

Ruth 1 Famine and Faith

1. Have you read the Book of Ruth before?
Have you received a sermon series from Ruth before?
Are you looking forward to hearing the Word of God from the Book of Ruth?
2. Verse 1 wants us to know the historical context.
Where do we discover what things were like when the judges ruled?
If you want a snapshot, read Judges 2vv10,16,19
Which of these words might be a fair description of the times of the judges?
Serenity brutality immorality faithfulness chaos
3. The people must have asked: Where in the world do we find hope in all this chaos? At the end of the Book of Judges, we are given a clue to the answer.
Read Judges 21v25. Where might hope be found?
4. The Book of Ruth takes us to the little town of Bethlehem in Judah.
Which old Bethlehem family might be the source of hope in despair?
Read vv1-5 How hopeful does it sound in the first ten years?
Is it true that hope with God takes a while to be realised?
5. Should Elimelech have taken his family to Moab?
Does God work his plans anyway?
Should the sons have married foreign wives?
Does God work his plans anyway?
Is it right that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose?
6. When did Naomi decide to return to Bethlehem? How was she generous to her daughters-in-law on the road?
7. Why was there much kissing, clinging, weeping and talking on the road?
Is this good and helpful? Should you do more of it?
There is no question 8.



Ruth 1 Where do you look for hope in times of trouble

9. Read vv.16-17.
'is there any more radical decision in all the memories of Israel?'
Did Ruth realise following Naomi was a decision for a lifetime?
Is deciding to join God's people always such a big decision?
10. Read vv.18-22.
Was the return of Naomi to Bethlehem a happy moment?
Can you remember moments, maybe in public, when you have had to face up to setbacks and disappointments, griefs and shame?
11. How would you express yourself at such times?
 explain how God has brought calamity upon you
 don't mention God at all in your explanation
 say nothing and ignore the issues
 suggest that the Lord Almighty has dealt harshly with you
 suggest that all the setbacks were the doing of the devil, not God
 look for anything positive and don't mention anything negative
Which of these does Naomi say?
Is she being truly faithful to God in saying these things?
12. Some of our pains seem unbearable.
Some of our circumstances seem so unjust.
Some of our questions will remain unanswered now.
Naomi testifies to this at the same time as showing her clear belief that God is the provider of everything. The Lord Almighty has given all of this.
Should we not witness like this if we experience hardship?
Isn't it more helpful to the tender hearted and the broken hearted?
Does Christian witness in the West lack credibility and power because it is too triumphalist or one-eyed when it comes to the providence of God (NB. God provides good times and bad times)?
13. Did Jesus think his suffering was an important part of his witness to the world? Does Christianity spread when Christians suffer well?

PRAY
 - Pray for refugees in this world
 - Thank God that he chose a lovely woman's experience of bitterness and a brave young foreign widow to provide the start of the answer to the chaos, brutality and immorality of the days of the judges
 - Pray for more to make lifelong decisions to join Christ's people
 - Pray for faithfulness and generosity of spirit to others