

Ruth Part 2: “Hold Fast to God’s People” (9-24-2017)

Intro to the Study of Ruth: The 4 short chapters of Ruth will take us throughout the scripture – it’s 1 complete story all pointing to Jesus and every detail matters and speaks of Him.

Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Review of Last Week: Hold Fast to the King, and the name (identity) He has given you.

This Week: Hold Fast to God’s People

This morning we are going to look at 4 Characters – 3 obvious, and 1 hidden . . .

1) Naomi . . . “turn back my daughters”

Ruth 1:6-10 (ESV)

(6) Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. (7) So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. (8) But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. (9) The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. (10) And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

Notes:

- Naomi wasn’t perfect (left Bethlehem pleasant, but returned bitter) – However, she was a good woman.
- In the midst of her loss and sorrow she stops to think of these 2 daughters.
- She acknowledges their previous kindness, and she must have shown them much of that herself.
- **Notice: Holding Fast involves letting go.** The people we love, we have to set free!!

Ruth 1:11-13 (ESV)

(11) But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? (12) Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, (13) would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me."

Notes:

- I have nothing left to offer you! I’m empty, I’m old, I’m used up. . .
- Take note – **God can redeem even the most broken and empty** . . . and bring new life!!!
- Naomi does provide a husband, through the form of a family member that is yet to be revealed.
- But, these girls don’t know that yet, how will they respond . . .

2) Orpah . . . “kissed her mother-in-law”

Ruth 1:14-15 (ESV)

(14) Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

(15) And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

Notes: Abby story – the “I love dad” t-shirt

- Orpah left her with a kiss. She had an emotional connection, lot’s of tears, but . . . She left all the same.
- Committed relationship is rooted in something more than emotional feelings or attachment.
- Our society is a **what’s in it for me** culture (Quote: JFK – “Ask not what your country can do for you . . .”)
- The church – we worship relationship – it’s a buzzword, but are we truly rooted in committed relationships with God’s people?
- Do I love the “idea” of being in real relationship with God’s people, or do I have real committed relationships, rooted in much more than just fond feelings?
- Or will I kiss and leave at the first sign of difficulty for me?

3) Ruth . . . “but Ruth clung to her”

Ruth 1:16-17 (ESV)

(16) But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return 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 will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

Notes: What would this redemption story have looked like without Ruth? Think about that as we work through the remainder of this book.

- Your people are my people – Your God is my God (Learning to walk with Jesus)
- Holding Fast to God’s People is a primary way that we can Hold Fast to the King
- **Story of my young adult experience** – Steve & Brandon
- Ruth is facing the reality that Naomi has laid out for her – things appear hopeless (no prospects for marriage, children, or a future)
- But, Naomi at her worse, was better than anything Moab had to offer!

Notice the contrast . . .

- **Orpah facing the reality of the difficulty ahead, kisses Naomi goodbye**
- **Ruth, looks beyond herself, and clings to Naomi**

The secret to good friendships . . . don’t worry about what you are getting from the relationship – you worry about loving your friends well. It’s really hard to be dis-appointed in someone, when you aren’t heaping expectation on people!

Ruth & Naomi – end up enjoying the fruits of this relationship for the rest of their lives, because they thought more about the others than themselves.

4) Jesus

Ruth 1:16-17 (ESV)

(16) But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return 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 will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

Notes:

- Jesus has walked where we walk
- He came and lived where we live
- Jesus united with us – you people are my people
- But, Jesus didn't take on our God, He gave us His. Jesus says, "My God will be your God"
- Jesus died where we die, so we could have the life that He has!

John 13:36-38 (ESV)

(36) Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." (37) Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." (38) Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.

Notes:

- Jesus is the true Naomi . . . There are roads I'm walking for you that you can't walk (the cross)
- Jesus forgives "Orpahs", and turns them into "Ruths"
- Jesus is the true Ruth . . .

Proverbs 18:24 (ESV)

A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Note: There is a friend . . . and His name is Jesus!