



Midweek Study Notes

21st November 2021

Prepared by Matt

Giants of Faith - Ruth

Kathryn spoke about the story of Ruth, an extraordinary, loyal woman of faith who had a pivotal role in God's story of redemption. Reread **Ruth Chapter 1** before proceeding.

Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi must have felt as if her life had been reduced to ashes. She had nothing left, and her personal landscape had been destroyed in the flames of her circumstances. She was extremely bitter towards God, believing that *her* circumstances were *His* fault.

But out of these ashes emerged Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth.

Despite being raised as part of a pagan culture that worshipped a hideous false god, and despite having no idea what the future might hold, Ruth left everything she knew in order to commit to the one true God of Israel.



God saw Ruth's loyalty and faith in the face of massive potential risk, and intervened to reward her and graft her into his purposes through the Jewish people. He also set up a love story between her and Boaz through what *appeared* to be a chance meeting in a harvest field.

Not only was Boaz qualified, willing and able to redeem Ruth's situation, but he was also a close relative of her dead husband's family, placing her firmly in the family tree of the future Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews Chapter 11 verse 6 reminds of the importance of having a faith like Ruth, by telling us *'it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.'*

This verse also reminds us that to simply believe God exists isn't enough, because we also need to believe that He is good. *Faith is trusting that God is good and that He generously rewards those who truly seek Him and walk in His ways.*

Suggestions for Discussion

Kathryn asked us to think about whether *we* could identify with any of the people in this story.

Elimelech believed in God but didn't trust in His goodness and faithfulness to provide for him and sort out the struggles he was facing. His impatience told him that God wasn't sorting out his problems quickly enough.

Naomi stepped out in disobedience due to a lack of faith in God's goodness and then oozed bitterness, blaming God for her negative circumstances.

Can you identify with Elimelech and/or Naomi? Do you prefer to take your own course of action in hard times?

Can you identify with Ruth? Does the story of her life inspire you?

Does the risk she took leaving the security of her own country inspire you to take a journey of faith, even when there's no guarantee of how things might work out?

Does Ruth challenge you to leave anything behind in order to follow the living God?

Does she inspire you to look for signs of new life in the ashes of your own circumstances?

Kathryn challenged us about our mindset, where the battle between mistrust and faith takes place. She also said that our faith, or lack of it, is the most contagious thing about us.

Do you have a mind set in fear or a mind set in faith? How do you think your outlook impacts those around you?

Suggestions for Prayer

Echo Kathryn's prayer that God will help us to live our lives confident in His goodness and steadfast in our faith.

Pray that we might be a church whose actions declare our trust in the one and only living God.

Pray that God will strengthen our faith, and that He will help us to trust even when we cannot see the way ahead.

Pray that God will set us free from fear and anxiety, and that He will help us to place our worry, pain and sadness into His safe hands.