

Grace OPC Sunday Class			
Year:	2 of 4		Date: Week 8
Quarter:	2 of 4	Bible Survey	
Lesson Title:	Survey of Ruth		
Lesson Purpose:	To understand the structure and contents of Ruth and look at some of its main themes		

Readings for next week: Hendricksen (H) Pp. 97-102, 223-224, 43-56

1. Review

Last week, Judges
Moving on to Ruth –

2. Who Wrote Ruth, and When?

Author is unknown but the book was clearly written after the time of the judges:

Ruth 1:1 Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons.

Probably in the time of David, because that is where the genealogy terminates:

Ruth 4:16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. **17** The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Apparently a date of 1000 B.C. is supported by writing style, vocabulary and local customs.

The book of Ruth appears in the Hebrew text among the five scrolls (Megilloth) in the third part of the Canon - "The Writings" (Hagiographa). The book was removed from this position by the Greek translators and placed after judges because it describes events contemporaneous with that period. This sequence was adopted in the Latin Vulgate and has since then passed into all modern Bibles.

3. Structure for Ruth

Chapter	Event
1	1. Ruth's wise choice. Ruth 1:16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. 17 "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."
2-4	2. Her Full reward
2	a. Material Support
3,4	b. A good marriage, through which she becomes an ancestress of Christ

4. Major Themes in the Book of Ruth

Summary of sermons already on our web site March-October 1999

a) *Ruth 1:1-5. A wrong reaction to God's chastisement*

Judges 6:1 Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years. **2** The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. **3** For it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. **4** So they would camp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. **5** For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it.

Why did famine come on the land of Israel at the time of the Judges?

Leviticus 26:14 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. 17 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you.

God's judgment – what was this oppression from God designed to do? Turn people to Him

What did Elimelech do? He took his family to Moab to avoid famine.

Moab had food – looked good. Just for a while until famine is over. BUT...Who was Moab?

Judges 3:12 Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. **13** And he gathered to himself the sons of Ammon and Amalek; and he went and defeated Israel, and they possessed the city of the palm trees. **14** The sons of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

Enemies of God – like us going into the world to escape God's chastisement in the church

Ultimately, they are in Moab for 10 years (1:4). No testimony of the gracious provision of God

Elimelech dies and his sons marry attractive Moabitesses.

But Israel wasn't far - could have gone there for wives

Orpah, at least, does not seem to have given up her gods

Then Mahlon and Kilion, the sons, also both die – a judgment from God?

Naomi finally returns to Israel – to Bethlehem

Applications

Running away from the chastisement of God is a wrong reaction to it – turn back to Him!

The world can seem an attractive retreat when God is dealing with our sin

We must not be tempted into the world but repent and seek God's blessing among His people

b) Ruth 1 - Ruth and Orpah – Count the Cost of Coming to Christ!

Both lived some years in a Hebrew home. Heard of the One true God

Seen at least some spark of faith in the life of Naomi – endurance in the midst of sorrow

Heard the law – struck with how good it is – no other nation has laws like this!

Probably heard of the promised Savior

Tragedy strikes – their husband dies

They are invited to travel to the promised land with Naomi

Leave behind their foreign gods, families, friends etc and live among God's chosen people

A huge cost for them to take this step

Orpah initially sets out but then decides the cost is too great. She turns back

Ruth though, is prepared to pay any price to have this God as her God and this people as hers

Applications

There is a cost in coming to Christ. We may have to give up many things in this world in order to follow Him

Ruth is a great example of determination to follow God whatever the cost and should be a great encouragement to us also.

c) Ruth 2 – He cares for those who trust Him

Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem

Elimelech had been comfortably off, it seems “we went out full”, but now Naomi returns with very little nothing – “call me Mara!”

“It's not fair!” – why has God treated me this way?

Ruth's reaction is exemplary. She lives to please God

- She honors her mother in law – asked permission to go out and glean to support them both. She didn't barge into the field of Boaz but again asked permission
- She humbled herself – 2:10, 2:13. Accepted her situation. No Moabites allowed in the assembly of Israel: **Deuteronomy 23:3** “No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the Lord, 4 because they did not meet

you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

- She worked long and hard gleaning and then threshing. Uncomplaining

And then comes the providence of God in the shape of Boaz: a man of power (2:1), a man who took interest (2:11-12), a man who made provision (2: 8, 9, 14, 16, 21), a man who gave protection (2:16, 2:22), a man who gave comfort (2:13) and a man who gave hope (2:20) It so happened that it was into Boaz's field, the Kinsman Redeemer, that Ruth came to glean!

Applications

Behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face

Ruth's "chance chanced upon" the field of Boaz

d) The Goel

Directed and instructed by Naomi, Ruth approaches Boaz and asks him to fulfil his duty to her as a kinsman redeemer

Leviticus 25:24 'Thus for every piece of your property, you are to provide for the redemption of the land. **25** 'If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.

Ruth submitted to this law. She prepares herself as a bride for her husband

Takes the position of a servant at his feet

She approaches him in humility and asks to come under his protection (3:9)

Boaz kindly receives her and promises to attempt for her what she has asked

Applications

This is how we are to approach our Kinsman Redeemer, who is Christ Himself

As a bride for her husband, in submission to the law, in humility

He receives all who come to Him in this way.

e) The Kinsman Redeemer

There is a Goel nearer in line than Boaz but he backs in view of potential costs and risks

Might lose everything to Naomi's family!

Takes off his sandal (mark of disgrace once). Probably congratulates himself on his escape

BUT He lost a godly, virtuous woman as a wife, the opportunity to be ancestor of King David

More – an ancestor of Messiah – a member of His family!

Lost having his name recorded and remembered with honor He lost his good name altogether.

It is not recorded here.

In contract, Boaz fulfills his promise; Ruth is a virtuous woman in his sight

Poor and helpless, a member of a nation that is the enemy of Israel

Yet at great cost, he redeems the land and takes Ruth as his wife and Naomi as mother in law

But he gains far more than he laid out – all the other Goel lost becomes his, along with honor.

How much like his greater descendent his actions are! Boaz is a type of Christ here

Christ had committed Himself to save His church at the beginning

She too was a poor and helpless widow. In time He made good on his promise

Submitted Himself to the Law of God, set His own comforts and position on one side

Came to redeem at the cost of His own blood, and of the anger of His own Father

Of separation from Him because of sin, Of a cruel death on the cross

And he did it all for those who were aliens and strangers to Him! For those who were enemies!

He lays out His life to redeem them from death

And because of His willingness to stoop so low, God has lifted Him up to the place of highest honor!

Applications

The nearer Goel saved his life in this world and lost everything – watch out for the world!

Boaz is a wonderful type of Christ pictured for us in this book – redeeming at great cost

Christ is our Goel, becoming our near Kinsman to redeem us from our hopeless state