

Life Group Questions

March 10, 2019

Ruth: Judges

Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab

1 In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. **2** The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. **3** But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there about ten years, **5** both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Naomi and Her Moabite Daughters-in-Law

6 Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food. **7** So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. **8** But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. **9** The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband." Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. **10** They said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." **11** But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? **12** Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, **13** would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me." **14** Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." **16** But Ruth said,

"Do not press me to leave you
or to turn back from following you!

Where you go, I will go;
where you lodge, I will lodge;
your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.

17 Where you die, I will die—
there will I be buried.

May the Lord do thus and so to me,

and more as well,
if even death parts me from you!”

¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS

- 1. A central theme to the opening of Ruth is the search for security. Where in the story are characters seeking shelter, food, financial support, or refuge?**
- 2. What events trigger Naomi to send away her daughters-in-law? Why would Naomi encourage them to return to their mother’s house, and later, “the house of [their] husband”?**
- 3. How does Orpah react to Naomi’s instruction?**
- 4. In John’s Gospel, Jesus is speaking with his disciples about what will take place after his death. Read the following passage:**

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. (*John 14:1-3*)

Considering the significance of having a *house* (more than just a *physical* place of shelter) in the story of Ruth, what can we learn about God from Jesus’ promise in John 14?
- 5. Remember in Ruth’s story, Naomi has pleaded with her daughters-in-law to return to their respective houses. What is Ruth’s response? What stands out to you in Ruth’s oath to Naomi in verse 16?**

6. What seems to be at stake for Ruth and for Naomi, by the end of the passage?

7. **Challenge:** Last week, we were encouraged to try to practice each of the spiritual disciplines covered in the sermon (Silence/Solitude, Prayer, Study/Meditation, Fasting, and Acts of Mercy/Service). Which of these were you able to practice? What was your experience? Which of these disciplines are you considering practicing during Lent?

8. Finally, we will ask the communal questions from the past few weeks:
 - Where have you seen/felt God in the last week?
 - Where are you seeking God?