

Ruth 1

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles and go with me to the book of Ruth. You will find that small book tucked between Judges and 1 Samuel in the English Bible, English translation.

If you are in a Jewish text, it will not be there, but that is where we have it. And I'm thankful for where it is in the English scripture. It is part of the writings of the Jewish, so it's not included in the history or the prophets in the writings.

But I'm thankful for where it is here for us, the book of Ruth. We'll be in Ruth chapter 1 this evening. We will look at the entire chapter of Ruth chapter 1. As you know, on Sunday evenings in particular, here recently Sunday evenings and Wednesday evenings, we're just making our way through the Old Testament.

We began almost seven years ago. I'm about to start the seventh round of Genesis 1. And we have got to here.

We have just finished up probably one of the hardest books, which we have looked at together. Even if you include Sunday mornings and all the times that we've been in the Word together, which namely is the book of Judges.

[1 : 15] The book of Judges is a very difficult book. You don't turn to the book of Judges if you want to feel good about things. You turn to the book of Judges if you want to see things as they are. It almost pulls the bandage back and shows you the rawness of the wound and what the world looks like.

If you remember in the book of Judges, there's that downward spiral where things just progressively get worse. And I know that we've just finished recently this past Wednesday evening, finished the book of Judges, but it bears recapping in light of where we're at.

If you remember that in the book of Judges, that it does not just show us the history of the nation of Israel, but rather it shows us the history of mankind. That what was true during the time of the book of Judges is something that we say is true throughout man's history.

Man is not progressing. Man is digressing. The further we move away from Eden, the further we move away from what God created us to be, the more downward we go. And the great theme of the book of Judges was, in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

And we've seen how the nation of Israel chose to deliver themselves even through the judge which God would raise up, and that deliverance was temporary at best, sometimes not even full. And being temporary, when the judge died, inevitably every man went back to doing what was right in his own eyes.

[2 : 32] And as we leave the book of Judges, we're kind of downcast, because they have entered into civil war, just about completely annihilated one of the tribes, the tribe of Benjamin. They have been fighting with one another, and some of the most hideous events in all of Scripture are recorded for us there in the last couple of chapters of the book of Judges.

And its theme is, because every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. Now, we have hope, because we know that the first king that is called out of the people of God comes from the tribe of Benjamin.

We know that. God has a purpose and a plan. But we dare not get lost in books of the Bible, especially like the book of Judges, and think that God has lost control.

What we see is that God is raising up and continuing to use, in spite of man, man for his purposes. What we have recorded in the last few chapters of the book of Judges is kind of a synopsis of what it looked like, what transpired, how wicked they had become.

And I'm thankful that when we turned a page, we turned a page to the book of Ruth, because this, too, is something that happened during the days of the Judges, as we will see in just a moment.

[3 : 47] And I'm thankful, if you remember this morning, I said, and I didn't do it intentionally, but it has great application to this evening, that it seems in those darkest moments, God shines the brightest lights.

One of the bright lights that we find in the Old Testament is the book of Ruth. That's one of the bright lights we find. And it follows, I think, the book of Judges intentionally.

Now, I know, and I always, you know, I said in the Jewish text, it's not that way. So in the Bible that Jesus would have opened up, the Old Testament, it would not have been here, but they would have read it in light of it being here, because this is when these things take place.

We don't know who the author of the book of Ruth is. Some have speculated, and probably rightfully so, that it is probably Samuel. We don't even really know the date of its writing, though, when we go to the very last verse of the book of Ruth, it is the only book that ends with a genealogy and ends with a name.

And at the end of the book of Ruth, we see that that genealogy is traced to David. So that leads many Bible scholars, and any time we open a book, we want to set it in this right context. So that leads many Bible scholars to believe that Samuel wrote this probably in the early days of David's reign.

[5 : 02] Now, that would seem fitting, because if it was not written, if it was written any time after that, surely they would have carried that on to Solomon. Solomon, the wisest king to ever reign, the largest kingdom, then surely it would have been carried on to there, because he too fits in that lineage.

But yet, this is a reminder that even in those dark days that we have just left behind, God was still in control. Right? That there is still, and if you need to have a title, our title for this evening, Hope in Troubling Times.

There are the troubling times of the book of Judges, but here is hope. And hope is found in this book, the book of Ruth. Not necessarily in the person of Ruth, because she finds hope.

But it is found in the text of Ruth and what we see. So let's pray, and then we'll get right into the first chapter. Lord, we thank you so much for allowing us to gather together.

We thank you for the great privilege it is of coming together and fellowshiping and joining our hearts and minds together. Lord, what a great privilege it is of opening up the Word of God and studying it with one another.

[6 : 09] We pray as we open up the text this evening, Lord, that you would speak to us. That we would see it in its truthfulness and its accuracy. Lord, also in all of its power and authority.

Lord, speak to our hearts and minds. Lord, may we learn more of you through it. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. It says in Ruth chapter 1.

I will read the entire chapter, so not very long, but we will take it all the way down to the 22nd verse.

Now it came about in the days when the judges governed that there was a famine in the land.

And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, in the name of his wife Naomi, in the name of his two sons Malon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah.

Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there. Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They took for themselves Moabite women as wives, and the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth.

[7 : 16] And they lived there about ten years. Then both Malon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had visited his people in giving them food.

So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her. And they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house.

May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. May the Lord grant that you may find rest each in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

And they said to her, No, but we will surely return with you to your people. But Naomi said, Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

Return, my daughters. Go, for I am too old to have a husband. And if I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons, would you therefore wait until they were grown? [8 : 25] Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is harder for me than for you. For the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me. And they lifted up their voices and wept again.

And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. Then she said, Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods, return after your sister-in-law. But Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you. For where you go, I will go. And where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die. And there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me. And worse, if anything but death, parts you and me. When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them. And the women said, Is this Naomi? She said to them, Do not call me Naomi.

[9 : 25] Call me Mara. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi? Since the Lord has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me.

So Naomi returned. And with her Ruth, the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Here we have Ruth chapter 1. We're going to see hope and troubling times found for us in Ruth chapter 1. I'm not so sure. We will not come back again when we gather on Wednesday night to look at this first chapter again, just in kind of bits and pieces of it, because there's a lot here in this text.

This is such a rich book for so short of space that it carries in our pages of our Bible. But yet we see here the hope and troubling times. Just three great things I want you to see, or three things I want you to see that kind of helps to not only cover broadly the first chapter, but also to kind of introduce the book to us.

Because this is a season in which we would not at least anticipate finding such a beautiful picture as Boaz that we will meet later.

[10 : 37] But we have to understand what gets us there before we do. Because this is during the days of the judges when every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. And we see that being played out in this man named Elimelech as well.

The first thing we see is this is a time of famine. These are times of famine. It says, Now it came about in the days when the judges governed. We don't know exactly when these things transpired, but if we were to take their genealogy back, it probably was near the end of the judges period because we can understand this.

And we can see that it is probably not necessarily too early into their entrance into the promised land. So near the latter part of the judges governing the land. And we also know that through reading the book of Judges, we have kind of this overlapping of times, right?

It's not necessarily a succession of judges, but that judges would kind of overrule or overlap in times because most of them were local. But it was during those days when things seemed so dark and things were so turbulent and we can read that every man is doing what is right in his own eyes. We see here that there was a famine in the land. During the time when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. Now when we're in the Old Testament and we begin to read of famines, we need to pay attention, especially when we read of famines in the land because the land is the promised land, right?

[11 : 59] There was a famine in the promised land. And that's important because God had made a promise to his people before they went into the promised land. Remember that? He told them that when they go into the promised land that he would not fail to bring the rain and the fields would not fail to bring forth fruit and he would not fail to give them food and he would not fail to provide for them if they remained faithful.

See, there was a promise connected to the land and the promise connected to the land was that God would provide all that the land needed to bear fruit as long as the people remained faithful to what he had commanded them to do.

Live as you should. Live as I have commanded you. Live in his covenant fellowship with me and the early rains and the latter rains will come. So when we open up the Bible and we read about a famine in the land, we have to understand that a famine has a cause.

And the cause of the famine is the one who controls the storehouses of heaven's floodgates. So we understand it. God caused a famine in the land. And God said the only reason he caused a famine in the land was because the people were walking in disobedience.

So this is what sets us in right context. God had said, I am your God and you are my people. If we live in a good fellowship with one another, you do all I have commanded you to do.

[13:18] I will not fail to bring about the rain to provide for the land. A famine was a sign of God's disciplinarian action in calling his people back to himself. This is one of the ways that God would call his people back to himself.

Our God, Deuteronomy 4.24, is a jealous God. Right? He is a consuming fire. Which means that God does not desire to share his glory with anyone else.

One of the attributes of the Holy Spirit that inhabits the believers is that he will convict you of sin. That is, he will call you back to himself. And sometimes the way he does that is through discomfort, pain, and distress.

And this is exactly what God is doing with his people in the land. Because there's a famine in the land, which means God's trying to get their attention. Now, Elimelech, the name Elimelech means, my God is king.

That's what his name means. My God is king. In those days, there was no king in Israel. And every man did what was right in his own eyes. Elimelech's name said, my God is king.

[14:26] But when the king tried to get Elimelech's attention, Elimelech left. Because, see, these were times of famine. And the famine wasn't just, there wasn't any rain falling, there also wasn't any people listening.

He decided it was better to leave. Now, history shows us in scripture that when God sends a famine, when his people leave, problems happen. Abraham left the land because there was a famine and he went and sojourned in Egypt for a while.

Remember that? He was named Abram at that time. It was before he was Abraham. There was a famine in the land. God told him to go walk around the land. There was a famine in the land. He decided it was better to walk around Egypt. When he was in Egypt, he told Sarai, his wife, listen, we get down here, they're going to look at you and they're going to kill me because of you.

So you tell everybody you're my sister. Remember that? It happened to him twice. What happened? There was a famine in the land and instead of calling out to God, they left. Warren Wearsby said, we do one of three things with our troubles.

This is good. I read this. I was like, man, that, that, that, that had to preach and I wish I'd have came up with it but he did it anyway. Warren Wearsby said, we do one of three things with our troubles. We endure them, we escape them or we employ them.

[15:38] If you endure your trouble, you're just going to put up with it until you get through it. If you escape your trouble, you're just going to try to run away from it. It's only when you employ your trouble will God use it and speak to you because see, this famine was sent to cause a holy disturbance among the people of God and Elimelech was trying to escape the disturbance because he wanted to live in peace.

So in those days when the judges were ruling, God wasn't ruling, the judges were ruling. A man whose name said, my God is king, when his king sent a disturbance, he said, but my family is out and they decided to leave.

The problem is, is that, as Tony Evans says, if God is the cause of your problem, only God can be the solution to your problem because it doesn't matter if you're in Moab, in the plains of the fertile fields of Moab, or if you're in the land of a barren, famine-stricken Canaan, wherever you're at, God's going to get your attention.

And they decided in this time of famine that he was going to leave. And he left and went somewhere unthinkable. He went to Moab. Now the last time God's people were in Moab, 24,000 men fell in one day.

You remember that, right? Because of their relation with the Moabite women. And they decided to do things they should not have done.

[17:11] Now, Bible geography lesson here. Let's ask us this. There's this common theme. This is good. I just thought about this. I like it when I think about these things and the Spirit nudges me

every now and then. In the book of Genesis, man's in the Garden of Eden.

Man sins. God puts them out of the Garden and he puts them out towards the, if you've been with me any time you need to hear, towards the east. Right? He put them out towards the east.

So we've said there's this biblical principle. It's called the Law of First Mention. That once something is mentioned first time then it continues to keep that theme throughout the rest of Scripture. So we have looked at this principle because then Adam and Eve had kids and you remember Cain slew Abel and then Seth was born and then there's Cain moves away and then Cain goes where?

To the east. Right? So he moves further east. So the principle was that every time man goes east he's moving further away from God because here's the garden you put out. The garden is where God's presence was to the east.

So he went to the east. He went to the east because the wise men came from the east. Right? So they traveled west. So they came back to his presence. Now do you know where Moab is compared to Canaan?

[18 : 24] It's to the east. They went to the eastern side of the Jordan River intentionally fleeing from the presence of God.

And in this time of famine we find Elimelech not living up to his namesake and not accepting his spiritual authority and God's trying to get his attention yet he intentionally avoids it and tries to escape it.

So it's a time of famine. The second thing we see is it is a time of failure. Elimelech failed to be what he should have been and in his failing he takes them to Moab and it says and they stayed there. They entered the land of Moab and remained there. They didn't just sojourn there they remained there. So they started living somewhere they should not have been. And then we read this sad reality in verse 3 then Elimelech Naomi's husband died.

Because if God's trying to get your attention it doesn't matter how far you go he's going to get your attention. Then Elimelech Naomi's husband died.

[19 : 40] The famine didn't kill him. Trying to save his life he lost it. That's very scriptural right? He who seeks to save his life will in the end lose his life.

Yet he who loses his life for my name's sake will save it. Here we see that trying to save his life and going to Moab and remaining there he lost his life. So Elimelech dies.

And then we move on further and further down this chain of failure because remember this principle we saw at the end of the book of Judges when we began to look at a snapshot of society we started with Micah who was in Bethlehem.

By the way isn't it amazing of all these types we have of Bethlehem the picture we get in Bethlehem is the birthplace of the Savior and we wonder why it's so astounding that in Micah the book of Micah 5 2 it starts speaking of Bethlehem Ephrathah too little to be counted among the clans of Judah yet out of view one shall arise through the scepter which shall never depart from his hand.

Why is that so? Because every time we're introduced to Bethlehem prior to that it's not necessarily a good thing until David's born because Micah is in Bethlehem he has a household full of idols there's a Levite who goes to Bethlehem and ends up being a priest to a tribe of Dan so he leaves his post there is a man of Bethlehem whose concubine leaves him and then she ends up dying and he cuts her in twelve pieces and sends her among the clans right and now this man is from Bethlehem everything seems to be happening in Bethlehem by the way Bethlehem means what house of bread in the house of bread there was no bread so Elimelech left because God definitely wasn't his king but to go back to our picture that Micah there that we find at the end of the book of Judges he was a messed up man and that messed up man created a messed up family that messed up family was a part of a messed up society and that messed up society had a messed up nation and that messed up nation leads to a messed up world Elimelech does something wrong and his sons follow quickly after him because it says his failure all of a sudden became their failure when he did not live up to his name's sake it says that he that Naomi husband died and she was left with her two sons and verse 4 says and they took for themselves

[21 : 56] Moabite women as wives the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth and they lived there about ten years now I know immediately when we want to say well it's amazing because Ruth is so good Ruth is included one of five women included in the genealogies of Christ in the book of Matthew four of those women are of disrepute and we wouldn't really want to hang around them Ruth being one of them Mary being the other but we say she's in the genealogy so important yes but before she was in the genealogy she was a Moabitess and God had clearly

commanded his people not to intermarry as a matter of fact in making this decision and this just magnifies the grace and the mercy of God the book of Ruth we understand this in introduction and we'll get to the person of Ruth later to introduce how grace overrules law according to the law no one to the tenth generation born of a Moabite could enter into the assembly of God to the tenth generation so in making the decision these two men decided to marry a Moabite woman what they were saying was the next ten generations that come from us cannot be a part of the assembly of God they're not going to have anything to do with God's people they're going to be excluded according to the law no one up to the tenth generation would have a part you say well when we go to the end of the book

David is definitely not ten generations out right because grace overrules law every time this magnifies God's grace but what we see here is that the failure of Elimelech becomes the failure of his sons they did not repent when their dad died they did not return when their dad died they actually embedded themselves more in that culture and then we read them both Malon and Chilion also died I cannot exactly remember what their two names mean puny and pining away so there you go they were fitly named they weren't real stout men I guess but these two men die as well what great failure we've entered into Naomi will testify later to the end of the chapter and it's fitting in listening to it

I went out full but the Lord brought me back empty they went out in their own strength and failed miserably because walking in disobedience never leads to blessing and we see this through the book of Ruth we see this famine which brought about this failure and yet God will overrule this failure and show us the third great truth through the book of Ruth probably the greatest time of faith this is a time of faith as we read the book of Ruth we will see the faith of Ruth we'll see it in just a moment we will surely see the faith of Boaz Boaz is so fitting in a picture of Christ as we read through it we will be astounded that one of some simple faith in all purity finds one who is able to redeem a kinsman redeemer who was of the right relation of the right monetary status had the ability and availability and the willingness to do it we will see it all but it all starts with this time of faith the faith the first faith that we see being displayed is not a very strong faith because it's the faith of

Naomi now up to this point Naomi has had to do exactly everything that the men of her family have led her to do whatever Elimelech wanted to do she went with him the two sons were to provide for their mother so she stayed with them now that all of them so she's going to go back from the land of Moab the first display of faith is a willingness to go back she's been gone for over 10 years everything that she had is now gone but yet she knows that she's welcome to go back and we know that the reason she knows this is because of the character of God that she's trusting in because it says that she had heard that the Lord had provided bread in the land she had heard in the land of Moab that the Lord had visited his people now pay attention to the Lord capital L capital O capital R capital D that's

Yahweh right that's the covenant name of God she had heard that in the land over there in the land where there was a famine the covenant God had visited his people and she knew that if she wanted to be in proper fellowship with the covenant God she needed to be in a covenant relation but to be in a covenant relation she had to be in the right place so she had to go back she had heard that the covenant God had been faithful and provided land to his people in the land or provided bread to his people in land so plural on the daughter right I always want to say daughter in laws but that's not right daughters in law she's trying to push them away now I can see that a little bit because it says that she tells them to go back to their family to go back to their parents house and go back to their gods because Yahweh was not their god in Moab that was the false god and she's telling them to do that but I believe that if we read the text right and

[28 : 00] I think as other bible scholars that she's not telling them they need to go back she's not even telling them they have to go back she is being honest with them about what it will look like if they stay with her she is doing much like Christ did counting the cost saying if you want it easy go back home and we know this because once she saw that Ruth was determined to stay with her she said nothing else she didn't try to persuade her didn't try to do anything else now the question we have to ask is whose faith is greater Ruth's determined faith or Naomi's submitting faith and we say yes because they both are in cooperation here we see a little bit of this and she calls on the covenant

God she pronounces a blessing in verse 8 and Naomi said to her two daughters in law go return each of you to her mother in house or her mother's house here it is may the Lord covenant God capital O capital O capital R capital D may the Lord deal kindly!

with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me now we don't have it in the English language this is one of these words that really doesn't translate real well to the English language but literally what it says in Hebrew is may the Lord deal chesed with you chesed is a good word Carrie I had a conversation about that I guess it was just yesterday morning chesed is one of those great words in Hebrew I can't read Hebrew I know some good people that write good books that can read Hebrew and they can write it down for you so that's how I do my study I wish I could read Hebrew maybe someday but not yet but chesed is one of those words that we can't really translate real well to the English because chesed quoted it this morning the Lord's loving kindness is new every morning that's the Lord's chesed is new every morning so her pronouncement here is may the covenant God have chesed upon you now chesed the reason it's not so easy to translate to the English language is because it means may he do all that is good for you in spite of the reality that you don't deserve it now that's a loaded way you can't really put that too good

English in our English Bible says deal kindly with you well to deal kindly means you've been kind to me I'll be kind to you chesed means you don't deserve anything but I'm going to do everything that is for your good that's what chesed means and so what she pronounces this blessing she pronounces over her daughters in law is may the covenant God I know bestow upon you all that is for your eternal good in spite of the reality that you don't deserve it that's faith because reality is friend listen to me we all lean on his chesed ness we don't deserve what is good but he provides for us all that is for our good and this is what she proclaims to them and she says may the Lord grant that you may find rest each in the house of your husband and then she kissed them and they lifted up their voices and wept and Orpah ends up leaving we know that but this is a time of faith because one stands up and accepts that challenge and one realizes that if the

Lord is going to have this goodness bestowed upon me that there is only one place that I can do that and Ruth clung to her and she said behold your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods return after your sister-in-law but Ruth said to her this phrase that is so often used in weddings and so often used throughout history but yet it is really in context shared and that's not to say it shouldn't be used there that's a great place to use it it makes sense but in context it's a gentile moabite woman making a declaration to a Jewish widow that this is a commitment I'm making look at what it says did not urge me to leave you or to turn back from following you for where you go I will go and where you lodge I will lodge your people shall be my people and your God my God where you die I will die and there I will be buried thus may the Lord do to me notice did you see the name of God that Ruth used she used the covenant name of God Yahweh may the Lord do to me and worse if anything but death parts you and me when she saw that she was determined!

[32 : 52] Ruth has the faith to leave everything to forsake all and to cast all her hopes all her desires and all her future upon the Lord God of that land and she's going to go to that land and it's when she casts all of her hope all of her desires all of her future she'll eventually run into a Boaz right God's drawing her so they come back and they both and all the ladies more than likely see them because the man would have been out in the fields in the days of harvest and everybody says is this Naomi is this Naomi Naomi means blessed or fruitful no don't call me Naomi call me Mara Mara means bitterness and again Naomi uses a great name of God she says why do you call me Naomi since the Lord has witnessed against me and the almighty that is the almighty the almighty has afflicted me here's a realization that what we have done is not right we went out full

I went out full in my own strength but he brought me back empty because sometimes for us to truly be walking in a time of faith God has to empty us of ourselves God has to empty us of ourselves and it's only when he takes us through those troubling times of famine and he empties us of ourself then we come back and we really stand and say he is Lord God almighty he is El Shaddai I have nothing else but the almighty to call out to I have nothing else but he to lead on because I've lost everything I trusted in us because we're not living like there was a king in the land we went out full but we came back empty it says so Naomi returned and Ruth with her the Moabitess her daughter-in-law who returned from the land of

Moab and they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest that is at the right time now here's a wording I like doing this on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights because we can study it a little bit more than just preach it right it says the Ruth in context it's saying that Ruth

returned from the land of Moab now in our wording we have to catch that because Ruth was from Moab she never went to Moab so how does she return from the land of Moab what it is here is the author's way of telling us that God had called her to himself she is leaving the God of Moab coming to the true God of Yahweh she's come out of the land of despair and come into the land of promise and it is here where she positions herself maybe we'll take time

Wednesday night we'll see how the Lord leads where she positions herself to be available for the book of Ruth shows us hope in troubling times because there was a famine in that land there was failure because man did not respond to the famine the right way but out of that failure God brought forth a great display of faith and that faith lead to the genealogy of Christ I mean as we get into it it's amazing Boaz his mother doesn't have that great of reputation either Charlotte. It's amazing when you see God's mercy being displayed through these people, and all of a sudden, God's drawing Gentiles into his people through the failures of his people.

Sounds a whole lot like what Paul told the believers in Rome in the book of Romans, that the rejection of the Jews has led to the inclusion of the Gentiles.

[37 : 16] Until the fullness of time. See, God chose a people not just to have a singular people. God chose a people that he may include all people for his glory and his honor.

And here we see that even though Elimelech walked in unfaithfulness and eventual failure, that God's working through this series of events would bring in Ruth through the person of Naomi and would show us the great hope even in those troubling times.

Let's pray and then we'll be dismissed. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you so much. We're so thankful that we can come together and look at your word. And looking at your word, we understand you're in complete control.

God, you're in control of every season, of every event, and of all time. We thank you for the story of Ruth and pray as we study it, God, that we will be reminded of your love for us.

Your care and your concern and how you reach out to us even when we don't deserve it. Lord, we thank you for this encouraging word that takes place even in these dark days in the history of your people.

[38 : 29] Lord, as we prepare to leave here tonight, we pray that we would go forth ready to be lights and ambassadors of the gospel. May the people that we encounter this week be strengthened in their walk with you.

May those around us be encouraged from what they see and hear in us. Lord, may we as your people and your church bring glory and honor to you and you alone.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you, guys. I greatly appreciate your time. Thank you.