

Ruth (Part 2)

(Ruth 2 – 4)

Introduction

[Teacher, write the word “Foreigner” and lead a discussion about this word.] Do you know anyone who is from a different country? Sometimes people treat foreigners rudely because they speak English with an accent or they may look different. Maybe they have skin that’s a different color or eyes that are slanted. Sometimes people are mean to someone with a skin color that is different from theirs. God loves all people; He made each of us special and unique.

Have you ever felt like a stranger or an outsider? Have you ever been the new kid in school? How did that feel? How do you treat people that are new in school? Do you try to make them feel accepted and comfortable?

What a foreigner needs is a friend who will come alongside and help them become part of the group.

Today we will continue learning about Ruth, a foreigner in the land of Israel. We’re going to find out if she was treated as an outcast or if she was shown kindness.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we want to be just like You. When you lived here on Earth You were loving and kind to everyone. We pray that this morning You will teach us how important it is to be kind to outsiders and to include them into our lives so they won’t feel left out. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

Lesson

Last week we began our studies in the book of Ruth, a wonderful love story that took place during the time of the judges.

Review:

1. Naomi and her husband and two sons left Bethlehem and moved to Moab because there was a famine in the land.
2. Then a sad thing happened: Naomi’s husband and her two sons died, leaving her and her two daughters-in-law as widows.
3. When Naomi heard that the famine was over back home, she decided to return to Bethlehem.
4. But Naomi encouraged her two daughters-in-law to stay in Moab because she knew the girls would have a better chance to get re-married among their own people. She only wanted what was best for the girls.
5. But Ruth decided to go with Naomi instead of returning to her own family. She loved Naomi and wanted to care for her *and* she had put her trust in the God of Israel.

So, we pick up the story at the point when Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem; it was the time of the barley harvest.

Ruth 1:22

So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

You may have heard of the little town of Bethlehem; it is the place where Jesus was born. But the story of Ruth was way before the time of Jesus. Bethlehem is a little farming community about five miles from Jerusalem.

Naomi and Ruth were both widows. There was almost nothing worse than being a widow in the ancient world. Widows were actually considered to be like slaves because they had no way of making money to buy food for themselves. So, Ruth came up with an idea.

Ruth 2:1

Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi's husband, Elimelech.

[Teacher, if you are using the NKJ version, explain that a *kinsman* is a relative.] Boaz was Naomi's nearest relative; he may have been her husband's brother. And, he was a wealthy farmer.

Ruth 2:2

One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it." Naomi replied, "All right, my daughter, go ahead."

The children of Israel had a law that said they were not allowed to pick a field completely bare. They were to leave some of the grain on purpose as a way to provide for the poor. When the wheat and barley were ready to be harvested, farmers hired *reapers* (pickers) to come into the field and cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles. The reapers were to leave the corners of the fields, along with any grain they dropped, for the poor. This was God's way to provide for the poor and to teach His people to care for others. Since Ruth had no money; she decided to go into the fields and glean. [Teacher, write the word "Glean" and explain to *glean* is a term that means to *gather* or to *pick up*. Gleaners were women who went into the fields after the reapers and harvesters had completed their work.]

It was a hard job. [Teacher, throw a handful of plastic drinking straws on the floor and demonstrate to the children what gleaning is.]

Ruth 2:5

Then Boaz asked his foreman, "Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?"

Ruth caught his eye. She may have been very pretty. We do know that she was a good hard worker.

Ruth 2:6-7

And the foreman replied, "She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi. She asked me this morning if she could gather

grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes' rest in the shelter."

The servant told Boaz of Ruth's hard work and kindness to Naomi.

Ruth 2:8-9

Boaz went over and said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don't go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field. See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well."

Boaz was a very kind man. He told Ruth to stay right there in his field with his other women and not to go to any other field. He promised to protect and provide for Ruth.

Ruth 2:10-11

Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" she asked. "I am only a foreigner." "Yes, I know," Boaz replied. "But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers.

Ruth was amazed that Boaz would show kindness to her, after all, she was an outsider, a foreigner, to those in Bethlehem because she hadn't been born there. How do you think Ruth might have felt being new in town? Ruth was pleased to be treated so kindly.

Boaz then invited Ruth to have lunch with him and his workers. After lunch, Boaz instructed his men to leave extra grain for her to gather.

Ruth 2:15-16

When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his young men, "Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without stopping her. And pull out some heads of barley from the bundles and drop them on purpose for her. Let her pick them up, and don't give her a hard time!"

Normally the gleaners were to wait to gather the grain after the workers were finished. But Boaz told his field workers not to block

Ruth from working alongside them. He knew that she would be able to gather a lot more that way.

He went way beyond the intent of the law that allowed gleaners to come into the fields; he made sure that she was well provided for.

Do you go beyond the minimum requirement? For example, when your parents ask you to clean your room, do you also clean the bathroom? God loves it when we do more than what is expected!

That night after work, Ruth took what she had gleaned to Naomi. Naomi was impressed with the large amount of grain Ruth brought home and she encouraged Ruth to continue to glean in Boaz's fields for the rest of the barley harvest season.

In time, Naomi explained that because Boaz was her closest relative, he was authorized to pay the price to legally marry Ruth and make her his very own so she would no longer be a foreigner in the land. Boaz wanted to take care of Ruth.

What Boaz did for Ruth is a beautiful picture of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. He came to Earth to pay the price to make us part of His family. When Jesus took the punishment for your sin by dying on the cross, He paid the price for your sin. He gave His blood for you, to make you His own so you don't have to be a stranger to God. You can now be a member of His family. God wants everyone to come into His family; He doesn't want anyone to be an outcast. But you must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. [Teacher, review the Memory Verse for this week and discuss what it means to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; give an opportunity to the children to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior.] If you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, you are now a child of God. You are a member of His family and will someday live with Him in heaven.

Boaz paid the price to make Ruth his very own so she wouldn't be an outcast any more.

God blessed Boaz and Ruth by giving them a son. Many years later into that same family line, Jesus was born. So, Ruth was the great, great, great... (29 greats) grandmother of Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Father, we admit to You this morning, that we are sinners. And we want to thank You that You came down out of heaven and lived among mankind. Thank You that your death on the cross paid the penalty for my sins. It is because of what You did on the cross, I can say today, that I am saved; I am now a child of God; and, I will some day be face-to-face with You, living in Heaven. Thank You for paying the price to make me part of Your family just like Boaz did for Ruth. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Gleaners

Divide the class into two teams. Have the teams line up. On "GO" the teacher throws down an odd number of plastic drinking straws. The first child on each team picks up straws as fast as possible. The child who "gleans" the most straws, earns the chance to answer a review question. Upon a correct answer, the child picks a felt shape off the flannel board with a hidden number of points on the back (or a ZONK for no points). [Teacher, make the game extra exciting by making the points large: instead of 100 points, make it 1,000 or 10,000!] Then the next child on each team takes a turn.

1. What is the name of the little town that Naomi and Ruth came home to in the land of Israel? (Bethlehem)
2. Naomi and Ruth had no way of making a living. So, what plan did Ruth come up with to provide food for herself and Naomi? (To glean in the fields.)
3. Boaz was Naomi's kinsman. What is a *kinsman*? (A relative.)
4. What did Boaz do for a living? (He was a wealthy farmer.)

5. What is a gleaner? (Someone who comes along after the harvesters and picks up the stray pieces of grain left behind.)
6. How did the children of Israel provide for their poor? (The harvesters were not allowed to pick all the grain. They had to leave some behind for the poor to pick up.)
7. What did Boaz do to make sure that Ruth got plenty of grain? (He told his field workers to leave extra grain for her to find.)
8. In what other way did Boaz make sure that Ruth was safe as she worked in his fields? (He told his men not to touch her; to leave her alone.)
9. What did Boaz finally do to make sure that Ruth was well cared for? (He “redeemed” her; he married her.)
10. Explain why what Boaz did for Ruth a beautiful picture of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. (He came to earth to redeem you and me and make us part of His family.)
11. What famous children came from the family line of Boaz and Ruth? (David and Jesus.)

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