**Series: The Human Side of Faith**

**Title: Ruth**

Corey Trevathan, Senior Minister

Text: Ruth 1.20-21; 4.13-17

Why do we have to suffer? - Lower Third

“I want to suffer and go to the deepest place of suffering I can go — for those suffering more than me.” - Jack Stradinger

***Ruth 1:1-21***

1 In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. 2 The man’s name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

3 Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. 4 The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, 5 both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

8  “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me. 9 May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

16 “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. 17 Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”

19 So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked.

20 “Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara..."

"...for (because) the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. 21 I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the LORD has caused me tosufferand the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”

When we suffer we struggle with faith.  And we wonder, "Why?"

**Ruth 2: 1-12, 20**

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

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.” 3 So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.

6 And the foreman replied, “She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi. 7 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.”

11 “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. 12 May the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done.”

20 “May the Lord bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband.  That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers.”

**Ruth 4:6, 16, 17**

6 “Then I can’t redeem it,” the family redeemer replied, “because this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot do it.”

16 Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. 17 The neighbor women said, “Now at last Naomi has a son again!” And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

What do you do with suffering?

God is always at work weaving together a beautiful story of redemption.