANDERING FAMILY

- Elimelech (God is my King) left Bethlehem (the house of bread) for a pagan land because there was no food in Judah (vs. 1).
- In Moab they found food, but they did not find rest or peace (vss. 3-5).

III. A RETURN TO THE LAND OF PROMISE

- Naomi returns to Judah not out of conviction, but because Judah has now received God’s blessing. Her loyalty is weak, but Ruth’s is strong (vss. 15-17).

IV. REDEMPTIVE HISTORY IN THE MAKING

- In spite of the sin, hardships, judgment and emotional pain, God has been at work in the life of Naomi and in His plan of redemption (Ruth 4:17; Micah 5:2-3; Matt. 1:1-16).

KNOW: God is always working out his sovereign plan. That plan includes you, and it may include some hardships—but even our emptying is under God’s gracious control.

DO: Trust in the work of God in your life.

Suggested Reading:

A Path Through Suffering, by Elisabeth Elliot

How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering & Evil, by D.A. Carson

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please read Ruth 1:1-18

1. What do you feel when you read (or hear) Ruth chapter one? Sorrow? Anger? Pity? What theme is the author developing?
2. What kind of people were Elimelech and Naomi? God-fearers? Were they teaching their children well? What do their actions tell us about their relationship with God?
3. Naomi doesn’t seem to want her daughters-in-law with her as she returns to Israel. Why? Anything we can learn from this in relation to ways in which we try to hide our own sin?
4. Bad things happen to good people. Bad things also happen to Christian people. Why?
5. Ruth shows incredible loyalty to Naomi. Why is it, do you think, that this type of loyalty is so uncommon in our world today?
6. As you look back at verses 1-18, what theme is the author developing?