

LESSON AIM: You can choose to become a member of God's family.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Ruth 1:1-22

REVIEW QUESTIONS: (Ok, who remembers from last week's lesson...)

- What was the name of the man with super-human strength?
- What were the two or three areas in his life that led to his downfall? (Compromise, anger, lust)
- Can someone explain last week's Bible verse in their own words? (James 1:19)

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever felt like a stranger or an outsider? What you need is someone who will come alongside you and help you become part of the group. This is what Naomi felt like in a strange land where she didn't know anyone and was very lonely. It wasn't always like this for Naomi. Sometimes bad things happen in life, and circumstances that are out of control change our lives, but God is always in control and always has a plan. (Maybe mention the recent hurricane and flooding in Houston August 2017)

LESSON – Progression of Events

1. **During the time of the judges, the land of Judah suffered from famine, but not the land of Moab. (Ruth 1:1)** Famine is where there is no food or water, and people must leave or relocate or they will die. The Bible tells us that the people were not following God's ways at this time. (Judges 21:25)
2. **In search of food, Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons chose to leave Bethlehem and go to Moab. (verse 2)** The distance between Bethlehem and Moab was about 60 miles. Moab was an enemy nation of Israel.
3. **When Elimelech died, Naomi had to face life as a single mother. (verse 3).** That was very difficult in those days. You really couldn't just look for employment ads in the newspaper or on-line. (Naomi means Pleasant, Delightful, Lovely")
4. **Naomi's sons, Mahlon and Chilion grew up and married Moabite girls, Orpah and Ruth. (verse 5)**

The Moabites did not know the God that Naomi worshipped. They worshipped many false gods. The Bible tells us about the one true living God (**1 John 4:10**). He is perfect in every way. He lives in Heaven. It is He who created the world and everything in it, even you and me. He made you and me. He made you just as you are, and loves you very much. (***1 John 4:10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.***) Naomi knew and worshipped the true God. But the Moabites didn't know Him at all. They worshipped false gods.

5. **Some years later both Mahlon and Chilion died, leaving Ruth and Orpah widowed just like Naomi.** (Their names meant "sick" and "pining – which means wasting away")
6. **Hearing that the famine in Judah had ended, Naomi decided to return home. (verse 6-7)** [Even though life had been difficult, God had faithfully provided for Naomi. If you know that Jesus is your Savior, you also can know that no matter how difficult time may be for you, God will meet your needs just as He met Naomi's. (**Philippians 4:19** – "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus")
7. **Naomi insisted that her daughters-in-law return to their homes. (Verse 11-13** Orpah chose to go back to her father's house in Moab, but Ruth chose to remain with Naomi. (verse 14)
8. Upon returning to Bethlehem, Naomi was welcomed back, but Ruth was a stranger and didn't know anyone. But she knew they needed to survive, so she needed to find work. Ruth offered to work as a gleaner (someone who gathers the grain that falls on the ground after the workers are done) to support her and her mother-in-law.
9. The field where Ruth asked permission to glean "happened" to belong to Boaz (a wealthy and

honorable man of Bethlehem, and a relative of Elimelech, Naomi's husband. **(Ruth 2:3)** Boaz asked his servant who this young woman was. **(2:4-7)**

- 10. The servant told of Ruth's hard work and kindness to Naomi. (2:11-12)** [When you work hard and do a good job, people notice you! People had heard about this strange new person and her kindness to her mother-in-law. Even though she was a stranger, she already had a good reputation! Ruth was faithful to Naomi and worked hard to support her. God worked through Boaz to reward Ruth for her selfless kindness to Naomi and her trust in the Lord of Israel.]
- 11. Boaz promised Ruth protection from rude remarks and actions, and he encouraged her to continue gleaning in his fields. (2:8-10)** After having lunch with Ruth, Boaz instructed his men to leave extra grain for her to gather. **(2:14-16)**
- 12. Ruth returned home with what she had gleaned and with what she had saved from her lunch with Boaz. (2:17-18)** Naomi excitedly told Ruth that Boaz was her relative. **(2:19-22)** ["Kinsman" or "close relative" is often used to mean "one who has the right to redeem" (buy back by a paying price). The Hebrew culture obligated some qualified relative to care for a family member who had suffered loss. As kinsmen qualified to "redeem" was to buy back his poor relative from slave status or buy back the poor relative's property, lost through indebtedness. The expression "kinsman redeemer" referred to a qualified relative.]
- 13. Ruth continues to glean in the field belonging to Boaz until the end of the harvest season. (2:23)** Naomi counseled Ruth in how to act toward Boaz, and gave her specific instructions on what she should do **(Ruth 3:1-9)** [It's important to get advice from people in our lives who are older and can share their wisdom with us and help us on our journey.]
- 14. Boaz was pleased and ready to do all that he could do for Ruth (3:10-18)** He also checked with another, closer relative to see if he desired to "redeem" both the land that belonged to Naomi and her daughter-in-law **(Ruth 4:5)**, but the other relative did not want to, which allowed Boaz to be the kinsman redeemer.
- 15. With ten elders as witnesses, Boaz did what was necessary to purchase the land and indicate his desire to marry Ruth. (4:9-10)** [Boaz wanted to make Ruth his very own. She would no longer be a stranger. He would come alongside and make her a part of his family. What Boaz did for Ruth is a beautiful picture of what the Lord Jesus did for us. He came to earth to redeem (purchase) you and me to make us a part of His family.]

Climax

Ruth no longer the stranger and outsider, but became the wife of Boaz, her redeemer. (4:13)

Ending

1. God blessed Boaz and Ruth by giving them a son. (4:13)
2. Naomi joyfully cared for her grandchild (4:14-16)
3. God honored Ruth, placing her in King David's line (4:17-22)

MEMORY VERSE: (Jeremiah 29:11)

**I know the plans I have
For you declares the Lord,
Plans to prosper you, and not to harm you,
Plans to give you a hope and a future.**

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me
And I will listen to you.

Jeremiah 29:11-12 (NIV)