

17 January

 Break the ice

Write down what God is saying to you in today's message:

TOPIC: The Book of Ruth – week 1

 Let's hear your story

1. Tell of a time or season where you like Naomi had financial troubles or lost a loved one, or had to move?
2. What is a man's responsibilities in leading his family and where did Elimelech fall short? (See 1 Tim.5:8 and Eph.5:25 – 6:4).
3. Naomi had been out of relationship with God's people over a decade. Have you ever had a season away from God's people and how did it go? (See 1 Corinthians 15:33).
4. Why is it important to be with God's people? (See Hebrews 10:25).

 Let's go deeper

5. **For men;** does your leadership in the home lead your family to flourish both practically and spiritually? What changes should you make now to get your family on the right path?
6. Naomi and Ruth went to great effort to be with God's people. What sacrifices and changes need to be made in your life so you be with God's people?
7. How do we know Naomi was bitter? (Ruth 1:20; Mara means bitter)
8. Who did she blame for her bitterness? (Ruth 1:20; the Almighty).

 Let's apply this

9. Naomi was bitter against God when Elimelech was largely responsible for her situation. Are you at all bitter against God for something that someone else did? Maybe in your past or present? How can you heal from that hurt as Naomi did?

Oftentimes our view of God can be distorted by experiences with people. This is especially true in regard to fathers and husbands. This question is intended to begin to uncover if there is any bitterness toward God or lack of trust in God's goodness because of painful personal experience.

SUMMARY:

- The story of Ruth – Faith; Hope and love

Read: Ruth 1:1 - 22.

Ruth begins with an honest look at a painful season in the life of Naomi and Ruth. Have you ever had a season like theirs where maybe you had financial troubles, lost a loved one, or had to move?

**v.1;** The events of Ruth happened in the days of the judges, roughly 1200–1020 BC—between the time of Joshua's death (Judges 1:1) and king Saul (1 Samuel 10).

**v.2;** Elimelech makes the tragic decision, as the head of his home, that impacts his wife and sons. He moves them away from church, fellowship and worship of God.

**v.3 - 5;** Why did Elimelech move to Moab? So that he and his sons would not die. What happened? They died in Moab. Naomi buried her only two sons before she got grandchildren, and she buried her husband. And there she was left, in Moab. No church, no women who loved God to pray for her and to walk with her and to encourage her. She is left penniless; she is left broke; she is left destitute.

**V.6;** Naomi was in the fields of Moab, and she heard a report that the famine had lifted in Bethlehem, after many long years. And that God had showed up. And that God was being gracious. And that God was blessing his people. She heard of hope.

**v.7 – 9;** Ruth includes a number of prayers and there are two important things about the prayers in Ruth: 1. No one ever prays for themselves. They only pray for others. 2. Every single prayer is answered by the end of the book.

**v.10 – 13;** Naomi says, "My daughters." She has them in her heart as her own daughters. She had no daughters, but through marriage she got two daughters.

**V.14 – 16;** Ruth's story is in many regards like Abraham's. She left her family, her hometown and her religion to start a new life in a new town with Yahweh, with one notable distinction, God never spoke to her. God never told Ruth to go. Abraham did what God said; Ruth didn't even have God speak to her. She is trusting in the character of God. This is a woman of extraordinary faith.

**v.17 – 18;** Ruth, when left with the decision to decide between her family of birth and the potential family of new birth, the church, that awaits her in Bethlehem, she chooses the family of new birth.

**v.19 – 22;** Naomi runs to God's people and tells them, "Here's where I'm at." She's asking for love, support and correction. She's telling the other women; I need help.