

Ruth

Ruth 1 - 4

PPT Title

Ruth

Main Point: Anyone who chooses to follow God will become a part of God's family.

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Where you go I'll go. Where you stay I'll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. - Ruth 1:16b*

Props: a tarnished silver spoon or other silver object, silver polish and rag

BACKGROUND/REVIEW

Say: God had led His people, the Israelites, into the land He had promised to give them. We call this land the Promised Land. Joshua led the people, and God fought for them and blessed them. But after Joshua and the people his age had died, the Israelites forgot about all the amazing things God had done for them. They began to worship the false gods of the people who were in the Promised Land before them. God warned them that this would happen, but the stubborn people did not listen to the warnings. So God stopped fighting for them and their enemies made them slaves. Each time the Israelites were in trouble, they called out to God. Each time, God sent a judge to rescue them. This happened many times. We call this the period of the judges. The Bible tells us an interesting story that happened during this period of time.

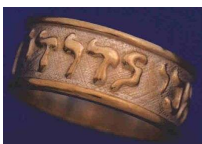
RUTH (Ruth 1)



There wasn't enough food in the land of Judah. So a man went to live in the country of Moab for a while. He was from Bethlehem in Judah. His wife and two sons went with him. The man's name was Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. - Ruth 1b-2a

Say: We learned in the book of Judges that the Israelites continually turned their backs on God. Their sin caused a land that once had been abundant, flowing with milk and honey, to be a difficult place to survive in. At this time there was a terrible famine in the land. There was not enough food to eat. Instead of turning from their sin, Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, to a place where there was food to eat.

Teacher: Point to the city of Bethlehem near the Dead Sea in the land of Judah, and show the route to Moab. They probably traveled north, across the Jordan River, then south. They left the Promised Land that God had given to the Israelites. When they came to the land of Moab, they settled there. Moab was one of Lot's sons. Lot was Abraham's nephew. The land of Moab is where Lot's descendants lived.



Sadly, Elimelech died while they were living in the land of Moab. So Naomi was left with her two sons. Her sons married two women from Moab. Their names were Oprah and Ruth. Oprah and Ruth were Moabites, from the line of Lot. They were not Israelites. After they had lived in Moab for about 10 years, Mahlon and Kilion also died. So, Naomi had lost her husband and both of her sons.

While Naomi was in Moab, she heard that the Lord had helped his people. He had begun to provide food for them again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to go

from Moab back to her home. - Ruth 1:6

God provided food for the Israelites back in the Promised Land, so Naomi decided to return to her homeland. Oprah and Ruth planned to go with her.

Naomi spoke to her two daughters-in-law. "Both of you go back," she said. "Each of you go to your own mother's home. You were kind to your husbands, who have died. You have also been kind to me. So may the Lord be just as kind to you. May he help each of you find a secure place in the home of another husband. May he give you peace and rest." - Ruth 1:8-9



Naomi kissed them good-bye. Oprah and Ruth cried and said they wanted to go with her. Both of the women were still young, and Naomi told them they should each go back to the home of their parents and find another husband. In Old Testament times, women could not have a job to support themselves. They each needed a husband who could take care of them. Naomi said something funny. She said she wasn't going to have anymore sons for them to marry, so why would they want to go with her? The women cried some more, then Oprah kissed Naomi and went home to her parents. But Ruth refused to leave Naomi.

But Ruth replied, "Don't try to make me leave you and go back. Where you go I'll go. Where you stay I'll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. Where you die I'll die. And there my body will be buried. I won't let anything except death separate you from me. If I do, may the Lord punish me greatly." - Ruth 1:16-17

Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, so she let her come along. They arrived in Bethlehem at harvest time. Soon, everyone was talking about them. They couldn't believe Naomi was back. Naomi said she was terribly sad about her husband and sons. She said they should not call her Naomi, which means "my delight," but they should name her Mara, which means "bitterness."

Application: Ruth who was a widow herself, did not pity herself or look out for her own good. She did not go to look for a new husband who could meet her needs. Instead, Ruth left her home, her family, her friends, and all that was familiar to her to go with her mother-in-law. Ruth knew Naomi was too old to marry another man who could take care of her. Ruth was dedicated to caring for her mother-in-law who was a widow. God is very pleased when we take care of those who can not care for themselves. James 1:27 says, "Here are the kinds of beliefs that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows and children who have no parents are in trouble, take care of them."

BOAZ'S FIELD (Ruth 2)



With no men to take care of them, Ruth knew she needed to go find food for Naomi and herself. She told Naomi she was going to go into a field and walk behind the harvesters. The harvesters were either servants or men that the land owner had hired to pick his grain. The harvesters would pick the best pieces of grain for their master to sell at market. Ruth would pick up any of the grain that was left behind. This grain would not be the best pieces, but it would certainly feed Naomi and Ruth. Picking up the leftover grain was called "gleaning." Ruth set out, hoping that someone would be kind enough to let her glean in his field.



As it turned out, Ruth ended up gathering grain in the field belonging to a man named Boaz. Boaz was a relative of Ruth's father-in-law, Elimelech. After Ruth had gleaned grain all morning, Boaz came to check on his harvesters. He noticed Ruth, and asked his foreman who she was. The foreman told Boaz that she was Naomi's daughter-in-law from Moab. He also told Boaz that Ruth had asked permission to glean there, and that she had worked very hard all day. Boaz went to meet Ruth. He told her to stay in his field. He warned his men not to harm her. He told Ruth to drink his water when she was thirsty. Ruth was very surprised by his kindness to her. She asked Boaz why he was so kind to her even though she was a foreigner.



Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband - how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." - Ruth 2:11-12

At mealtime, Boaz invited Ruth to eat with the harvesters. She had more than enough to eat. Boaz then told his men to leave some stalks of the good grain for Ruth to gather. Ruth gathered until night time. She took the grain back to show Naomi. She also took her leftover food to Naomi. Naomi was very excited to see what Ruth had gleaned that day. She asked Ruth who had been so generous to her. Naomi recognized Boaz's name and prayed blessings over him. So Ruth returned to Boaz's field every day until the harvest was finished.

Application: Boaz was also determined to follow God's commands concerning widows. Deuteronomy 24:19 says, "When you are gathering crops in your field, you might leave some grain behind by mistake. Don't go back to get it. Leave it for outsiders and widows. Leave it for children whose fathers have died. *Then the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do.*" Boaz went out of his way to take care of two widows - Ruth and Naomi. Did you hear the promise in this verse? God promises to bless those who take care of widows and orphans. **God ALWAYS keeps His promises!** Listen for the blessings as we continue our story.

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH (Ruth 3 - 4)



Let's take a moment to talk about the word **restore** because it has to do with the next part of our story. Restore means to bring something back to its original condition. Look at this silver spoon. When the silver company made it, it was perfectly clean and bright. Its original condition was shiny and beautiful. But over the years, it has become tarnished. This dark stain has crept over it, and now it looks dirty and dull. Water won't wash this off. This takes a special cleaner called silver polish. **Teacher: dip the spoon in silver polish, or wipe polish on with a rag. Polish for a few moments, then show the shiny spoon to the students.** **Say:** The polish is working. The spoon is being restored. It is becoming like it used to be. Keep the word **restore** in mind as we return to our story.

One day Naomi said she should try to find a new husband for Ruth. Naomi told Ruth to bathe and put on perfume, and then go visit Boaz, because he was a kinsman-redeemer of theirs. A kinsman is a relative. And to redeem means to restore, or make right, the way it used to be. Therefore, a kinsman-redeemer was a relative who was supposed to restore something.



In the law that God gave to Moses, God gave clear instructions about how a man could restore something that his relative lost or sold. For example, if an Israelite person became poor and had to sell all of his property to pay his debts, his closest relative could come and buy back the land. That way, the relative had "restored" the man's home and land (Leviticus 25:25). Similarly, if a man was desperate and sold himself

into slavery, his closest relative could come and pay the price to free him. The relative would have bought back, or "restored," the person's freedom (Leviticus 25:48). Also, if a man died before he had any children, it was the closest relative's duty to marry the man's widow and have a son. That son would be named after the first husband, so that his name would be carried on. In that way, the second man would have "restored" or "redeemed" his relative's name that would have been lost otherwise.



Ruth obeyed Naomi and went to visit Boaz. Ruth mentioned to Boaz that he was a kinsman-redeemer to her. Boaz was happy that Ruth was willing to marry him. But he told her that he was not the closest relative to Elimelech. There was one who was closer. Boaz said he would go to talk to him in the morning. If the other relative did not want to redeem Ruth, Boaz promised that he would marry her. Then Boaz sent a gift of barley grain back to Naomi.

Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat there. When the kinsman-redeemer he had mentioned came along, Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down. - Ruth 4:1

Boaz also asked ten elders to sit with them. He began to tell his relative about Naomi and Ruth. He said that Naomi was going to sell the land that had belonged to her husband. Boaz told the relative that he was first in line to buy it, and Boaz was next in line. The land sounded good to the relative and he said he would redeem it by buying it. Boaz told him that on the day he bought the land, he would also have to marry Ruth. Then the property would remain in the name of Elimelech and his sons. The relative did not like that part of the deal, because it would cause problems with the land he already owned. The relative told Boaz to buy the land and marry Ruth himself.

Then Boaz spoke to the elders and all of the people. He said, "Today you are witnesses. You have seen that I have bought land from Naomi. I have bought all of the property that had belonged to Elimelech, Kilion and Mahlon. "I've also taken Ruth, who is from Moab, to become my wife. She is Mahlon's widow. I've decided to get married to her so the dead man's name will stay with his property. Now his name won't disappear from his family line. It won't disappear from the town records. Today you are witnesses!" - Ruth 4:9-10

The elders prayed blessings over Boaz and Ruth. They asked the Lord to give them many children. They prayed that Boaz would be an important man in Bethlehem. So Boaz and Ruth were married, and God blessed them with a son.



After his birth, the women said to Naomi: Praise the LORD! Today he has given you a grandson to take care of you. We pray that the boy will grow up to be famous everywhere in Israel. He will make you happy and take care of you in your old age, because he is the son of your daughter-in-law. And she loves you more than seven sons of your own would love you. Naomi loved the boy and took good care of him. The neighborhood women named him Obed, but they called him "Naomi's Boy." - Ruth 4:14-17a CEV

Ask: What do you think became of that boy? Listen to the next verse in Ruth:

When Obed grew up he had a son named Jesse, who later became the father of King David. - Ruth 4:17b CEV



Obed's grandson was King David! He was one of the greatest kings the Israelites ever had. He even wrote part of the Bible! God called him, "A man after My own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Indeed the prayers of the elders were answered. David had a son, and his son had a son, and his son had a son. Many generations later, Joseph was born into



this family line. This is the Joseph who took a young Hebrew woman named Mary to be his wife. This is the Joseph who was blessed to raise Jesus, the very son of God.

Application: Who would have imagined that God would use a girl from Moab to be part of Jesus' heritage? Ruth was born in a country that worshipped false gods (Ruth 1:15). She was raised by people who did not acknowledge the one true God. She was not one of God's chosen people. **But she chose to follow God.** She refused to return to her people and to their gods (Ruth 1:16). She believed in God and trusted that He would provide for her (Ruth 2:12). And she was faithful to God's people (Ruth 1:8, 2:11).

This is an example of how God looks at the heart (1 Chronicles 28:9). It is far more important to God that we trust in Him than what family or nation we were born in. Our belief and dependence on Him is what makes us right with Him (Genesis 15:6). The Israelites were God's chosen people, not because they were special, strong, or talented, but simply because God loved them (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). To us, it would seem that anyone born an Israelite would be right with Him. But God said most of them did not trust in Him, so they were not part of Him (Romans 11:19-20). On the other hand, God accepts anyone who trusts that He sent His perfect Son to die for us, and then raised Him from the dead (Romans 4:23-24).

JESUS - OUR REDEEMER

The story of Ruth and Boaz is a picture of God paying the price to restore our relationship with Him. Just as Boaz paid a price to bring Ruth back into the family and give her a lasting inheritance, Jesus paid a price for us.

Galatians 4:4-5 says that when the time was right, God sent His Son, to redeem us, to give us all the rights that a son would have. Titus 2:14 tells us that Jesus gave Himself to redeem us from all wickedness, to make us pure and make us His very own.

When we chose to sin, our relationship with God became tarnished. It was no longer the way God had intended it to be. Our sin came between us and God (Isaiah 59:2). Because of our sin, we deserved punishment (Romans 6:23). We deserved to be separated from God forever (Revelation 20:14-15). Jesus came to restore what was tarnished, to make things the way God had intended them to be.



There are two qualifications that must be met in order for a kinsman-redeemer to redeem. He must have the means to pay off the debt or buy the land, and he must choose to do so. Jesus meets both of these requirements. He had what it took to pay our sin debt. God would only accept a perfect, sinless sacrifice (1 Peter 1:19). And Jesus willingly chose to die on the cross to take away the sins of all who would believe (John 10:18). Jesus is our kinsman-redeemer. He paid the price to free us from our sin and our punishment.



The blood of Christ set you free from an empty way of life. You know that you were not bought with things that can pass away, like silver or gold. Instead, you were bought by the priceless blood of Christ. He is a perfect lamb. He doesn't have any flaws at all.
- 1 Peter 1:18a,19

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Anyone who chooses to follow God will become a part of God's family.