Crossroads International Church Singapore Dr. Rick Griffith

28 October 2017 Message 8 of 66

NLT 60 Minutes

**Be Relational**

Title

***Book of Ruth***

**Topic:** Relationships

**Subject:** How does God reward us when we care for others?

**Complement:** God helps those who help others.

**Purpose:** The listeners will be devoted to someone whom they have not been helping.

**Attribute:** We worship the God of Relationships

**Reading:** Romans 12:9-11

**Song:** Blest Be the Tie That Binds

# Introduction

### Interest: The world says that “God helps those who help themselves.”

Them

#### "The phrase '**God helps those who help themselves**' is a popular motto that emphasizes the importance of self-initiative.

#### [Although it has been commonly attributed to [Benjamin Franklin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Franklin)], the phrase originated in [ancient Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece)...

#### The phrase is often mistaken for a [Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) quote, but it appears nowhere in the Bible."[[1]](#footnote-1)

• Heresies

#### Except perhaps for 2 Heresies 4:7!

• Bible?

### Curiosity: The not-so-often quote is this. Bible says “God helps those who help others.”

Others

#### Well, the exact quote isn't in the Bible, but the concept sure is.

• Bible

#### Another way to say "God helps those who help others" is to say that God rewards the selfless. Perhaps no better book in Scripture illustrates this truth than…

• Ruth

Theme

#### The Book of Ruth

#### Today's teaching emphasizes through the lives of Boaz and Ruth that God truly rewards those who care for other people. This is the outstanding quality of these two key characters, especially Ruth herself.

• Ruth

Boaz & Ruth

#### God, in fact, rewards US when we seek to be a blessing to OTHERS, so I sum up the entire book of Ruth with this key word: REWARDS.

• Ruth

Rewards

### Subject: How does God reward us when we care for others? In what ways does the LORD take care of us when we make others a priority (restatement)? Here is our key issue to address today.

Subject

### Background:

#### We are in a study through the whole Bible right now, book by book in one sermon per biblical book. The goal is to give us a basic understanding of the whole of each book of the Bible.

Book by Book

#### The period of Judges was the most self-entered era of Israel’s history. The story of Ruth takes place at this time to highlight how God responds when we live counter-culture by living a selfless life. The final verse of Judges sums this era up well: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit” (21:25).

Occasion

#### In Judges, Samuel records the moral & spiritual failure of Israel, which ends with 2 horrible accounts:

• 19-21

• Ruth

In Ruth

• 17-18

##### A Levite pagan priest blesses Dan's ungodly migration (Judges 17–18).

##### Benjamites murder a concubine so the other tribes nearly destroy this tribe (Judges 19–21).

##### The story of Ruth is a third illustration of life at this time, but provides the other side of the story.

Pearl

• Godly couple

Contrasts

• Black Backgrnd

#### As Pastor John Reed says, "The Book of Ruth gleams like a beautiful pearl against a jet-black background."

##### You can’t see a pearl very well on a light background, can you?

##### That’s why the jeweler always places it on a black piece of velvet! The contrast draws out the beauty of the pearl.

##### The same is true of the amazing story of Ruth—we see it best when we realize its brightness shines during the darkest days of Israel’s history.

Balance

##### Perhaps Samuel saw the need to balance the negative picture of the judges era with godly examples (Ruth & Boaz) who lived by the law of God despite national unfaithfulness.

#### One key theme of Ruth is similar to that of Judges–God's redemption–with this key difference:

• Redeem

• Deliverers

##### Judges shows redemption through deliverers.

##### Ruth shows redemption through a godly couple.

#### There are more specific contrasts:

##### Judges was a time of faithlessness, immorality, idolatry, decline, debasement, and disloyalty. But Ruth shows faithfulness, fidelity, righteousness, purity, following the true God, and devotion.

• Chart

##### Judges had lust, war, cruelty, and Bethlehem was a bad town. But in Ruth we see at the same time love, peace, kindness, and Bethlehem has many benefits!

##### Judges shows tribal anarchy sourced in Saul where disobedience leads to sorrow due to spiritual darkness. Yet Ruth leads to a national monarchy under David where obedient faith leads to blessing due to spiritual light.

### Text: Today we will survey the entire book of Ruth.

2 Ways

(How does God reward us when we care for others?)

# I. God meets our own needs.

MP

[When we care for others, God cares for us in a special way.]

## Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi by leaving family and country to return to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (Ruth 1).

Ruth 1 Black

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

### Ruth and Naomi became widows after the deaths of their husbands Mahlon (Naomi and Elimelech's son) and Elimelech while the family lived in Moab to escape Bethlehem’s famine (1:1-5).

Ruth 1 Fields

Chart

### Ruth's devotion to Naomi by leaving family and country to travel with her to Bethlehem exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (1:6-18).

Choices

#### When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, her daughter-in-law Orpah (Moabite: "stubbornness") stayed in Moab to pursue a selfish, pagan, idolatrous lifestyle (1:6-14).

#### Unlike Orpah, Ruth (Heb: "friendship") left her family, country, and idolatry by returning to Bethlehem with Naomi in her selfless commitment to others and God (1:15-18).

Ruth refuses

Priorities

##### Orpah (Moabite: "stubbornness") lived up to her name and Ruth (friendship) lived up to her name also!

##### In 1:16 we find perhaps the most beautiful declaration of trust in God in the Bible. Ruth identifies with Israel's geography, people and God—never to see Moab again. Ruth shows undying devotion until she herself dies (v. 17)!

Key Verses

### Naomi (Heb: "pleasant") was bitter against God in wanting the name Mara (Heb: "bitterness") as she couldn’t see Ruth as God’s provision to show how not to react to trials (1:19-22).

Changes

#### Still, there is hope. Lev 26 declared that obedience would lead to crops.

Lev 26

#### They returned to Bethlehem just as the barley harvest was starting. Soon after that would come the wheat harvest. God was rewarding him people.

• Rewards

## Ruth's devotion to Naomi by working for her benefited them by God's provision of food, protection, and hope for future redemption to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 2).

Ruth 2

### God guided Ruth to the field of her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, due to her initiative to work for Naomi to show his pleasure with those who sacrifice for others (2:1-3).

Against the Grain

#### The Practice of Gleaning (Deut. 24:19-22; Lev. 19:9, 10): Israel's "welfare system" required work by the poor ("workfare"). Landowners could not harvest the corners of their fields so that the poor, the aliens, the widows and the orphans could pick up ("glean") these remaining sheaves. Ruth benefited from this merciful provision in the Law (2:2, 3, 7, 8, 15-19, 22).

Gleaning

(5 slides)

#### In the next chapter we will see that the reaping leads to threshing (separating the kernal from the chaff) and then the winnowing to blow away that chaff in the wind.

Harvest

(3 slides)

#### Rather than simply waiting around for God to meet her needs, Ruth took initiative and worked hard for her mother-in-law. The NT supports this idea for Christians too!

Duty to Act

(5 slides)

### Boaz rewarded Ruth's gleaning for Naomi when he protected her and provided food for her as God's blessing for her own kindness to Naomi (2:4-16).

Assist by Boaz

#### In 2:12 Boaz gives a blessing to Ruth using an interesting word by saying that she has sought refuge under God’s wings.

2:12

Chicks

#### Do you see something a bit unusual about this picture? If you look closely, you will see two little chicks finding refuge under their mother hen’s wings.

#### This is the word Boaz uses, giving the imagery of Ruth finding protection under God as if he is a caring hen. Do you have that sense that God also protects you?

God’s “Wings”

### Ruth shared her blessing of food with Naomi and saw Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer, thus filling Naomi with anticipation, thankfulness, and hope for future redemption (2:17-23).

Assist by Ruth

#### The Kinsman-Redeemer (Deut. 25:5-10): The Law also required a dead man’s brother to marry his widow and raise up their first son in the name of his brother. While the Law prohibited sexual relations with a sister-in-law (Lev. 18:16), this kinsman-redeemer provision was required when the brother died: (a) without a son (male heir) and (b) when these brothers lived together having jointly inherited their father's property.

Kinsman

(8 slides)

#### The new husband was called the "kinsman-redeemer," or *goel* (Hebrew). If the deceased man had no living brother then the *goel* was the closest male relative. Ruth's first husband, Mahlon (4:10), had no living brother, thus making the next closest kin responsible (3:12), but since he refused to marry Ruth (4:5-6), Boaz became the closest kin. This emphasis on the *goel* in Ruth is evident as the kinsman-redeemer appears 13 times in only four chapters.

(How does God reward us when we care for others? At a minimum, he provides for our basic needs, such as food, shelter, and caring for our loved ones. But does it stop there? No. When we live the selfless life…)

Trans

(4 slides)

# II. God sometimes rewards us more than we ever dreamed (Ruth 3–4).

MP

[When we care for others, God may reward us in a way that we never considered.]

Hatching a Plan

## Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz shows her devotion to Naomi and his accepting her proposal shows his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (Ruth 3).

Cold Feet

### Naomi requested Ruth to follow her plan for the young woman's redemption and Ruth agreed to follow the plan entirely, thus again showing her devotion to her mother-in-law (3:1-5).

Contribute & Courage

### Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz showed her devotion to Naomi since without remarriage she had no long-term way to support herself and Naomi (3:6-9).

3:9

Ezek 16:8

#### Remember blessing of Boaz in chapter 2? He uses the word for God’s “wing,” giving the imagery of Ruth finding protection under God as if he is a caring hen.

2:12

#### What I find fascinating is that the same Hebrew word is used in 3:9 when Ruth asks Boaz to spread the “corner” (wing!) of his garment over her! She is asking Boaz to answer his own prayer!

#### God uses the same word in Ezekiel 16:8 in reference to protecting the nation of Israel.

### Boaz gladly accepted Ruth's proposal contingent on the refusal of the nearer kinsman to show his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (3:10-15).

Boaz Commits

### Naomi and Ruth expected Ruth's redemption by the nearer kinsman or Boaz that very day (3:16-18).

Property

Title

Title

Title

Title

Title

#### Property had to remain in the family line.

Posterity

(5 slides)

#### Not to be willing to do this required a public rebuke!

## Ruth's reward of redemption by Boaz for her devotion to Naomi exceeds her dreams in her relationships and sharing in Davidic and messianic line to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 4).

Ruth 4

### Ruth's reward of marriage and financial security for her devotion to Naomi occurred as the nearer kinsman refused his right to redemption and Boaz married Ruth (4:1-13a).

#### Refusing the obligation comes when we think only of our own needs (4:1-8).

Refusing Obligation

Redeem

(22 slides)

#### Receiving the opportunity comes when we think of others (4:9-12).

Receive Opportune

#### Boaz is a perfect picture of Jesus as our Redeemer (explain slides).

### The birth of Ruth's son Obed rewarded her devotion to Naomi (4:13b).

Obed

### A renewed Naomi rewarded Ruth for her devotion to Naomi (4:14-17)!

Grace

### Participation in the Davidic and messianic line became Ruth's greatest reward for her devotion to Naomi to show how God blesses those who help others (4:18-22).

Genealogy

(13 slides)

Subject

(How does God reward us when we care for others?)

# Conclusion

### God helps those who help others (Main Idea).

MI

### So how does he reward us (Main Points)?

MPII

MPI

#### God meets our own needs (Ruth 1–2).

#### God sometimes rewards us more than we ever dreamed (Ruth 3–4).

What to Do?

### Application: What does the Lord want you to do with what you heard?

#### God’s love is impartial—is yours?

God’s Love

#### Summary Statement

Summary

#### Renounce sin and promise God what he says.

Renounce

(3 slides)

#### Do you need to turn away from family, take up your cross and give up everything?

Jesus

(3 slides)

Others?

#### Do you live for yourself or for others?

#### What person in your world is God telling you to help?

Which Person?

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The book of Ruth takes place in the period of the Judges.

### The period of Judges was the most self-entered era of Israel’s history.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The story of Ruth takes place at this time to highlight how God responds when we live counter-culture by living a selfless life.

### Our tendency is to look out only for ourselves, so God included this account to help us look out for others.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The final chapters of Judges 17–21 tells us that at that time “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

### Ruth helps us see that “everyone” must be qualified as not *absolutely everyone.* There still were exceptions, though they were rare.

# Questions

### Is the point of this story simply moral? What is the theological value?

### How does the genealogy fit into the argument of the book? Isn’t it a bit anticlimactic to end a great story with a genealogy?

# Tentative Main Ideas

Text

# Illustrations That Apply

### Text

# Old Testament Survey Notes

**Ruth**

**Introduction**

**I. Title** The name Ruth (tWr *ruth*) literally means "friendship" (BDB 946c) and describes the outstanding characteristic of the main person in the book—Ruth herself.

**II. Authorship**

A. External Evidence: Talmudic tradition ascribes the authorship of Ruth to Samuel.

B. Internal Evidence: Ruth makes no mention of its author. Some (e.g., *TTTB*, 66) have supposed that authorship by Samuel could not be possible since David appears in Ruth (4:17, 22) and Samuel died before David's coronation (1 Sam. 25:1). However, one must also remember that Samuel himself anointed David as king although he had not yet been crowned (1 Sam. 16). Since the genealogy in the book (4:18-21) stops with David and makes no mention of Solomon, the book was likely written between David's anointing and Solomon's crowning. Since the only tradition ascribes the writing to Samuel, it was written during his lifetime, and no internal evidence proves otherwise, it is most probable that Samuel penned the narrative.

**III. Circumstances**

A. Date: As mentioned above, since the genealogy in the book (4:18-21) stops with David and makes no mention of Solomon, the book was likely written after David's anointing (ca.1030 BC) and, at the latest, just before Solomon's crowning as king (971 BC). However, authorship by Samuel pushes the date back to probably 1030-1020 BC.

Of course, the story itself takes place in the previous era of the judges (1:1). Since this period lasted over 300 years, at what point does the account of Ruth occur? An estimate can be discerned through the genealogy again. Since Ruth was the great-grandmother of David (4:17), who began his rule in 1010 BC, some believe Ruth lived in the latter part of the 12th century at the time of Gideon (e.g., Reed, *BKC*, 1:415-16). However, Gideon ministered in the *early* 12th century (1191-1151 BC) so the latter half of the 12th century places the marriage of Boaz and Ruth at approximately 1120 BC during the judgeship of Jair (Whitcomb, "Chart of the Old Testament Patriarchs and Judges," in these notes, 96). Therefore, Samuel records events that happened about one century earlier.

B. Recipients: The first readers of Ruth must have been those under the unified kingdom of Saul and David, some of the older readers having experienced the tragedy of the end of the era of the judges.

C. Occasion: Ruth takes place at the time of the judges (1:1). Samuel records the moral and spiritual failure of Israel during this time in the Book of Judges itself, which ends with two horrible accounts: the hiring of a Levite pagan priest who blesses Dan's ungodly migration (Judges 17–18), and the murder of a concubine by the Benjamites with the national retaliation that nearly destroys the tribe (Judges 19–21).

The story of Ruth serves as a third illustration of life at this time, but provides the other side of the story. "The Book of Ruth gleams like a beautiful pearl against a jet-black background" (Reed, *BKC*, 1:415). Perhaps Samuel, as author of Judges, saw the need to balance the picture of the period of the judges with godly examples (Ruth and Boaz) who lived according to the laws of God despite the unfaithfulness of the nation as a whole.

One key theme of Ruth is similar to that of Judges—God's redemption—yet in Ruth this redemption comes not through judicial or executive reforms in a deliverer, but rather through a godly couple who provide the Messianic line through their faithfulness to the covenant and to others. Ironically, the word “covenant” is never used in the book.

**IV. Characteristics**

A. Ruth is only one of two books in Scripture named for women (the other is Esther). Both had mixed marriages. Esther was a Hebrew who married a Gentile; Ruth was a Gentile who married a Hebrew.

B. The Book of Ruth contains the second highest proportion of dialogue in the canonical books, surpassed only by the Song of Songs. Of the 84 verses in the narrative, 59 have dialogue!

C. Irony plays a very important part in the Ruth narrative (adapted from Robert Chisholm, "Theology of Ruth," Dallas Seminary Class Notes, 1985):

1. This, the most beautiful love story in the Bible, never once uses the word "love."

2. At the start of the story God has *blessed* (1:6) but Naomi is *bitter* (1:20-21). However, at the end Naomi is *blessed* (4:14ff.) even though she once wanted to be called Mara, meaning bitter (1:21)!

3. Naomi initially rules out any possibility that she could provide Ruth with *any* man for a husband (1:11-13), but soon a member of her *own* family marries Ruth (2:20; 4:13)!

4. In 1:21 Naomi complains that she returns to Bethlehem empty (which insults the ever loyal Ruth standing beside her!), but in the final analysis Ruth is better to her than seven (the ideal number) sons (4:15; cf. 1 Sam. 2:5)!

5. Boaz prays for Ruth, who sought refuge under Yahweh's “wings” (2:12), and within a few months Ruth asks him to cover her with his own “corner” or “wing” (3:9 is the same Hebrew word as 2:12). He does so by marrying her and thus answers his own prayer!

D. The Book of Ruth contrasts with Judges in several ways (*TTTB*, 68, adapted):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Judges** | **Ruth** |
| **Faithlessness** | **Faithfulness** |
| **Immorality** | **Fidelity, righteousness, purity** |
| **Idolatry** | **Following the true God** |
| **Decline, debasement, disloyalty** | **Devotion** |
| **Lust** | **Love** |
| **War** | **Peace** |
| **Cruelty** | **Kindness** |
| **Bethlehem Bad** | **Bethlehem Benefits** |
| **Anarchy** | **Monarchy** |
| **Tribal** | **National** |
| **Saul** | **David** |
| **Disobedience leads to sorrow** | **Obedient faith leads to blessing** |
| **Spiritual darkness** | **Spiritual light** |

The book is totally positive. "Ruth is a literary masterpiece. The author, with consummate artistry, great delicacy, obvious enjoyment, yet a bare minimum of words, has depicted people who, although magnanimous, are believable. At one level this is what the story teaches: its characters live, love, and relate so as to be the enfleshment of the Hebrew concept of *sedaqa* 'righteousness,' 'integrity,' illustrating in concrete terms life under God's covenant. The story has no villain. Orpah does leave her mother-in-law, but only after a second appeal, and the nearer kinsman is perfectly willing to redeem the land until his own patrimony is jeopardized by the concomitant requirement of marrying Ruth" (LaSor, 614).

E. The Book of Ruth is best understood in light of two customs in the Law of Moses:

1. The Practice of Gleaning (Deut. 24:19-22; Lev. 19:9, 10): Israel's "welfare system" required work by the poor ("workfare"). Landowners could not harvest the corners of their fields so that the poor, the aliens, the widows and the orphans could pick up ("glean") these remaining sheaves. Ruth benefited from this merciful provision in the Law (2:2, 3, 7, 8, 15-19, 22).

2. The Kinsman-Redeemer (Deut. 25:5-10): The Law also required a dead man’s brother to marry his widow and raise up their first son in the name of his brother. While the Law prohibited sexual relations with a sister-in-law (Lev. 18:16), this kinsman-redeemer provision was *required* when the brother died: (a) without a son (male heir) and (b) when these brothers lived together having jointly inherited their father's property. The new husband was called the "kinsman-redeemer," or *goel* (Hebrew). If the deceased man had no living brother then the *goel* was the closest male relative. Ruth's first husband, Mahlon (4:10), had no brother, thus making the next closest kin responsible (3:12), but since he refused to marry Ruth (4:5-6), Boaz became the closest kin. This emphasis on the *goel* in Ruth is evident as the kinsman-redeemer appears 13 times in only four chapters.

This kinsman-redeemer (*goel*) theme beautifully typifies Christ’s relationship with the Church. Four requirements existed for a legitimate *goel*, all of which Christ fulfilled as the *goel* to redeem people:

1. He must be related by blood to those he redeems (2:20; cf. Deut. 25:5, 7-10). Jesus was God made fully man (John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-15).

2. He must be able to pay the redemption price (2:1; cf. 1 Peter 1:18-19).

3. He must be willing to redeem (3:11; cf. Matt. 20:28; John 10:15, 18; Heb. 10:7).

4. He must be free himself (4:10; cf. the virgin birth freed Christ from the curse of sin; Matt. 1:23).

F. Although most (except the first infidel below) would agree that Ruth is a beautiful story, its theme is debated. The following shows what some have suggested as the main teaching of the book:

1. No Purpose Whatsoever: "…The book of Ruth [is] an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country-girl, creeping shyly to bed with her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed, to be called the Word of God! It is however, one of the best books of the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine" (Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*).

2. Affirmation of King David's rights to the throne of Israel (John Reed, *BKC*, 1:418). This includes identifying David with the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant in his priestly role in the order of Melchizedek (cf. 1 Chron. 15–17; Pss. 2, 110) rather than the conditional Mosaic Covenant (Thomas L. Constable, “A Theology of Joshua, Ruth, and Judges,” in *A Biblical Theology of the OT*, ed. Roy B. Zuck, 96). Thus David functioned both as king (whose genealogy stretched back to Judah—Ruth 4:18; Gen. 49:10) and priest.

3. God's faithful, providential workings: "The Lord is faithful in his business of loving, superintending, and providentially caring for his people" (Reed, *BKC*, 418); cf. "God is at work in the 'corners of the land' though violence may fill the news" (Wiersbe, *Expository Outlines on the OT*, 131); Ruth focuses "on God's providential activity in the lives of the participants" (LaSor, 614); "God watches over his people and brings blessing to those who trust Him" (Morris, 242); Ronald Hals, *The Theology of the Book of Ruth*, Facet Books Biblical Series 23 [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969], 18).

4. "Since God's people are recipients of his grace they, like Ruth and Boaz, should respond in faithful obedience to him and in gracious acts towards other people" (Reed, *BKC*, 1:418)

5. Redemption/Kinsman-Redeemer: The illustration of grace by redeeming others (*TTTB*, 67; cf. Reed, *BKC*, 418) is a type of Christ’s redemptive role.

6. "Put Your Life Together" (title of Warren Wiersbe's book)

7. "Men, watch out for those women; they'll get you yet" (H. Gunkel)

8. Marriage to foreigners is OK: Ruth defends against the exclusivism and nationalism shown in the forced divorcing of pagan wives by Ezra and Nehemiah (Abraham Geiger in 1857, followed by Bertholet, Rost, Weiser). [But Ruth became an Israelite!]

9. Entertainment (R. H. Pfeiffer, *Intro. to OT*, [New York: Harper, 1941], 719)

10. Several other purposes: friendship, faithfulness, kinsman-redeemer, don’t exclude Moabites, why David took his parents to Moab (cf. F. B. Huey, “Ruth,” *EBC*, 3:512)

11. God blesses those who help others: "As a just king Yahweh [God] (1) **provides** for the needs of widows/resident aliens… and (2) **blesses** (fertility, family continuity, great descendant) those who demonstrate loyalty/devotion (*hesed*) in their relationships to others (cf. Ps. 18:25)" (Robert Chisholm, DTS Notes; Judah J. Slotki, “Ruth” in *The Soncino Books of the Bible: The Five Megilloth*, ed. A. Cohen [London: Soncino, 1946], 38).

Of the many options above, the last description of the purpose of the book seems to have the most to commend it as shown in the following argument and outline.

**Argument**

The Book of Ruth chronicles the devotion of Ruth, a young Moabitess widow, to Naomi, her widowed mother-in-law. It purposes to show how God blesses those who help others, which is especially significant since the story takes place in the most selfish period of Israel's history—the time of the judges—when "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg. 21:25). The LORD blesses Ruth's devotion to Naomi first only through provision of temporal needs such as food and protection (Ruth 1–2), but the account ends climactically with Ruth's reward of a home and especially participation in the Davidic and messianic line (Ruth 3–4). Therefore, the Book of Ruth stands as a strong apologetic for the benefits of selfless and righteous living during the most selfish and unrighteous period of Israel's history.

**Synthesis**

**God rewards the selfless**

**1–2 Devotion brings food and protection**

1 Selflessness shown

1:1-5 Setting

1:6-18 Ruth's Devotion

1:19-22 Naomi's Bitterness

2 Temporal rewards

2:1-3 God's guidance

2:4-16 Food/protection

2:17-23 Hope for redemption

**3–4 Devotion brings messianic ancestry**

3 Redemption requested

3:1-5 Naomi instructs

3:6-9 Ruth proposes

3:10-15 Boaz accepts

3:16-18 Ladies anticipate

4 Eternal rewards

4:1-13a Marriage/finances

4:13b Son

4:14-17 Renewed Naomi

4:18-21 Davidic/Messianic line

**Outline**

**Summary Statement for the Book**

**Ruth's devotion to Naomi benefits both of them by God's provision of food, a home, and participation in the Davidic and messianic line to show how God blesses those who help others.**

# The significance of Ruth's devotion to Naomi benefiting both of them by God's provision of food and protection is to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 1–2).

## Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi by leaving family and country to return to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (Ruth 1).

### Ruth and Naomi became widows after the deaths of their husbands Mahlon (Naomi and Elimelech's son) and Elimelech while the family lived in Moab to escape Bethlehem’s famine (1:1-5).

### Ruth's devotion to Naomi by leaving family and country to travel to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (1:6-18).

#### When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, her daughter-in-law Orpah (Moabite: "stubbornness") stayed in Moab to pursue a selfish, pagan, idolatrous lifestyle (1:6-14).

#### Unlike Orpah, Ruth (Heb: "friendship") left her family, country, and idolatry by returning to Bethlehem with Naomi in her selfless commitment to others and God (1:15-18).

### Naomi (Heb: "pleasant") was bitter against God in wanting the name Mara (Heb: "bitterness") as she couldn’t see Ruth as God’s provision to show how not to react to trials (1:19-22).

## Ruth's devotion to Naomi by working for her benefited them by God's provision of food, protection, and hope for future redemption to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 2).

### God guided Ruth to the field of her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, due to her initiative to work for Naomi to show his pleasure with those who sacrifice for others (2:1-3).

### Boaz rewards Ruth's gleaning for Naomi when he protects her and provides food for her as God's blessing for her own kindness to Naomi (2:4-16).

### Ruth shared her blessing of food with Naomi and saw Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer, thus filling Naomi with anticipation, thankfulness, and hope for future redemption (2:17-23).

# The significance of Ruth's devotion to Naomi where Boaz rewards beyond her dreams with a home and sharing in David’s and Messiah’s line is to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 3–4).

## Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz shows her devotion to Naomi and his accepting her proposal shows his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (Ruth 3).

### Naomi requested Ruth to follow her plan for the young woman's redemption and Ruth agreed to follow the plan entirely, thus again showing her devotion to her mother-in-law (3:1-5).

### Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz showed her devotion to Naomi since without remarriage she had no long-term way to support herself and Naomi (3:6-9).

### Boaz gladly accepted Ruth's proposal contingent on the refusal of the nearer kinsman to show his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (3:10-15).

### Naomi and Ruth expected Ruth's redemption by the nearer kinsman or Boaz that very day (3:16-18).

## Ruth's reward of redemption by Boaz for her devotion to Naomi exceeds her dreams in her relationships and sharing in Davidic and messianic line to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 4).

### Ruth's reward of marriage and financial security for her devotion to Naomi occurred as the nearer kinsman refused his right to redemption and Boaz married Ruth (4:1-13a).

### The birth of Ruth's son Obed rewarded her devotion to Naomi (4:13b).

### A renewed Naomi rewarded Ruth for her devotion to Naomi (4:14-17)!

### Participation in the Davidic and messianic line became Ruth's greatest reward for her devotion to Naomi to show how God blesses those who help others (4:18-22).

**Be Relational**

***Ruth***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*:

**The way God blesses those who help others is seen in Ruth's devotion to Naomi that benefits both of them by God's provision of food, a home, and sharing in the Davidic and messianic line.**

# The significance of Ruth's devotion to Naomi benefiting both of them by God's provision of food and protection is to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 1–2).

## Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi by leaving family and country to return to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (Ruth 1).

### Ruth and Naomi became widows after the deaths of their husbands Mahlon (Naomi and Elimelech's son) and Elimelech while the family lived in Moab to escape Bethlehem’s famine (1:1-5).

### Ruth's devotion to Naomi by leaving family and country to travel with her to Bethlehem exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (1:6-18).

#### When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, her daughter-in-law Orpah (Moabite: "stubbornness") stayed in Moab to pursue a selfish, pagan, idolatrous lifestyle (1:6-14).

#### Unlike Orpah, Ruth (Heb: "friendship") left her family, country, and idolatry by returning to Bethlehem with Naomi in her selfless commitment to others and God (1:15-18).

### Naomi (Heb: "pleasant") was bitter against God in wanting the name Mara (Heb: "bitterness") as she couldn’t see Ruth as God’s provision to show how not to react to trials (1:19-22).

## Ruth's devotion to Naomi by working for her benefited them by God's provision of food, protection, and hope for future redemption to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 2).

### God guided Ruth to the field of her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, due to her initiative to work for Naomi to show his pleasure with those who sacrifice for others (2:1-3).

### Boaz rewards Ruth's gleaning for Naomi when he protects her and provides food for her as God's blessing for her own kindness to Naomi (2:4-16).

### Ruth shared her blessing of food with Naomi and saw Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer, thus filling Naomi with anticipation, thankfulness, and hope for future redemption (2:17-23).

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### The birth of Ruth's son Obed rewarded her devotion to Naomi (4:13b).

### A renewed Naomi rewarded Ruth for her devotion to Naomi (4:14-17)!

### Participation in the Davidic and messianic line became Ruth's greatest reward for her devotion to Naomi to show how God blesses those who help others (4:18-22).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will be devoted to someone whom they have not been helping.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: The world says that “God helps those who help themselves.”

### Need: The Bible says that “God helps those who help others.”

### Subject: How does God reward us when we care for others?

### Background: The period of Judges was the most self-entered era of Israel’s history. The story of Ruth takes place at this time to highlight how God responds when we live counter-culture by living a selfless life.

### Preview: We will see two ways that God blesses our helping others.

### Text: Today we will survey the entire book of Ruth.

(How does God reward us when we care for others?)

# I. God meets our own needs.

[When we care for others, God cares for us in a special way.]

## Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi by leaving family and country to return to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (Ruth 1).

### Ruth and Naomi became widows after the deaths of their husbands Mahlon (Naomi and Elimelech's son) and Elimelech while the family lived in Moab to escape Bethlehem’s famine (1:1-5).

### Ruth's devotion to Naomi by leaving family and country to travel with her to Bethlehem exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (1:6-18).

#### When Naomi returned to Bethlehem, her daughter-in-law Orpah (Moabite: "stubbornness") stayed in Moab to pursue a selfish, pagan, idolatrous lifestyle (1:6-14).

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### Naomi (Heb: "pleasant") was bitter against God in wanting the name Mara (Heb: "bitterness") as she couldn’t see Ruth as God’s provision to show how not to react to trials (1:19-22).

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### Boaz rewards Ruth's gleaning for Naomi when he protects her and provides food for her as God's blessing for her own kindness to Naomi (2:4-16).

### Ruth shared her blessing of food with Naomi and saw Boaz as a potential kinsman-redeemer, thus filling Naomi with anticipation, thankfulness, and hope for future redemption (2:17-23).

(How does God reward us when we care for others? At a minimum, he provides for our basic needs, such as food, shelter, and caring for our loved ones. But does it stop there? No. When we live the selfless life…)

# II. God sometimes rewards us more than we ever dreamed (Ruth 3–4).

## Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz shows her devotion to Naomi and his accepting her proposal shows his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (Ruth 3).

### Naomi requested Ruth to follow her plan for the young woman's redemption and Ruth agreed to follow the plan entirely, thus again showing her devotion to her mother-in-law (3:1-5).

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### A renewed Naomi rewarded Ruth for her devotion to Naomi (4:14-17)!

### Participation in the Davidic and messianic line became Ruth's greatest reward for her devotion to Naomi to show how God blesses those who help others (4:18-22).

(How does God reward us when we care for others?)

# Conclusion

### God helps those who help others (Main Idea).

### So how does he reward us (Main Points)?

#### God meets our own needs (Ruth 1–2).

#### God sometimes rewards us more than we ever dreamed (Ruth 3–4).

### Application: Which person in your world is God telling you to help?

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

29 October 2017

Message 8 of 66

**Be Relational**

***Ruth***

# Introduction

### The world says that “God helps those who help themselves.”

### The Bible says that “God helps those who help others.”

### \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does God reward us when we care for others?

### The period of Judges was the most self-entered era of Israel’s history. The story of Ruth takes place at this time to highlight how God responds when we live counter-culture by living a selfless life.

# I. God meets our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ needs.

## Ruth's devotion to her mother-in-law Naomi by leaving family and country to return to Bethlehem with her exemplified selfless sacrifice for others and God (Ruth 1).

## Ruth's devotion to Naomi by working for her benefited them by God's provision of food, protection, and hope for future redemption to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 2).

# II. God sometimes rewards us more than we ever \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Ruth 3–4).

## Ruth's request for redemption by Boaz shows her devotion to Naomi and his accepting her proposal shows his righteous response to his obligation and God's blessing upon Ruth's faith (Ruth 3).

## Ruth's reward of redemption by Boaz for her devotion to Naomi exceeds her dreams in her relationships and sharing in Davidic and messianic line to show how God blesses those who help others (Ruth 4).

# Conclusion

### God helps those who help \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Main Idea).

### Application: Which person in your world is God telling you to help?

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**Ruth**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **God Rewards the Selfless** | | | |
| **Devotion Brings**  **Food & Protection** | | **Devotion Brings**  **Messianic Ancestry** | |
| **Love Revealed** | | **Love Rewarded** | |
| **Ruth and Naomi** | | **Ruth and Boaz** | |
| **Return** | | **Romance** | |
| **Chapters 1–2** | | **Chapters 3–4** | |
| **Selflessness**  **Shown** | **Temporal**  **Rewards** | **Redemption**  **Requested** | **Eternal**  **Rewards** |
| **Return** | **Reward** | **Romance** | **Redeem** |
| **Death**  **of a Family** | **Ruth Cares**  **for Naomi** | **Boaz Cares**  **for Ruth** | **Birth**  **of a Family** |
| **Moab** | **Fields**  **in Bethlehem** | **Threshing Floor**  **in Bethlehem** | **Gate**  **in Bethlehem** |
| **30 Years** | | | |

**Key Word: Rewards**

**Key Verses: *Devotion*: “… Ruth replied, ‘Don’t urge me to leave you or to 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” (Ruth 1:16).**

***Reward*: “‘The LORD bless him!’ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. ‘The LORD has not stopped showing kindness to the living and the dead. She added, ‘That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers’” (Ruth 2:20)**

**Summary Statement:**

**Ruth's devotion to Naomi benefits both of them by God's provision of food, a home, and participation in the Davidic and messianic line to show how God blesses those who help others.**

**Application:**

**God helps those who help ~~themselves~~ others.**

1. Adapted from Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God\_helps\_those\_who\_help\_themselves) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)