

“God is Present in Even the Most Minor Story”

Sermon Reflection Questions September 6, 2009

Ruth 1:1-5, Unlocking the Old Testament

The book of Ruth could have easily been left out of the Bible for the simple fact that it doesn't talk about any events that would have been considered historically or spiritually significant at the time. There is no mention of kings or prophets and at no time does God reveal himself directly to a person. It is a simple story about the faithfulness of a woman named Ruth and how God provided for her and eventually used her for His purposes.

Read over the book of Ruth.

1. From your reading or from the message, describe in your own words the plot of what is taking place in the book of Ruth.
2. What strikes you as different in the book of Ruth from the other passages that we have gone over in the Old Testament?
3. The passage says that Naomi and her husband moved out of Bethlehem because of a famine. How have we seen God use famines to move His people to His desired location? (Think of the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 42).
4. Ruth was a Moabite.
 - a. What do the following passages teach us about the Israelites relationship to the Moabites. (Numbers 25:1-3, Deuteronomy 23:3-6)
 - b. How much of an outcast could Ruth have been considered by her mother-in-law Naomi?
5. What positive character traits do you see Ruth displaying throughout her life?
6. The story is especially interesting because it takes place during the period of the judges. As we saw last week the period of the judges was filled with the people disobeying God's desires and commandments. So the ironic thing is that the people of God who should have been doing right were not doing right. Ruth who was a Moabite (and Moabites ordinarily were far from God) was living rightly. What lessons can we learn from this irony?
7. Perhaps Ruth's' most powerful statement and the resulting actions, came in chapter 1 verse 16 when she said, "Your God shall be my God." This was Ruth's' conversion to putting her faith and trust in Yahweh. What does this passage teach us about who it is that God can redeem and welcome into His family?

“God is Present in Even the Most Minor Story”
Sermon Reflection Questions September 6, 2009
Ruth 1:1-5, Unlocking the Old Testament

8. Ruth is an analogy for us, because she was born a Moabite she was born outside of the people of God, and yet because of her faith she became a member of God’s family. How is this analogous to all of us as well? (see John 1:12, Romans 5:12-21)

9. Ruth would be a minor story, except for her lineage to King David and thus to Christ. (See Ruth 4:16, Matthew 1:5). So a Moabite woman, Ruth, is listed in the genealogy of Jesus in the book of Matthew (which is primarily geared toward a Jewish audience.) What does this tell us about how God can overcome any background or past?

10. In what ways is God’s faithfulness, love and protection displayed to Ruth?

11. How might the story of Ruth encourage you in whatever situation you are in right now?