

Saturday, April 4 Daily
Devotion: Ruth

Why am I always amazed at God's timing? We have been reading through the Bible word by word, a chapter at a time and I am still amazed that we get to a point in scripture that meets us right where we are and when we need it most. The book of Ruth has always been a favorite of mine. Her story, God's story and how we get to see Jesus has always captured my heart.

As we are navigating each day in our new normal and in a time of uncertainty, sadness, even grief; I think of Ruth's circumstances. My bible says it was the worst of times. If you finished the book of Judges, you know how bad things were. Ruth was a Moabite, a widow, and headed into unchartered waters, much like we are now.

The book of Ruth is considered a love story by many. Not the type of love story we think of, this happened between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi. While I do agree there is a deep love and care for one another, I consider this to be a faithfulness story. "But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." (Ruth 1:16-17) I am jealous of Ruth's unwavering faith in a God that wasn't "hers" and often think about my own faith and trust in God. Were things so bad that she had nothing to lose? Did she have this feeling that things would not always be this bad? Was a simple love for her mother-in-law enough? As the story of Ruth unfolds, we see God more clearly, his love and his plan always faithful to completion.

Currently things are not as we desire them to be. Schools are cancelled, sports are on hold, entertainment options are limited, businesses are suffering, people are losing jobs, and so on and so on. We just want to know when it will be over. Naomi had a similar reaction and basically gave up hope that anything good was possible. She even told the women to call her Mara, which means bitter. Has bitterness set in yet for you? I hope not. Ruth, however, did not let being in a land that was not her own stop her. She went to the fields of Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer (we will come back to him). Hope came alive for Naomi and for Ruth. See God's faithfulness? He always provides and makes way a path for us and he did that for Ruth and Naomi.

There in the fields of Bethlehem, I just love that this story takes place in Bethlehem, Ruth finds favor in the eyes of Boaz, and there he becomes her protector and provider, like our own redeemer. ("So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told them not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled." Ruth 2: 8-9) From here we see the rest of the story unfold as Ruth continues to be faithful to Naomi and follows her instructions.

Boaz is faithful to his responsibilities as a kinsman-redeemer and follows the laws set before him and makes a way to make things right again for Ruth and Naomi. Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi from all that had happened to them making a way for a new life and the rest of God's story to take place. Boaz married Ruth and they had a son, Obed. Obed would be the father of Jesse and Jesse the father of David and ultimately Jesus. When you look back at

the genealogy of Jesus, it isn't perfect and it is filled with some pretty imperfect people, but oh how God works in our brokenness and mess to make things work to his glory. Jesus is our Redeemer. He came to make our life new in him and to set us free from our brokenness and mess. Jesus is the ultimate love story God gave to us and the greatest example of his faithfulness.

God is always faithful and in this mess and brokenness of today, I know God is still faithful and I can rest in the promise of his faithfulness and goodness, kindness, grace and mercy he provides every day. So I leave you with these questions. What do you need today to see and accept God's faithfulness in your life? What will it take for you to be able to rest in his faithfulness?

I pray his faithful protection and provision for each of you and that you stay strong and faithful to each day that passes. I pray God will be revealed to you in new ways. Peace and blessings to each of you.