



During the time of Judges, one Israelite family ventured into a foreign land. There they met Ruth, a woman who would follow them back to the Promised Land. God provided a redeemer for this faithful woman. In her story, we learn that anyone who chooses to follow God will become a part of God's family.



Day #1: Naomi & Ruth

In the book of Judges, the Israelites turned their backs on God over and over. Because of their sin and rebellion, their lives became very difficult. There was a terrible famine in the Promised Land. There was not enough food for the people. An Israelite man named Elimelech, along with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, left the Promised Land in search of a place where there was food to eat. When they came to the land of Moab, they settled there.

While they were living in the land of Moab, Elimelech died. When a woman's husband dies, that woman is called a "widow." Naomi's sons married two women named Oprah and Ruth. Oprah and Ruth were Moabites, not Israelites. About 10 years later, Naomi's two sons also died. Naomi was terribly sad to lose her husband and both of her sons (Ruth 1:20).

+ *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

Naomi told Oprah and Ruth to stay in Moab where they could find new husbands who could take care of them (Ruth 1:9-10).

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." - Ruth 1:16-17a

Ruth was a widow herself, yet 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 her land to go with Naomi. Ruth recognized that Naomi's God was the one true God. And Ruth was dedicated to caring for her widowed mother-in-law. God wants us 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."

***** Take a moment to pray for any widows that you know. Pray that God blesses them and takes care of them. Ask the Lord if there is something you can do to help or encourage these women.

Day #2: Gleaning

With no men to take care of them, Ruth knew she needed to find food for Naomi and herself. Ruth decided to find a field and walk behind the men who picked the grain. The workers would pick the best grain for their master. Ruth would pick up any of the grain that was left behind. Picking up leftover grain was called "gleaning."

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 all morning, Boaz came to check on his harvesters. Boaz saw Ruth and asked one of the workers who she was. When Boaz found out who Ruth was, he told the workers to be kind to her and to leave extra grain for her. He fed Ruth at mealtime, and gave her water while she worked. Ruth asked Boaz why he was being so kind to her.

+ *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

Like Ruth, Boaz was 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 the verse above? God promises to bless those who take care of widows and orphans. **God ALWAYS keeps His promises!** Listen for God's blessings to Boaz and Ruth as we continue our story.

Day #3: Redeemer

Naomi wanted 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 bring back to the way it was meant to be. Therefore, a **kinsman-redeemer** was a relative who would make something the way it was supposed to be.

God's law instructed any Israelite man who was not married to **redeem** the widow of his relative. This meant, he would pay money to buy her land, marry her, and have a son. That son would be named after the first husband, so that the man's name would be carried on. In that way, the second man would have "redeemed" or "brought back" his relative's name that would have been lost otherwise.

Day #3 continued:

Ruth went to visit Boaz. Boaz was happy that Ruth wanted to marry him, because Ruth was a woman of fine character (Ruth 3:10-11). Boaz spoke with another relative and the town elders. They agreed that he should marry Ruth (Ruth 4:2-12).



"And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today." - Ruth 4:10 NLT

All the people of the town were happy for Ruth and Boaz, and the elders prayed blessings over them (Ruth 4:11-12).



God provided a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth. God always provides for those who trust in Him (Genesis 22:14). Discuss a time when God provided for the needs of your family.

Day #4: Grafted In

After Ruth and Boaz were married, God blessed them with a son. Naomi, who had lost both of her own sons, was blessed with a grandson. The women of the town called the boy "Naomi's boy." His name was Obed.



Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!" - Ruth 4:14-15 NLT

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

Ruth's great-grandson was King David! He was one of the greatest kings the Israelites ever had. God called him, "A man after My own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). David had a son, and his son had a son, and so on. Many generations later, Joseph was born into this family line. Joseph was the husband of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Joseph was blessed to raise the very son of God!

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 an Israelite. **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). Remember that 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).

Discuss how this is also an example of God keeping the promise we read about in Day #2!

Day #5: Our Redeemer

(Mom or Dad: You will need two one-dollar bills for this day.)

The idea of redeeming is very important for us to understand. Boaz paid a price to redeem Ruth, to bring Ruth back into the family and give her a lasting inheritance. The Bible tells of another way to redeem someone.

Slavery was very common in Bible times. Sometimes people were forced into slavery against their will, and sometimes they chose to be a slave. You may wonder who would ever choose to be a slave. If a person was desperate to feed his family, he might choose to sell himself into slavery. For example, a farmer may have lost all of his crops in a terrible drought. Soon he would have to sell all that he owned to buy food. He might even borrow money to buy food, but would have no way to pay back that debt. If he sold himself into slavery, he would have money to pay his debts and buy food for his family, but in turn, he would be a slave to the person who bought him. The Bible tells God's rule about how to get out of slavery. Leviticus 25:47-49 says that the slave's kinsman (or relative) could redeem (or buy back) the person. The slave's brother, uncle, or cousin could give his own money to the slave owner, and the slave would become a free man.

Let's demonstrate how this works. Pretend you are a person who has lost everything and have no food to eat. You borrowed money to buy food and the people you borrowed from are demanding payment or you will go to jail. With absolutely no other choice, you must sell yourself into slavery. You go to the slavery block, and someone pays for you. (Mom or Dad, give one of the dollars.) But that money immediately goes to the people you borrowed money from. (Set the money aside.) Now you are a slave; you **belong to** your owner. The work is hard; the days are long and hot. Day after day you are treated harshly. You must work out in the dusty fields from sunrise to sunset. Freedom becomes a distant memory, and you are **helpless** to change that. But after many long months, your relative comes to visit. He tells you that he will give his own money to redeem you. He will pay the required price to your owner. (Mom or Dad, give the second dollar.) You are free from slavery! How does this feel?

This is a picture of God paying the price to **redeem** us. The first time you choose to sin, *you become a slave.* Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**" (John 8:34 NIV) When you sin just one time, you are a sinner, and you are **helpless** to change that. Our sin comes between us and God (Isaiah 59:2). Because of our sin, we deserve punishment (Romans 6:23). We deserve to be separated from God forever (Revelation 20:14-15).

Galatians 4:4-5 says that when the time was right, God sent His Son, to **redeem** us. Jesus became the sacrifice that was required by God for our sins to be wiped out (John 1:29). **Jesus came to restore our relationship with God and to set us free from sin.**



The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with Him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. - Romans 3:24



If you have placed your trust in Jesus, you have been redeemed. You are no longer a slave to sin! Your relationship with God has been made right. Pray for the opportunity to tell someone about how Jesus has redeemed you.