

Ruth 4 Where on earth to look for hope?

1. Have you ever been to the Courts? What did you think of the system of justice?
2. In ancient Israel, the court could be convened with ten elders from the city as witnesses at the main gate of the town. In vv.1-2, can you see how Boaz is determined to have a prompt and proper hearing for Naomi's case?
3. In vv.3-4, Boaz discovers whether the closer kinsman redeemer is ready to buy out Naomi's lost land. First this is a property matter concerning Elimelech's inheritance, in a system that enables families to reclaim the family land even when one generation's foolishness or bad fortune may have lost it, by the paying out of a kinsman redeemer. Do you think Boaz is surprised when the closer kinsman says 'yes please'?
4. In vv.5-6, Boaz introduces the existence of Ruth, which seems to change things completely. Why does the other kinsman give way to Boaz? Has Boaz carefully thought things through in advance again? How carefully do you think things through in advance? Are you wise when it matters?
5. The court case is completed by the exchange of sandals, the declaration of completed business by Boaz and the speech of the witnessing elders. Read vv.7-12. Rachel and Leah were Jacob's wives, the ancestral mothers of Israel. How is Ruth like them? Why did Rachel mean a lot to Bethlehem people? (Gen.35vv16-20)
6. Perez and Tamar were ancestors of the people of Bethlehem. Read Gen. 38. What is similar about the story of Tamar and the story of Ruth? What does this tell us about the way God acts in order to achieve his purposes?

Ruth 4 Where do you look for hope in times of trouble

7. How have the prayers of Naomi and Boaz been answered? (1v9, 2v12) How were the prayers of the elders and the women (4vv11-16) eventually answered through the offspring of Ruth and Boaz?
8. Read vv.18-22. Is it or isn't it rather amazing that an account of one poor family's faithful toil and struggle turns into a tale of how God provides the king for his people?
9. Compare Matthew 1:1-6 with vv.18-22. The book of Ruth records one stage in the unfolding of God's great plan. What was the end point towards which the whole plan was moving? Is this where you place your hope?
10. How clear is it to you that this plan is to be worked out in the ordinary lives and struggles of God's people?
11. What have you learnt from the Book of Ruth?
About God's faithfulness? His kindness?
His sovereign control over the events of world history?
 - Thank the Lord for his provision in so many ways
 - Pray for wisdom and perseverance as you take your place in God's plans and purposes for his world
 - Pray for a good attitude towards immigrants
 - Pray for enthusiasm and inspiration to continue reading Old Testament books as well as New
 - Pray for our justice system in England, that it may not lose any more of its moorings in the Bible
 - Praise the Lord