

BIBLE STUDY Ruth Chapter 1

Video on Circuit website

A Jewish family, Mum and Dad and 2 boys leave Bethlehem because of famine set up home in foreign land (v1,2) and for many years do well – no thought of returning to Bethlehem. Dad dies(v3), boys grow up and marry local girls (v4)(against Jewish rules)

- 1) When you are not in regular fellowship with other Christians, do you let your faith slip and get into bad habits? – Does God seem further away? When David didn't confess his sins, God's hand seemed heavy upon him (Psalm 32:1-5)

Now both sons die(v5). Mum left with two childless non-Jewish daughters in law. She must have wondered whether God had forsaken her (read Ruth1:20-21 – for her description of what happened).

- 2) Are you now, or have you been in a place of feeling forsaken? Have you been in a place where everything has gone wrong and there is no help available? Feast on God's promise in Deuteronomy 31:6.

Three widows set out for Bethlehem(v6,7), for one it was a home coming and the other two doing it for love and loyalty. Mother in law recognised her daughters in law would be better off staying in their home country (v8-10)– prejudice would be against them by Jews in those days. She tried to persuade them, one changed her mind amid tears, the other made the commitment to go with her (v11-15).

- 3) Naomi had reached across the cultural divide and loved her daughter in laws, and they had been drawn to her because of the powerful witness to the reality of God in her life. Is the reality of God's presence in your life evident to others that they might be drawn to the God you worship?
- 4) What prejudices do we have against others who are different to us? Can we reach out to other people groups, or do we only love our own kind?

Ruth continued with her mother in law with an amazing declaration of commitment (v16-18).

- 5) Do you love God like Ruth did? Write a prayer declaring your devotion to God

For a moment Naomi was overwhelmed by grief on her return to Bethlehem, she didn't recognise God's provision for her in Ruth, and bitterness was overtaking her. But Ruth continued to love, to serve, to get to know the God whom Naomi worshiped and trusted. Both women had suffered loss and grief, both had had their low moments. They were able to help each other over those periods of doubts and despair to celebrate God's goodness. Sometimes being the giver and sometimes the receiver. (v19-22)

- 6) What stops you looking beyond yourself to give away God's goodness to others? Who can you extend love to this week?

Contact Andrew Sankey 07966 187216 or apsankey@gmail.com for discussion or questions

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