

Sunday 25 January 2009  
Sermon notes  
[www.usbc.org/sermons](http://www.usbc.org/sermons)  
© USBC – [www.usbc.org.uk](http://www.usbc.org.uk)

## **Making Connections**

### **Ruth 3 – Relationships & Marriage**



- **Trusting**

It is evident that Naomi enjoyed good relationships with both her daughter-in-laws Orpah and Ruth.

When Naomi following the death of her husband Elimelech, and her sons Kilion (Orpah's husband) and Mahlon (Ruth's husband), encourages both Orpah and Ruth to go back to their mother's home, Orpah reluctantly does so, but Ruth vows to stay with her. These were her words

*Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.*

*17 Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. Ruth 1.16-17 NIV.*

Ruth 1 describes Naomi and Ruth's journey to Bethlehem. Naomi asks that she be called Mar which means bitter, because she feels that God had made her life very bitter 1.20.

There are the "seeds of hope" as Ali described them because the Barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth 2 reveals how the Lord was continuing to provide for her and Ruth. Within scripture the needy were able to glean fields at harvest time Lev19.9, 23.22, Dt 24.19. So Ruth did so and in the doing of this met Boaz. He was impressed by Ruth (possibly attracted to her) because of her attitude to Naomi and her willingness to leave Moab and in doing so to make the God of Israel (Yahweh) her God. He speaks a blessing over her

*May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge. Ruth 2.12*

Ruth 3 shows us how relationships are being strengthened. Naomi is concerned that Ruth has her own home and husband 3.1

Parents in those days and still in parts of our world arranged marriages, so here Naomi is taking on her motherly role. For Ruth to follow Naomi's instructions reveal that a strong relationship of love and trust has been established between them. Ruth has already demonstrated by her harvesting activity that she is concerned to provide not only for her needs but for Naomi's also.

Nomi tells Ruth to wait until Boaz is asleep and go to him and lie at his feet v4, 7.

Ruth in acting upon this instruction is not only placing trust in Naomi but also in Boaz. She is indeed making herself vulnerable. This action was to remind Boaz that he was a relative and as such he could redeem the situation 2.20, &

"Sir, I am Ruth," she answered, "and you are the relative who is supposed to take care of me. So spread the edge of your cover over me."  
Ruth 3.9

This is Ruth in effect saying to Boaz that it was for Boaz to fulfill his responsibility to his family and take her as his wife.

This highlights that within scripture for a marriage to take place it needed to be consummated and within the OT this act of love and commitment demonstrated that marriage had taken place. It is about a husband and wife becoming one Genesis 2.24.

Rob Bell in his book Sex God explores sexuality and has a chapter called "Under the Chuppah" where he describes an ancient Jewish tradition which has roots in the Exodus. In doing so he is expressing that marriage is a sacred thing and is a picture of God and His people coming together.

Jesus when asked about divorce speaks of marriage and speaks of it as God's creation and is an exclusive relationship between husband and wife

*...at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate. Matthew 19.4-6.*

In an age where safe sex and recreational sex are promoted Ruth helps us to get back to the basics of quality relationships and reminds us that the first question is " would I like to marry this person".

- **Being loving** (Hesed – Kindness, steadfast love)

*The LORD bless you, my daughter, he replied. This **kindness** is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. 3.10*

The love and kindness demonstrated by Naomi Ruth and Boaz is a picture of the love and kindness shown by God 1.8, 2.20, 3.10. This is a quality of care that includes, love, steadfastness, loyalty, faithfulness. Exodus 15.11 reminds us that God had led his person whom he had redeemed, that is made free from the Egyptians and he had led them with steadfast love. God is a God who keeps his promise and as the story of Ruth illustrates is a God who truly loves.

- **Honour**

*Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. 3.12*

Honour is demonstrated in the way in which Ruth acts upon Naomi's instructions. It is also seen in the response of Boaz who whilst flattered by Ruth reminding him of his family responsibilities and fairly directly offering to marry him, is aware that there is a closer relative who first must make his response.

Honouring God and one another is important in our relationships. It shows respect and demonstrates an unwillingness to take advantage of others.

- **Generosity**

*He also said, Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out. When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. Then he went back to town 3.15.*

Boaz has things to do – see Ruth 4. Yet what is evident from the outset is that Boaz is a godly man and with it displays generosity and kindness. From Boaz comment he is not young, how physically attractive we do not know, but we do see his character shines brightly and the account of Ruth suggest that this was highly attractive.

Generosity is once again a quality that mirrors God. God wants us to be generous in our giving, not only of material things but of ourselves. Sometimes are greatest gift is that of our time. How important it is to value family time, time with friends, and the time God has given us, so as to invest wisely.

### **For Small Groups Ruth 3**

- If you are picking up the story of Ruth for the first time read the story through together.
- Identify the qualities displayed by Naomi, Ruth and Boaz in the story so far. What is it that has helped their relationships to grow .
- Reflect upon the qualities displayed, trust, love and kindness, honour and generosity.
- What helpful insights does Ruth 3 provide about marriage?
- Pray or relationships – our own, family and friends, within our Church family, within community and the world. Lift to God particular people and needs that you are aware of.