

MOTHER'S DAY 2011 (RUTH)

TEXT: RUTH 1

Introduction:

1. Today is Mother's Day, and to commemorate Mother's Day I would like to preach this morning from the book of Ruth.
2. When the famous American statesman Benjamin Franklin was serving as the United States ambassador to France, he often heard many of the French aristocrats ridiculing the Bible.
3. On one occasion Franklin wrote out the entire book of Ruth in longhand (only 85 verses), but he changed all the names of the people and places to French names.
4. He then read the book of Ruth to an audience of Frenchmen, but by changing the names they did not recognize it as a book of the Bible.
5. When he finished, the listeners were unanimous in their praise. They all exclaimed on the elegance and simplicity of style. They all said it was one of the most beautiful stories that they had ever heard, and demanded that he tell them where he had found such a remarkable story.
6. They asked him, "Monsieur Franklin, where did you find this gem of literature?"
7. They were quite surprised when he told them it was from the very book they despised -- the Bible, God's Holy Word!
8. The time frame for the book of Ruth is the same as the book of Judges (Ruth 1:1). The book of Ruth provides the link between the days of the judges and the beginning of the kings.
9. In fact, Ruth was the great grandmother of King David (cf. Ruth 4:13-22).
10. The Scofield Study Bible has a good outline:
 - I. RUTH DECIDING (1)
 - II. RUTH SERVING (2)
 - III. RUTH RESTING (3)
 - IV. RUTH REWARDED (4)
11. I will use a slightly different outline this morning:
 - I. RUTH'S FAITH
 - II. RUTH'S REST
 - III. RUTH'S REWARD

I. RUTH'S FAITH

1. Naomi, her husband, and their two sons left Bethlehem ("House of Bread") and moved to Moab because of a famine (1:1, 2). One son married Ruth, the other son married Orpah.
2. Eventually Naomi's husband and both her sons died (1:3-5), so Naomi decided to return back to Bethlehem.
3. But she felt that her daughters-in-law would be better off staying in Moab (1:6-13).
4. But when Naomi urged her two daughters-in-law to go back to Moab, Ruth decided to stay with her (1:8-14).
5. It is evident that both women loved their mother-in-law, but it was Ruth that loved the God of her mother-in-law (1:14-16).
6. There are certain friends and relatives that love us...but do they love our God? The Lord Jesus said the first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37).
7. Ruth loved her mother-in-law, but she also came to love her mother-in-law's God. Many people love their mothers, but unfortunately they won't have anything to do with their mother's Saviour.
8. I have preached at funerals and seen the children and grandchildren of the deceased crying their hearts out. But when I say, "If you want to see your mom and dad again, you need to get saved," they turn their back on God.
9. Ruth didn't turn her back on God. Ruth turned her back on Moab, with all of its wickedness.
10. Ruth 1:16 tells us that Ruth not only turned her back on Moab, but on the gods of the Moabites. She told Naomi, "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."
11. Ruth put her trust in the LORD, and the LORD led her. Proverbs 3:5, 6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
12. The LORD was directing Ruth. When we come to Ruth 2:3 we read, "And she went, and came, and

gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

13. This old English word "hap" (2:3) is similar to the words "happy" and "happen" and "happenstance," etc.
14. But it didn't just "happen" by blind chance that Ruth wound up in the field of Boaz. It was the hand of God.
15. Ruth decided to follow Naomi, and put her faith in Naomi's God -- the true God of the Bible.
16. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
17. The God of heaven and earth.
18. And God providentially led her to Boaz's field, and eventually to Boaz himself.
19. Boaz recognized Ruth's faith. He said, "The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust" (2:12).

*Under His wings I am safely abiding,
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me,
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.*

*Under His wings, under His wings,
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide forever.*

II. RUTH'S REST

1. Naomi wanted Ruth to find "rest" (3:1). Specifically this meant a good husband, and children, and a home, etc. (cf. 1:9; cf. 3:18).
2. Many women today are restless because they have put their careers ahead of family. This can only lead to unhappiness because men and women cannot go against God's Word and expect to be happy.
3. Way back in the Garden of Eden, Genesis 2:18 says, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

4. Kate Middleton followed the example of her husband's mother Princess Diana, and decided to omit "obey" from her wedding vows.
5. Worldly people think wives obeying husbands is old-fashioned and unnecessary, but the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22).
6. First Peter 3:1 says, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands."
7. Proverbs 18:22 says, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD."
8. Proverbs 19:14 says, "A prudent wife is from the LORD." Boaz understood this (Ruth 4:13).
9. Proverbs 12:4 says, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband."
10. Proverbs 31:10 says, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies."
11. Boaz understood this (cf. Ruth 3:10, 11).
12. The Bible says, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Genesis 1:28).
13. That commandment is repeated many times throughout the Bible.
14. Unfortunately, most people today are not obeying God's commandments. According to statistics just released by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the U.S. birth rate has dropped to the lowest level since national data have been available.
15. Naomi was determined to help Ruth, and so she willingly relinquished her own claim to marriage and property. Naomi advised Ruth to go down to the threshing floor where Boaz was winnowing barley.
16. Ruth was obedient to her mother-in-law (Ruth 3:1-6).
17. Naomi realized that perhaps the LORD was bringing Ruth and Boaz together. In the hope of this, she advised Ruth to follow her instructions.
18. These instructions may seem strange to us, but undoubtedly many of our courtship and marriage customs would appear strange to people in their day (cf. Ruth 4:7).
19. Boaz was ready, willing, and able to marry Ruth, but there was another relative nearer than he. If this near kinsman did

not wish to serve as the kinsman-redeemer, than Boaz would.

20. Boaz would be happy to marry Ruth and "raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance" (4:5b).

III. RUTH'S REWARD

1. Ruth married Boaz, and God blessed them with a baby boy, who was the great grandfather of King David. This was Ruth's reward.
2. "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3).
3. Sadly, many people today do not see children as a blessing from God. Over one million babies are killed every year here in America.
4. Back in Bible times, the city gate was where legal matters were discussed and settled. Boaz was ready to settle this the first thing in the morning (4:1, 2).
5. The near kinsman was given the opportunity to redeem (buy back) the land belonging to Elimelech, and he agreed to it (4:3, 4).
6. However, Boaz went on to explain that if he were to purchase the land, he would also have to agree to marry Ruth (4:5).
7. The man explained he could not marry Ruth because that would "mar" (ruin) his inheritance (4:6-9).
8. Ruth and Boaz were happily married (4:10-12). I heard about a fellow who was very nervous at his wedding. The preacher said, "Repeat after me...with this ring I thee wed..."
9. The fellow said, "With this ring I be dead..." His friends thought that was funny, so they took the "Just Married" sign off the back of his car and replaced it with a new sign: "Just Buried."

CONCLUSION:

1. The book of Ruth reminds us of Romans 8:28. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
2. Consider Naomi. She lost her husband, and both her sons.
3. But then God blessed her, and the women said unto Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him" (Ruth 4:14, 15).

4. Upon her return home to Bethlehem, Naomi felt "empty" (1:21). But Boaz made sure she would no longer be empty (3:16, 17)
 5. Naomi felt the LORD had afflicted her (1:20, 21). But she got in on the blessing when Ruth married Boaz and they had a son (4:16, 17).
- When we are in God's will, we are in the place of blessing.