



Unit .09

Session .05

The Hope of Redemption

Scripture



**Ruth 1:16-17;
2:2-3,8-12; 4:13-17**

16 But Ruth replied: “Don’t plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. **17** Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.” ... **2** Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, “Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone with whom I find favor?” Naomi answered her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” **3** So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech’s family. ... **8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Don’t go and gather grain in another field, and don’t leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. **9** See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven’t I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled.” **10** She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found

favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?” **11** Boaz answered her, “Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband’s death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn’t previously know. **12** May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” ... **13** Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son. **14** The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” **16** Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became his nanny. **17** The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Intro Options

Main Point:
**God shows steadfast love
by providing a redeemer.**

Option 1

One of the Beatles' most well-known songs says, "All you need is love, love. Love is all you need." They were partly right. All we need is indeed love—the love of God. In the difficulties of life, one thing for sure never changes: God is love. If we know the love of God—truly know it through Jesus Christ—we are taken care of for eternity. We may lose our jobs, retirement accounts, and even loved ones, but the love of God helps us endure the sufferings in this present world, giving us a bright hope for tomorrow and the world that is to come.

- **What do you think it means that God is love?**

Option 2

- **Who is your best friend? Why is he or she your best friend?**
- **Why is commitment important in a friendship? What makes it hard to stay committed at times?**

C.S. Lewis, who had long rejected faith in any kind of god, took a walk one night with two of his closest friends and mentors, J. R. R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson. As they walked through Oxford into the early morning hours, Tolkien and Dyson answered many of Lewis' lingering doubts and questions about Christianity. A few days later, Lewis acknowledged that Jesus Christ was his Savior.

"Friendship with Lewis compensates for much, and besides giving constant pleasure and comfort has done me much good from the contact with a man at once honest, brave, intellectual—a scholar, a poet, and a philosopher—and a lover, at least after a long pilgrimage, of Our Lord." —J.R.R. Tolkien

- **In what ways were Tolkien and Dyson faithful friends to Lewis?**
- **Would you consider yourself a faithful friend? Why or why not?**

TEACHING PLAN

During the time of the judges, a severe famine had broken out in the land of Israel forcing a family of four—a father, mother, and their two sons—to migrate to Moab. While there, the two sons married Moabite women, but then they, and their father, died. The three remaining women—Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth—were left helpless and hopeless. Unable to provide for themselves in Moab, Naomi led her two Moabite daughters-in-law toward Israel, but she did not intend to take them all the way.

Naomi knew the journey to Bethlehem and a new life there would be challenging. She was homeless, broke, and alone. Any woman would have a hard time making it in that culture, but being a Moabite woman living in Israel would only compound the difficulty. This is why Naomi told her two daughters-in-law to return to their families in Moab (1:6-9). Sure, the situation was dire for them there too, but it would be better than in Israel.

Read Ruth 1:16-17



Orpah went. Ruth stayed. Her love for her mother-in-law was too strong. Her love was a steadfast love, and nothing—not famine, not alienation, not homelessness—would cause her to sever her relationship with Naomi. The steadfast fellowship of Ruth and Naomi was a gift from God. Ruth is a shadow of the love God has for His people. Ruth didn't bail; God doesn't bail. Ruth went with Naomi forward into difficulty; God goes forward with us into difficulty. Even as we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, God is with us, comforting us, leading us, and guiding us. When life's difficulties escalate, Jesus is still there with us, drawing even closer than before (Matt. 28:20).

- **Why is having community so important when we are suffering?**
- **The love Ruth displayed toward Naomi was steadfast. What are two or three ways you have seen steadfast love in action in your own relationships?**

Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (1:22). Showing her character and her love for Naomi, Ruth asked for permission to gather grain and Naomi agreed. The Scriptures record that Ruth “happened” to end up in a field owned by a relative named Boaz. But we know that with God there are no coincidences. Ruth was in the exact field where God wanted her.

Read Ruth 2:2-3, 8-12



Boaz was a prominent man of noble character, a man of God. In verse 4, we see him greet his workers with the phrase, “The Lord be with you.” Here was a man who saw God as part of his daily interactions, not just his weekly worship. In Ruth, we see a woman who took the initiative to care for her mother-in-law, Naomi. She went into the fields and was willing to take on the humble task of gathering grain behind the harvesters.

In verse 3, the paths of Boaz and Ruth cross, as Ruth “happened to be in the portion of land belonging to Boaz.” This “happened” was more than just a coincidence. God was directing their steps in His providence to redeem His people.

- **Similar to the way Boaz demonstrated the loving welcome of God to a stranger, how can we, as the church, show this kind of love toward others?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God shows steadfast love
by providing a redeemer.

Ruth 1

16-18. Ruth was committed to Naomi even beyond Naomi's life. She promised that where Naomi died, she would die (v. 17). In other words, Ruth was promising that after Naomi died, she would not return to her homeland. Again, we see in Ruth a picture of faith.

Ruth was committed to Naomi's God. In verse 16 Ruth declared that Naomi's people would be her people, and Naomi's God would be her God. It is likely that Ruth had already become a follower of the God of Israel. (Her husband probably told her of the Lord.) But this declaration is striking because it comes right after Naomi had claimed God's hand had afflicted her. Despite the fact that Naomi's experience with God had led to bitterness (see v. 13), Ruth pledged her undying loyalty to this God.

This is the character of a godly woman who doesn't settle for the comforts of this world. Ruth rested in the unyielding and unfailing love of God for her, and so she demonstrated the same kind of unyielding love for others.

Ruth 2

2-3. At the heart of Ruth's request to Naomi was her desire to avail herself to the gleaning system of the Israelites. God had commanded that landowners gather their fields' grain to the edges, with the grain in the corners reserved for the poor (Lev. 19:9-10). Boaz, however, put a stop to that when he saw Ruth. He had something better for her. Don't glean like a beggar—glean like this field is yours too. Follow my workers and go get the good stuff. Don't let thirst slow you down either. If you get thirsty, go get some cool refreshing water filled by the young men.

We can't miss how amazing this is. Boaz had given Ruth, a Moabite stranger, the credentials to work as if she was a part of his own group. Why? Because Boaz was a gracious man who reflected the grace of God. What Boaz did for Ruth, God did for us—only to a much greater degree.

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 104, DDG)


God is Love

To say that God is love is to say that God is the essence of love, or that perfect love both resides and resonates within God Himself—one God in three Persons. The imperfect love that human beings share between one another is a dim reflection, a sign that points to the perfect love that resides within God. The greatest act of love by God toward humans isn't the giving of earthly goods but the giving of Himself in Christ so that we might become reconciled to Him.

TEACHING PLAN

In her time of suffering, Ruth found refuge and provision in Boaz, who gave her grain and protected her from the men in the field, a real threat to a single woman. But Ruth needed a greater refuge and greater provision than Boaz could provide. What she needed most only the Lord could provide. Just as Boaz delighted in being a refuge and provider for Ruth, so does the Lord, even more so. And the Lord longs to be a refuge for you as well. He desires to be a shelter, a shield, a covering in your times of affliction. Ruth was in the process of discovering a peace that surpasses understanding in the care of God, and so can we if we trust Him and His grace.


▪ When you have experienced God as your refuge?

Boaz had been a refuge to Ruth and had provided her with a generous amount of grain. This was not lost on Naomi who explained to Ruth that he was a family redeemer and that she should stay close to him. But that was not Naomi's only advice to Ruth. After the barley harvest had ended, Naomi encouraged Ruth to find out if Boaz was willing to be more than a refuge. Would he be willing to act as family redeemer and take Ruth to be his wife? Boaz was willing. The field that Ruth "happened" to come across would now become her field. But once more, we see that God's plans were so much greater. Neither food, a field, a new people, or even a husband was the greatest gift God was giving Ruth. He had something else in mind. 

Read Ruth 4:13-17



In the closing chapter of Ruth, we see Boaz meet with the man who is closest in kin to Naomi's husband. The two of them discussed the need for Naomi's property to be redeemed. They also discussed the need for Ruth to be cared for. Boaz spoke with the elders of the community and agreed to marry Ruth and thus continue on the family line.

Boaz was under no obligation to redeem Ruth, and yet he chose to do so no matter what it cost him personally. Someone reading the Book of Ruth for the first time might think that its crescendo ended with verse 16. Boaz has redeemed Ruth. He stepped in and changed her life forever. He redeemed her past—the loss of a husband. He redeemed her present—she was no longer a beggar. Boaz redeemed her future—she had a family. It appears to be the high point of the book for both Ruth and Naomi, whose bitterness in chapter 1 has given way to joy. But verse 16 is not the high point. Indeed, it is where the crescendo takes a sharp upward turn. All the great things that had happened, as impressive as they were, paled in comparison to what would happen next, in the book's closing six verses. Ruth gave birth to a son named Obed. Obed would go on to have a son named Jesse. Jesse would go on to have a son named David. It would be through this man, David, that God would reaffirm His promise to send a greater Redeemer: Jesus of Nazareth. For thousands of years, Christians have seen in the integrity of Boaz a picture of Jesus and His love for us. He is our Redeemer, and He bought us with His blood. 

▪ How has Jesus redeemed your past, present, and future?

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God shows steadfast love
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Ruth 4

13-17. God had used Boaz to renew her life. She went through complete change in the instant that Boaz acted as her family redeemer. In the second before, she was poor, without a family, an alien in a foreign land. But then, with that one act, Ruth became wealthy, had a family, and was part of a new people in a land of her own. That was the transaction brought about by love: Boaz's love for her, but more than that, God's love for her. That is the power of God's renewing love.

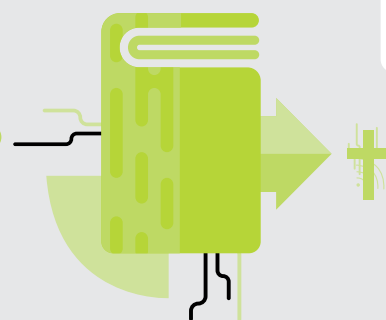
We are a people who need constant reminders of God's renewing love. The love we often experience in the world around us is far from God's love. It is conditional and comprised. It is fleeting and fickle. For this reason, we need to preach the gospel of grace to ourselves over and over until we finally hear it. We need to stare at God's love continually until we finally see it. In doing so, we will come to grasp God's beautiful love, and we will find renewal just around the corner.

From the Davidic line, the King of kings would arrive. He would redeem us from the curse of the law. Christ died in our place, paying for our sins, and He rose from the dead so we might rise from the dead, too. He fills us with His Spirit, leading us and guiding us in our daily lives. Jesus will return and make the earth new, and we will reign and rule with Jesus forever in the New Jerusalem. We are quick to connect Jesus with the great King David, but we should be just as quick to connect Him with David's great grandmother, a poor Moabite widow named Ruth. Jesus' family tree reveals His redemptive purpose: to reconcile all people—Jew and Gentile, man and woman, wealthy and poor—to the Father.

Jesus redeems our past, our present, and our future. His love is a redeeming love. And it's the message we make known to the world. As the old hymn says, "Redeeming love has been my theme, And shall be till I die." Not quite though. Christ's redeeming love will continue to be our theme ten billion years from now and beyond.

(p. 105, DDG) Christ Connection

Boaz was a family redeemer who showed undeserved kindness to Ruth, a foreigner. In a similar manner, Jesus is our Redeemer who has showed unmerited kindness to us and adopted us into His family.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



Why are people quick to blame God when life is tough?

What does the story of Ruth teach us about God's love and provision in the midst of sorrow and pain?

Heart



By looking at Ruth and her actions, what can we learn about faith?

How do our lives demonstrate this type of faith?

Hands



Who in your life needs to hear about the redeeming love of God this week?

How can we love others this week in ways that reflect God's love for us?

Main Point: **God shows steadfast love by providing a redeemer.**



Head

We are most tempted to ignore God when life is going great. In these seasons of everything clicking in life, we don't feel a need for God, and if we are honest, sometimes not even a desire. We are quick to believe that we are the cause of the goodness we are experiencing and deep down, we worry that God could just come along and mess all of that up by calling us to do something we would rather not do. But on the other side, we are most tempted to blame God when life is going difficult. We hold Him responsible for causing our seasons of adversity, or at least for failing to pay attention and keep us out of them. We question God's power and doubt His love.

Suffering brings doubts and fears to the surface. Does God care? Has God abandoned us? Where is God in all of this? The Bible is clear. God cares. God hasn't abandoned His people. God is right here. No matter how hard of a time we face, we can know that God is always present, always loving, and always providing for us. This is what Ruth would come to learn, but it is also what Ruth would demonstrate.



Heart

As you compare Ruth to Naomi, you see the contrast between grumbling with God and a faith willing to risk everything. While Orpah turned back when the door was opened to her, Ruth clung to Naomi and proclaimed her utter loyalty. This is the way God loves us! Knowing that we are eternally secure in the love of Christ is the basis for intimacy with God. When we know that He will never leave us, we are free to come to Him openly with our sins, struggles, and fears, trusting that He understands and will never abandon us.



Hands

God's love is steadfast; it never wavers. God's love is gracious; it's a gift to the undeserving. God's love is redeeming; it rescues us from our plight. God's love is all of these things—and more—because God is our steadfast, gracious Redeemer. This is the God Ruth came to know—and this is the vision of God we must make known to the world. Since we've experienced the perfect love of God, we can love our peers, siblings, and others in the way God has loved us, all while pointing them to the God who is love.

This story reminds us of God's welcoming love for those who put their trust in Him. Faith in God moves us from being foreigners to family. When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we inherit God as Father and other Christians as siblings. God makes no distinctions of race or nationalities. As followers of Christ, we who were once not part of the family of God should reach out to extend the love of Christ to all nationalities.

UNIT EIGHT

Session Two

1. Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?* (Baker Books, 2011), 175-176.
2. Ibid.