

Cover to Cover: From Genesis to Maps
Sermon # 9 – “Ruth”
May 20, 2007

The Book of Ruth is one of only two Bible books bearing a woman’s name.

The Book of Ruth is a little book with a big message. It stands out like a shining jewel in the Old Testament. Basically, it is a story within a story.

The big story is the time of the Judges—a time of instability, rebellion and anarchy.

The small story against the backdrop of that big story is the love story of Ruth & Boaz.

1:1a – The big story: It was bad enough to be living in the time of the Judges, but now add on top of that famine.

1:1b-5 – The plot develops for “the story within the story.”

v. 3 – Difficulty becomes tragedy: Naomi’s husband dies.

v. 5 – Tragedy becomes heartache: Naomi’s two sons die.

Now that the stage is set, the love story begins to unfold. Actually, this book is more than a love story. It’s a love study—re: how to love God and how to love each other.

1. Love’s Commitment. 1:6-22

- Key verse—v. 16 (Said by a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law)
- Genuine love always seeks to commit itself.

2. Love’s Character. Chapter 2.

- In chapter 1, Ruth is clinging. In chapter 2, she is gleaning.
- When Ruth and Boaz met, Ruth’s reputation had preceded her. v. 11-12
- The Kinsman-Redeemer Law: The very next of kin had the opportunity of taking over everything his deceased relative had left behind—including his widow, children & property.

He also assumed the responsibility of (1) debts, (2) caring for the family, and (3) defending the reputation of the one who’d died before him.

Why had God instituted this law? (1) To protect widows, (2) To protect property rights (i.e., keep it in the family)

3. Love's Cultivation. Chapter 3.

- Naomi plays matchmaker. She offers Ruth a plan.
- Ruth follows Naomi's plan and Boaz responds positively. v. 10-13
- Ruth reports back to Naomi. Naomi responds with wise counsel. v. 18 – i.e., “*You’ve done all you can do. Now leave it in the hands of the Redeemer.*”

4. Love's Concern. 4:1-12.

Boaz seeks out the nearer kinsman, but the nearer kinsman cannot take on the obligation. He releases the opportunity to Boaz. So then Boaz marries Ruth.

5. Love's Capability. 4:13ff.

A son is born to the couple. v. 17. This was the beginning of the Davidic line, leading all the way to Christ.

This is especially remarkable, when you consider that Ruth was a Moabitess. But who was Boaz' mother? Matthew 1:5. Rahab the Harlot (Joshua 2, 6; Hebrews 11). And who was Boaz' ancestor Perez referred to in Ruth 4:12 & 18? The offspring of the liaison between Tamar and Judah (Genesis 38).

There is a scarlet thread of redemption that runs throughout the Bible.

SUMMATION: What does this story teach us?

- Believe in the power of love.
- Recognize the sovereignty of God.
- Seek to live responsibly in irresponsible times.
- We can have our most effective witness in the worst of times.
- (Symbolically) It's a beautiful picture of our redemption in Christ.

Boaz, the Kinsman-Redeemer, is a picture of Christ.

Ruth, who was redeemed, is a picture of us.

This “story within a story” points us to yet another story – The Greatest Story Ever Told!