

# "OVERCOMERS: RUTH" SE1916

Date: 2020-10-25AM Context: Lockdown and Sunday Morning - AM GRA

Series: Overcomers (MOM) Title: Overcomers: Ruth

Readings: Rut2:11-14 Cited:

## I. INTRO TO READINGS

The story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz is a well known part of the Bible. The great German poet, Goethe, described it as one of the greatest literary works ever written.

It describes events that happened in the life of a family in Palestine;

The ingredients of any gripping story are here:

A loving family,  
disasters like famine and death,  
a journey to a foreign country,  
a homecoming,  
romance, a wedding, the birth of a baby and a royal family line.

The story revolves around Elimelech an Israelite who relocates from Bethlehem to Moab because of a famine. The sons marry Moabite girls, but then Elimelech and his sons die leaving Naomi, Orpa and Ruth. Naomi decides to go home and Ruth sticks with her, and looks after her, eventually marrying Boaz, and continuing Elimelech's family line and becoming a great granny to King David and an ancestor to Jesus.

The names in the story are a very important part of the story:

- Elimelech - my God Reigns
- Naomi - Pleasant
- Mara - Bitter
- Mahlon - sickness/unfruitfulness
- Kilion - weakness
- Bethlehem - house of bread
- Orpa - stubborn, mountain goat
- Ruth - friend, refreshment
- Boaz - strength

These names reveal the tension in the story. The tension revolves around Elimelech's name - "My God reigns". Right through the book we're asking the question: If Elimelech's God reigns, if God is in charge then what's going to happen to Naomi and what will happen to the family line of Elimelech?

Here's how it sounds when you work in the names: "The "House-of-Bread" runs out of bread, "My-God-reigns" goes to live with the heathens and dies and "Sickness" and "Weakness" die leaving "Pleasant" who says she's "Bitter" (but doesn't seem to be) and "Stubborn" leaves, but "Refreshment" stays. Now the "House-Of-Bread" has bread again but we will need "Strength" to let the story of "My-God-Reigns" have a good ending and cause Ruth (a Moabite) to be the great grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus.

So the story is actually about Naomi and Elimelech, but I believe the book bears Ruth's name because she's the person God uses to pull together all the loose threads in this story...

Our reading comes from ch.2

- Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem.
- She persuaded Orpah to go back to her family.
- But Ruth declared her faith and her commitment.
- Now back in Bethlehem Ruth goes to glean.
- (Pick up ears of barley dropped by the harvesters)
- She lands up on the field of Boaz - who *happens* to be a relative who can rescue her.

## READINGS

Ruth 2:11-14 Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband--how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. 12 May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

13 "May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant--though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls."

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar."

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over.

## 2. SERMON

### 2.1. Boaz - Master of the Understatement...

If we didn't know that he's the hero who wins Ruth's heart, we might have thought of Boaz as the master of the understatement and maybe even a bit insensitive...

On paper his words are brutally succinct:

"I've been told

- of all you have done
- since the death of your husband (10 out of 10 on stress chart)
- how you left your father and mother (9 out of 10 on stress chart)
- came to live with a people you did not know before. (8-9 out of 10 on stress chart)"

### 2.2. Let's face it - Ruth has been through the wringer

We'd think of words like: Devastation, Dislocation, Depression, Disappointment, Disillusion, Doubt, Denial and Dysfunction

But many of us have been through the same:

- we've worked incredibly hard
- we've lost loved ones, lost jobs, lost dreams
- we've had to leave things behind (funerals, matric dances, carefree lives)
- we've had to embrace a strange new world.

*And somehow, Boaz, in spite of the brevity of his words, manages to comfort Ruth.*

Look at the depth of her words:

You have given me comfort                      Spoken kindly - though I have no standing...

#### **Do you see it?**

- The depth of the pain
- The acknowledgement of her need of comfort
- Her sense of alienation and her shattered sense of self-worth

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT TO LET THAT SINK IN.

- We've been there and we know people who have been there **or are there now...**

### 2.3. How did this story come to a good ending?

1. Naomi was a great role-model and guide
2. Ruth came to personal faith
3. Ruth stood her ground
4. Ruth was willing to work hard
5. Ruth stepped into the unknown
6. Ruth let her MIL guide her

7. Boaz (who foreshadows Jesus in many ways) is compassionate
8. Boaz steps up to rescue her (His title Kinsman-Redeemer says it all)
9. The community who support, recognise and cheer on
10. God who is at work in the background

## **Conclusion**

Ruth - surprisingly two-dimensional at times...

But these moments

- Where you go I will go...
- Why do you notice me a foreigner?
- You have given me comfort
- Spread the corner of your garment over me since you are a kinsman-redeemer

In between are these moments are the everyday events of life.

- A day's work
- Family Relationships
- Waiting

Wine-Vinegar