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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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The Faith of Ruth Ruth 1:6-18, 22

Lesson Background and Introduction

Ruth's story is one biblical example of love expressed in the after time of tragedy. The author of the book of Ruth is unknown. The date of composition has been proposed as early as King Solomon's reign (approximately 970-930 BC) to as late as 250 BC, long after the return from Babylonian exile. This huge range speaks to the many factors one might point to as evidence of an earlier or later date as well as the text's own ambivalence concerning these questions. The setting of the events within Ruth are comparatively much better defined as occurring during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1), that is, sometime between 1373 and 1043 BC. The conquest of Canaan was completed with the Israelite tribes settled in the land (Joshua 23). But the Israelites experienced oppression from outside nations, Moab occasionally being one of them (example: Judges 3:12-31). The Moabites were descended from Abraham's nephew Lot (Genesis 19:33-37). Conflict with Moab was already ancient by the time the time of the judges in Israel (Numbers 22-25). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the Moabites were banned from entering the assembly of the Lord (Deuteronomy 2:26-30; 23:3-6), though marriage to Moabites was not banned specifically (contrast 7:1-3). Despite these deep antipathies, a persistent famine in Israel motivated a certain Naomi's Israelite family to leave Bethlehem and settle in Moab (Ruth 1:). Ten years are covered quickly in the text, apparently beginning with the death of Naomi's husband, Elimelek, and ending with the death of her sons (1:3, 5). In the meantime, these two sons had married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah, before leaving them childless with their untimely deaths. Widowhood was an especially precarious state for women. In the ancient Near East, including both Moab and Israel, men had far more economic power than women. A woman left without male relatives to care for her could be reduced to abject poverty, and prostitution might result. Fathers or sons were the best lines of defense to protect widows; in the case of younger widows, this protection lasted until new husbands could be found (compare Genesis 38:11; Leviticus 22:13). God had given Israel specific instructions for caring for widows, both within the family and the larger community (examples: Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 24:17).

We are created to be in community with God and with others. Ruth's faithfulness to the Lord and to Naomi is an example to all of what living and loving in community might require of us. Ruth's words and actions demonstrated true commitment to carrying Naomi's burdens (compare Galatians 6:2). Showing up in the midst of pain and anguish is difficult, especially if we are dealing with our own feelings of loss. How we respond to tragedy will determine whether we are following Ruth's example as she followed Christ's example without even knowing her many-times great grandson (see lesson 3; 1 Corinthians 11:1).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Sharing God's love = caring for others

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Jesus, as we share our lives with others, may we reflect Your loving heart

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God
(Ruth 1:16 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 16, 2019)

Series: Faith that Pleases God

UNIT 1: Profiles in Faith

NEXT WEEK

**The Faith of David
(1 Sam 17:31-37, 45, 48-50)**

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Faith to Follow (Ruth 1:6-10)

Follow as part of returning (6-7)

- Returning could bring blessings from God (Joel 2:13-14)
- Returning as a sign of growth in faith (Luke 17:17-19)
- Returning brings healing of the spiritual and physical man (2 Chron 7:14)
- Returning brings mercy and prosperity (Prov 28:13)

Follow but count the cost (8-9)

- Count cost to ensure completion (Luke 14:28-32)
- Count cost to be well-advised (Prov 20:18)
- Count cost to find out God's will (James 4:13-16)
- Count cost to check for danger and evil (Prov 22:3)

Follow in unity (10)

- Unity through a good and pleasant relationships (Ps 133:1)
- Unity through being in one mind and heart (Acts 4:32)
- Unity in agreed upon lifestyles (Amos 3:3)
- Unity in mind and thought (1 Cor 1:10)

Faith without Security (Ruth 1:11-14)

Without security of success (11)

- Success is obtained when God is in control (Prov 16:3)
- Success is obtained when God's purposes are followed (Prov 19:21)
- Success is obtained when God's plans are followed (Acts 2:22-23)
- Success is obtained through obedience to God (Isa 1:19)

Without security of hopefulness (12)

- Hopefulness comes when we desire to return home (Luke 15:15-20)
- Hopefulness comes when God wants us to return to be a witness (Luke 8:38-39)
- Hopefulness is inhibited when we have strayed away (Prov 27:8)
- Hopefulness comes because we have a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)

Without security of family (13-14)

- A family that is committed to godly principles (Deut 4:9)
- A family that is committed to each other (Prov 31:27-28)
- A family that respects and be obedient to its head (1 Tim 3:4)
- A family that seeks to be committed to unity (Ps 133:1)

Faith and Loyalty (Ruth 1:15-18, 22)

Loyalty without turning back (15)

- Not turning back because of troubles (Matt 13:20-21)
- Not turning back because of living by faith (Heb 10:38)
- Not turning back because of belonging (1 John 2:19)
- Not turning back because of a vow (2 Sam 15:19-21)

Loyalty offered unconditionally (16-17)

- Unconditionally because of sincere wanting to follow (Matt 8:19)
- Unconditionally regardless of life or death (John 13:37-38)
- Unconditionally because being purchased (Rev 14:4)
- Unconditionally because faithfully helping others (Ruth 2:11)

Loyalty confirmed (18-22)

- Confirmed because of being devoted (Acts 2:42)
- Confirmed because of future relationships (Matt 1:5)
- Confirmed because of following God's will (Acts 21:14)
- Confirmed because of giving oneself fully to effort (1 Cor 15:58)