

Sermon Discussion Guide - Ruth 1

Loyal Love in Difficult Seasons

Key Passage: Ruth 1:16-17



Introduction

Life rarely unfolds according to our plans. The opening chapter of Ruth begins with famine, loss, disappointment, and uncertainty. Yet even in the midst of tragedy, God is quietly at work, preparing a story of redemption. This week, we'll explore how God works through hardship, faithful relationships, and ordinary acts of loyalty to accomplish His purposes.

1. When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan

Read Ruth 1:1-7

Naomi and her family left Bethlehem during a famine, seeking security in Moab. Instead of finding relief, they experienced even greater loss.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever experienced a season when life turned out very differently than you expected?
2. Why do you think people are often tempted to "run from" difficult circumstances rather than walk through them with God?
3. What are some ways fear can influence our decision-making?
4. How can trusting God's sovereignty help us navigate uncertainty?

2. Choosing Loyalty Over Convenience

Read Ruth 1:8-18

Orpah chose the understandable path back to what was familiar. Ruth chose sacrificial loyalty.

Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about Ruth's commitment to Naomi?
2. Why do you think Ruth was willing to leave her homeland, culture, and future security?
3. What is the difference between convenience and covenant commitment?
4. Where might God be calling you to remain faithful when it would be easier to walk away?

3. The Power of Everyday Influence

Read Ruth 1:16-17 again

Ruth's decision suggests that Naomi's faith had made a lasting impression on her.

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Naomi influenced Ruth's understanding of God?
2. Who has been a "Naomi" in your life—someone whose faith impacted you?
3. Who has been a "Ruth" in your life—someone who has stood by you through difficult seasons?
4. How can you intentionally invest in someone else's spiritual growth this week?

4. Bitterness or Trust?

Read Ruth 1:19-22

Naomi returned to Bethlehem overwhelmed by grief and wanted to be called "Mara," meaning "bitter."

Discussion Questions

1. Why is it often easier to focus on our losses than on God's blessings?
2. What blessings in Naomi's life was she struggling to see?
3. How can disappointment gradually turn into bitterness?
4. What practices help you maintain trust in God during difficult seasons?

Takeaway

The story of Ruth reminds us that God is working even when life feels broken. Loss does not mean God has abandoned us, and hardship does not cancel His purposes. This week, ask yourself:

Am I being a Ruth—showing loyal love and commitment to others?

Am I being a Naomi—allowing my faith to influence someone else's life?

Am I trusting God's redemptive plan even when I cannot yet see it?

Challenge: Identify one person this week whom you can intentionally encourage, support, or disciple. Ask God to use you as part of His redemptive work in their life.

If you see this... text Pastor Marc the following phrase for a fun surprise. "RUTH pays off!"