

“Discouragement gives rise to love”

Ruth 1:1-22 & Philippians 2:5-8.

Not just a book for women.

- Historical context
- Situational context
- Theological context
- Names, places and their significance.

A dilemma: To stay or not to stay

Verses 1 to 2

A second dilemma: To marry or not to marry

Verses 3 to 4

But death could not be avoided

Verse 5

But what about Orpah and Ruth?

God provides. Decision to return.

Verses 6 and 7

Prodigal daughter? Opportunist? Or the obvious thing to do?

A change of mind.

Verses 8 and 9 (10 to 18)

God provides again. A determined reluctance.

Verses 9 to 18

But only two return.

A surprised welcome home.

Verse 19

Anger? Frustration? Or discouragement?

Verses 20 and 21

Empty? Isn't Ruth with you?

Scene set for God to lovingly provide again.

Verse 22

A Bible Study – Ruth 1:1-22

No:1

Pray: Ask God to teach you of Himself and your relationship with Him from his word.

Background: Ruth was written during the time of King David around 1000BC but the events took place during the time of the judges from around 1150BC to 1120BC. Judges 17-21 (e.g. 21:25) gives you an insight into what God's people were like at the time into which the story of Ruth stands in contrast. It is worth while reading these chapters beforehand and also Deuteronomy 23:3-6 and Exodus 6:6-8 to understand the story. It's also worth noting that Jews have traditionally read Ruth during the time of the Festival of the Tabernacles (when we celebrate Pentecost). It is a festival that remembered God graciously providing for Israel as they wandered in the wilderness post their exodus from Egypt to the promised land, despite what they were like. Before reading Ruth read these passages and discuss the background with your group: what you found interesting, your insights and thoughts.

Read the passage: Ruth 1:1-22

Questions:

1. Why would Elimelek take his wife and two sons and leave Judah? What do you think he was hoping to avoid? Do you think he lacked faith in God by not staying like others did? What of Mahlon and Kilion – was it wise for them to marry Moabite women? Do you think they would have been better off staying in Judah?
2. Do you think there is a kind of “Prodigal son” moment for Naomi in verses 6 and 7 or is she being opportunist or realising this is what she should do?
3. Read verses 8 to 18. Do you think it was a right thing for Naomi to change her mind and encourage Orpah and Ruth to return to their homes and gods? What is encouraging about Ruth's response?
4. Share your thoughts as to what might be meant by the women exclaiming “Can this be Naomi”?
5. What do you learn about Naomi, her thoughts about God and her relationship with Him from verses 19 to 22? Are they justified in your opinion? Has she underestimated the goodness of God?
Have you felt like Naomi at times? What could you remind yourself about God?

Conclude with prayer:

In preparation for next week's Bible Study read ahead Ruth Chapter 2.