



## **RUTH: RADICAL LOVE**

### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Daniel Block, *Judges & Ruth*, 1999.

Elyse M. Fitzpatrick & Dennis E. Johnson, *Counsel from the Cross*, 2009.

C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 1971.

Paul Miller, *A Loving Life*, 2014.

### Head: Understanding the Bible

1) Read Ruth 1:6-18. Where does the conversation between Naomi and her two daughter-in-laws take place? Why does she try to get rid of the only family she has? What specifically does Naomi pray God will do for her daughters?

*Hesed*—Hebrew for covenant love. It is in verse 8, “*May the Lord deal kindly with you.*” Sometimes it is translated steadfast love or unfailing love. *Hesed* is tricky to translate because it includes all of God’s positive attributes committing to his people. God is stuck with us because of His *hesed*. Or a better theological way of saying this would be: God voluntarily binds himself to us with his *hesed*. He is willingly trapped in a relationship with you. Love in this case is being used not as a feeling but an action.<sup>1</sup>

2) Were Ruth and Orpah followers of Yahweh at the time of this conversation? (Read vs. 15 closely) How does your answer shape your view of Ruth’s commitment to Naomi?

3) What is Ruth giving up to stay with Naomi? What does Ruth have in her possession as she walks towards Bethlehem? How will a depressed widow like Naomi survive alone?

4) Read Genesis 12:1-3. Compare Abraham’s sacrifices made in faith with Ruth. How did God bless Abraham’s faith? How then should we expect God to work through Ruth’s faith?

5) Compare Ruth’s deeds of faith with Jesus’ description of the deeds demanded by faith in Mark 8:34-38. Who seems to have a better understanding of God’s *hesed*: Naomi or Ruth?

### Heart: Using the Gospel on Our Affections

*“We draw people to Christ not by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.”*

~Madeleine Engle<sup>2</sup>

6) Why is a Ruth-like commitment so difficult? What is your natural reaction to hard relationships?

*“There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to be sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, not even to an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable...The only place outside Heaven where you can be perfectly safe from all the dangers and [anxieties] of love is Hell.”*

~C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

7) Compare Ruth’s sacrifices made for Naomi with Jesus’ sacrifices made for us. What do each have to put up with in this hesed relationship? Whose sacrifice is greater? Describe Jesus’ love for his people in your own words.

8) Read Ephesians 5:1-2. How does Ruth model the principle of love as we have been loved, even before Jesus came?

### Hands: Applying the Gospel to Our Lives

*“...walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us...”*

~Apostle Paul, Ephesians 5:2

9) Who is Jesus calling you to do hesed for? In light of the command to do hesed, what do we need to repent of?

10) How can we model hesed in our relationships at home, in the workplace, and at Hope Church? Make sure to process this question in light of the little word, *as*, in Ephesians 5:2.

*God’s disposition toward us is entirely different because we are beloved. He isn’t simply tolerating us, regretting that he opened the door to the likes of us. No we’re beloved. This is the same word the Father used to describe his disposition to his Son, Jesus (see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Eph. 1:6)<sup>3</sup>*

~Elyse Fitzpatrick

<sup>1</sup> Miller, 24-27.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Scott Sauls here: <http://scottsauls.com/2016/08/22/being-counter-culture-and-for-the-culture-at-the-same-time/>

<sup>3</sup> Fitzpatrick & Johnson, 28.