

Ruth

"Your people will be my people and your God my God." Ruth 1:16b

NUGGET - This text is one of the most famous that comes from the women of the Old Testament. It speaks of devotion and love and ... evangelism. Yes, evangelism. I know it may seem odd to say that because that is not often spoken of when you think of Ruth. But consider how she came to say these famous words.

She is not Israelite by birth. She is not a follower of Yahweh because of how she was raised. Indeed she was of people who worshipped other gods. But she came to follow the one true God, to be a believer. She was converted. And how did this happen?

It happened through her family, more specifically, through the family she married into. She was a Moabite and she married a Hebrew, a Hebrew who came to her land from the land of Judah. And in marrying into that Hebrew family, she came to know the Lord. It's important to note that:

- She and another Moabite woman both married into the same family
- She was married to her husband about 10 years before he died.

The part about another Moabite woman, Orpah, is important because when it comes time for Naomi (the mother of Ruth's husband) to leave Moab and return to the land Judah, Ruth goes with her but Orpah, stays. Ruth utters these famous words when [Naomi tries to get both the girls to stay in Moab](#) while she return to Judah. These words are Ruth's declaration of faithfulness to God and of love to her mother-in-law.

The part about 10 years is important because we so often over look it as just one line in the text. That was *10 years* of living with and getting know the Hebrew ways, one day at a time. Ruth's husband, and Naomi her mother-in-law, had 3,650 days with Ruth before she spoke these words.

In those years Ruth learned of Yahweh and His ways. She learned the stories and the traditions and in those things learned of the relationship that the living God of the Hebrews had with His people. She was not willing to give that up after 10 years. Yes, it is true she loved her mother-in-law. But that relationship served to strengthen Ruth in her devotion to the true and living God of heaven and not the idols she had known.

APPLICATION - God gives us people in our lives that sometimes come to us from 'other countries'. These are the Ruth's in our lives. Our family is where we first teach our faith and our faithfulness. Your family is your mission field and it can take years to see the fruit of your efforts and God's work.

1. Consider your family traditions, what do you always do at Christmas or birthdays that a new member of your family has to learn. What do you do to teach them those things about which they do not know?
2. Who is God using in your life that, by listening to them and honoring them with humble obedience, can guide you to a closer relationship with Christ? And consider is this; whom would God have you mentor as a 'mother Naomi'? Remember that it took 10 years for to Ruth learn faith in God.

PRAY - Ask God to guide your actions and your speech among your family. Ask Him also to give you the words and the timing to speak of Him there.

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

GOING DEEPER

Ruth teaches us many things. You'll want to read the [whole thing](#) as it's a short 4 chapters and a wonderful story. Ruth teaches us by her attitude, actions and words the beauty of being humble and obedient. Beauty is one of those characteristics of God that we don't often talk about or even think about. But in this story we see God's beauty reflected in Ruth by her humble and faithful obedience.

The beauty of God is something we are created to adore. However the beauty of God often gets lost on us, as we tend to seek God for *our* needs and not for Who *He* is in His loveliness. God's beauty is one of those things that make Him desirable to us, though we rarely consider such a thing.

His beauty gets reflected in this world in many ways. It's seen in nature in sunsets and flowers, in sweeping vistas and tiny drops of rain. Yet the highest beauty of God is seen, as with Ruth, in His service and humbleness in Jesus. What, in Ruth's story of her and Boaz, reflects how God reveals Himself in these ways?

Her ways point us to the loveliness of God. And we see His beauty in a humble person like Ruth. True humbleness can serve to attract others as it did with Jesus. And in the story of Ruth, her humbleness is not to be confused with humiliation, pettiness or insignificance. Rather she is seen as honoring her mother-in-law by remaining with her devotedly and being loving toward her. How did people then and now confuse Christ's humbleness and service with either self-delusion or insignificance? And what does Ruth teach us regarding what God sees as significant?

She does not allow panic in her circumstances or pride in her differentness to overshadow her love for Naomi and for Yahweh. By seeking Naomi's advice and listening to that advice, Ruth acknowledges that through her 'mother' comes the wisdom of God. It takes a humble heart like Ruth's to listen for God speaking to her through another trusted follower Boaz.

Ruth also plays another significant role for us gentiles. She, who was an idol worshipper as we said in the nugget, came to faith in the One True God of heaven. And this non-Jew has an honored place in the [lineage of Jesus Christ](#). What are the implications in our daily life to Ruth being in Jesus' lineage?

We too are called to honor the Lord in humble service and obedience as we learn from Ruth. But she also teaches us steadfastness and dedication. Jesus of course was steadfast in His purpose and mission on earth. Who else in scripture plays out these Godly characteristics?

Beyond Ruth's role in the lineage of Jesus we also learn of the role of kinsman-redeemer in that day. Drawing upon this story of Ruth, what are we taught regarding Jesus role of kinsman- redeemer? And what does that teach us of who we are to God?