



A Guide for Spiritual Formation

Text for the Week: Ruth 1

Message for the Week: Irrational Faith

Sunday, January 19

Opening:

What is one low (a bad thing) and one high (a good thing) that happened to you this past week? Write them down and take turns sharing them with the others in your group.

Where have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life this past week?

When did you make a decision out of desperation? What was it? What were the unintended consequences of your decision?

Preparation:

Spend 1-2 minutes in silence with God to center and prepare yourself for your time with God today.

Read:

Read / Have two people in your group read [Ruth 1](#) out loud.

[Clicking the link will bring you to multiple translations.]

As you read and/or listen to the text being read, circle, highlight, or underline what words, phrases, or ideas grabbed your attention and heart in these verses?

Write them down below and/or share them with those who are with you.

Respond / Reflect:

What do you think was the cause or motivation for Ruth to behave the way she did in this story?

Where do you see signs of compassion and deliverance in this story?

What type of life experiences could cause someone to feel that there is little or no hope?

What is God / the Lord doing throughout this story?

What do you make of Ruth's commitment and loyalty within this story?

Take Away:

What is a main point or key message that you learned, understood, observed, or experienced that you are taking away with you from your group's reflections on the bible passage or your group's conversations today?

Prayer:

Spend time in prayer with/for the other people who are with you. Who in your group needs prayer today? Who in your group will you pray for?

Pray this prayer together:

Heavenly Father, our faith is often weak. We want to see and know rather than follow your still, small voice. Give us the courage to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit so that we follow where you lead. AMEN

"Try It" - Putting our Faith into Action:

Each day this week, answer this question: "Where do you see God at work?"

Ruth 1 – New International Version

1 In the days when the judges ruled,^[a] there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ² The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. ³ Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁶ When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹ May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰ and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

¹¹ But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— ¹³ would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!"

¹⁴ At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, "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 even death separates you and me." ¹⁸ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

¹⁹ So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

²⁰ "Don't call me Naomi,^[b]" she told them. "Call me Mara,^[c] because the Almighty^[d] has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted^[e] me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

²² So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Footnotes

- a. [Ruth 1:1](#) Traditionally *judged*
- b. [Ruth 1:20](#) Naomi means *pleasant*.
- c. [Ruth 1:20](#) Mara means *bitter*.
- d. [Ruth 1:20](#) Hebrew *Shaddai*; also in verse 21
- e. [Ruth 1:21](#) Or *has testified against*

Ruth 1 - The Message

1¹⁻² Once upon a time—it was back in the days when judges led Israel—there was a famine in the land. A man from Bethlehem in Judah left home to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The man's name was Elimelech; his wife's name was Naomi; his sons were named Mahlon and Kilion—all Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They all went to the country of Moab and settled there.

3³⁻⁵ Elimelech died and Naomi was left, she and her two sons. The sons took Moabite wives; the name of the first was Orpah, the second Ruth. They lived there in Moab for the next ten years. But then the two brothers, Mahlon and Kilion, died. Now the woman was left without either her young men or her husband.

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6⁶⁻⁷ One day she got herself together, she and her two daughters-in-law, to leave the country of Moab and set out for home; she had heard that God had been pleased to visit his people and give them food. And so she started out from the place she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law with her, on the road back to the land of Judah.

8⁸⁻⁹ After a short while on the road, Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, "Go back. Go home and live with your mothers. And may God treat you as graciously as you treated your deceased husbands and me. May God give each of you a new home and a new husband!" She kissed them and they cried openly.

10 They said, "No, we're going on with you to your people."

11¹¹⁻¹³ But Naomi was firm: "Go back, my dear daughters. Why would you come with me? Do you suppose I still have sons in my womb who can become your future husbands? Go back, dear daughters—on your way, please! I'm too old to get a husband. Why, even if I said, 'There's still hope!' and this very night got a man and had sons, can you imagine being satisfied to wait until they were grown? Would you wait that long to get married again? No, dear daughters; this is a bitter pill for me to swallow—more bitter for me than for you. God has dealt me a hard blow."

14 Again they cried openly. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye; but Ruth embraced her and held on.

15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is going back home to live with her own people and gods; go with her."

16¹⁶⁻¹⁷ But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you; don't make me go home. Where you go, I go; and where you live, I'll live. Your people are my people, your God is my god; where you die, I'll die, and that's where I'll be buried, so help me God—not even death itself is going to come between us!"

18¹⁸⁻¹⁹ When Naomi saw that Ruth had her heart set on going with her, she gave in. And so the two of them traveled on together to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem the whole town was soon buzzing: "Is this really our Naomi? And after all this time!"

20²⁰⁻²¹ But she said, "Don't call me Naomi; call me Bitter. The Strong One has dealt me a bitter blow. I left here full of life, and God has brought me back with nothing but the clothes on my back. Why would you call me Naomi? God certainly doesn't. The Strong One ruined me."

22 And so Naomi was back, and Ruth the foreigner with her, back from the country of Moab. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.