

What Does It Mean to Us?

As we read and consider what the book of Ruth tells us we can see much of what you and I deal with on a regular basis in our lives.

How many times in life do we feel helpless, with no hope of getting back to where we have any hope at all? Illness, death of a family member, financial disaster, abandonment and more has taken away any joy or hope from our lives.

If we trust that God has a plan for our lives as He had a plan for Ruth's we can see hope in any situation. What can we learn from Ruth to keep us seeing Hope through our relationship with Him?

1) Remaining unselfish

We saw that Ruth might have been better to stay with her family in Moab, yet she chose to follow Naomi and care for her in her time of need.

We will go through times in life where we know that in the short-term there is a better way for you and I. But when we look at the big picture what might be best for me today might not be what God wants. When we learn to look at what God wants and how our decisions stack up again what we learn in scripture, we see things a different way.

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.(Philippians 2:3-4)

2) Know that God has a plan already in place

Ruth and Naomi just didn't happen to end up in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. God had planned that out so that there wouldn't be a lapse in timing that might have changed things. We need to trust that God has a plan for you and I far before we ever have a need.

In Luke 19:1-10 we read about Jesus as He was traveling through Jericho, and as was the case throughout most of His ministry, He was surrounded by a large crowd. To the outcasts, the rich, the poor, the sick, the rulers, and the sinners, Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Light. He was a force, drawing in the hearts of any person in His path.

Many of us remember the old song from Sunday School Class about Zacchaeus. If you don't we learned in that song that he "was a wee little man"... He was short. He wanted to see Jesus and he ran ahead of the crowd and found a tree to climb in so that He could see Him. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and called him out and went to his house to eat.

There is a saying that I have seen several times in different places and it goes, "Long before Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus, the tree was already planted to serve his need". This is a simple story and saying, but it's the truth. God knows our needs long before we even know of them and He has already figured out



how to take care of the need. We just have to rest on Him. We have no need to worry, God has it all planned out ahead.

²⁶Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

³¹"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³²For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:26-34)

3) Always do your best, you never know who's watching

If Ruth had waited behind those that were picking the grain hoping that there would be some easy pickings left, most likely the supervisor that was working for Boaz would never had taken note of her.

You and I never know who is watching us and what impact we might have on them today or in the future. We can rest assured that if no one else is watching, God is always watching over us. He sees everything. This is not to scare us into doing our best, but so we know what He cares enough to keep an eye on us.

If we are a child of God then we can rest assured that the world is also watching. Some are watching in hopes that we will mess up and they can pounce on our faith. But others are watching to see what is different about us. Boaz knew right away that there was something different about Ruth and because she was living and acting in a godly fashion, she ended up being redeemed from the life she and Naomi had been living.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

4) Be Submissive

Being submissive has somehow gotten a bad rap in today's world. When we think of someone that is submissive today we think of a skinny legged wimp with pants about his ankles, a pocket protector and



electrical tape holding the bridge of his glasses together. If that is our idea of biblical submission we are way off base.

What does submission mean? Google's dictionary defines submission as "*the action or fact of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will or authority of another person.*" Submitting means putting others before yourself; it means not always doing what you want to do. It means putting God's desires above your desires.

When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He was crucified, He was struggling about what was coming the next day. Remember Jesus was 100% man and 100% God. He had the feelings and struggles that you and I have. Which one of us would have wanted to leave our friends and family, be whipped and beaten, had to carry a heavy cross through the streets and then be nailed to that cross and hung until you died? And worst of all, which us would have wanted to watch our father turn His back on us?

Jesus didn't want any of that, and I don't blame Him. But I am so glad that He prayed, "Father not My will but Your's be done." (Luke 22:42) Now that is prefect submission.

The life of Ruth is a great example of how we are to act in our lives. We also see God provision through this great woman of faith. What else is revealed to us is the example of Jesus Christ and how He has redeemed you and I. Ruth could have gone back to her parents and her country, but she chose to stay with Naomi. She could have rejected the redemption offered by Boaz, but she accepted his gift. This is the same situation that we face as we decide to accept or reject Jesus Christ as our savior.