

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Sermon Series: Ruth
Title: Trust and Obey God
Speaker: Steve Berg
Text: Ruth 3
Date: November 19, 2017



REVIEW

Naomi and Ruth have established a relationship with Boaz, who is Naomi's close relative. Through Ruth's resourcefulness and Boaz's kindness and generosity, these two women have managed to survive. The question follows then, "How will they manage to live in the long term back in Naomi's home town?"

DISCUSSION

The Text: Ruth 3

The story plays itself in three scenes:

- Scene 1: 3:1-6 – Naomi's Daring Proposal
- Scene 2: 3:7-15 – The Midnight Conversation – the Ruth/Boaz Encounter
- Scene 3: 3:16-18 – Debriefing the Results

The Players: As you re-read the story, what was the thinking of each of the three main actors?

- **Naomi:** What was her plan? What was her strategy? Can you think of some other options Naomi might have used to make her point?
- **Ruth:** Is she just a puppet in Naomi's scheme? Why, or why not? What makes Ruth a person of integrity? (See below)

The Message is a *paraphrase* (it takes a shot at interpreting the text), not a *translation*. Perhaps the text 3:9-18 will be helpful: *She said, "I am Ruth, your maiden; take me under your protecting wing. You're my close relative, you know, in the circle of covenant redeemers—you do have the right to marry."* (Wow! She's rather proactive!) *He said, "God bless you, my dear daughter! What a splendid expression of love! And when you could have had your pick of any of the young men around. And now, my dear daughter, don't you worry about a thing; I'll do all you could want or ask. Everybody in town knows what a courageous woman you are—a real prize!"*

- **Boaz:** Does he perhaps come off best? (See above)

Responding to the Text:

- If you gave this story to a person who wasn't conversant with the Bible, how would they understand this text? What assumptions might they make about the players in the story? How might they describe Naomi's strategy? How might they interpret Ruth's actions? What might they think about Boaz?
- Even as believing Christians we are seeing this story through our own contemporary lens. How were those times culturally different than ours?

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Application Possibilities:

As much as some have wanted to sanitize completely the romantic aspect of the story ("It was just family business. Nothing romantic."), there was the reality of temptation for both Ruth and Boaz. However, they remained people of integrity.

- Steve's message focuses on our trust and obedience to God in challenging times to maintain our integrity:
 - * What would be some temptations that might arise for us to lose our integrity? In business, in the media, in relationships, in marriage, in the workplace, in school?
 - * Remember that South Abbotsford Church's priorities are: (Share with each other)
 - ⇒ **Prayer Engagement** - Is there opportunity for confession for our healing (James 5:16)? Praying in triads perhaps here?
 - ⇒ **Holy Spirit Empowerment:** Is there a place for Ruth-like boldness where the Holy Spirit seems to be prompting you to greater personal growth?
 - ⇒ **Difference-making Faith:** Is there a place in your daily settings where you are being called to live with integrity so that Christ's light will shine in a dark place?