Ruth: God’s Love for a Young Widow December 18, 2022

*Ruth 1:1-18 Series: God's Love Overcomes People’s Rejection*

Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die. – Ron McManus

Intro: The daily walk to the cemetery

1. People’s bad choices can make life hard for you
2. When everyone ignores God, the world becomes a hard place

v. 1 *In the days when the judges ruled …*

Judges 17:6 *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*

v. 1 *there was a famine in the land*

2 Samuel 21:1 *Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD.*

1. When people leave God out of the solution, we’re affected

v. 1 *a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons*

v. 2 *They went into the country of Moab and remained*

v. 2 *The name of the man was Elimelech*

v. 2 *the name of his wife Naomi*

1. Sinful decisions have painful consequences

v. 3 *But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.*

v. 4 *These took Moabite wives …*

v. 4 *They lived there about ten years …*

v. 5 *both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband*

* Why would the woman keep going to the cemetery like she did?
* How do you avoid not becoming hardened by the consequences of a world that has turned its back on God?
* How can you help your children not become embittered by the consequences of your poor choices?
1. People’s bitterness can make life seem hopeless for you
2. God’s grace is at work in even the most desperate situations

v. 6 *she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food*

v. 7 *she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law*

v. 8 *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.*

v. 10 *And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.”*

1. Bitterness can turn God’s grace into cold comfort

v. 13 *it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me*

v. 20 *Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.*

1. Bitterness can make life seem hopeless

v. 14 *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.*

v. 15 *And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”*

* In what sense did Naomi have reason to be grateful?
* What helps you to be grateful when life is hard?
* How is bitterness like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die?
1. There’s a future in a life that trusts God and loves as He does
2. Faith trusts in God beyond the circumstances

v. 16 *But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you.”*

v. 16 *Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.*

1. Faith is expressed when we love the way God loves

v. 16 *where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge*

v. 17 *Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried.*

v. 17 *May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.*

*Acts 2:42 they devoted themselves to … the fellowship*

1. Christmas is for people like Ruth who trust Him despite all that they’ve faced

Ruth 4:13 *So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.*

Matthew 1:5-6 *Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.*

* What was remarkable about the fact that Ruth decided to put her trust in the God of Israel?
* How might Ruth’s love be expressed if she attended Grace Baptist Church?
* How does the way that Matthew highlights Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus change how you think of Christmas?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study 2 Samuel 11:1-15

Notes