

The Life Challenge

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

Sermon Series: Ruth

Title: A Series of Unfortunate Events

Speaker: Matt Ewert

Text: Ruth 1

Date: October 29, 2017



(The material below is a resource from which you can select what will be most appropriate, challenging and transforming for your Life Group. There is far more material below than you could possibly tackle in one session. As you sense the Holy Spirit guidance, you will be able to select the right material for your group.)

DISCUSSION

REVIEW: "Vintage Faith" Series

- Three priority areas for this year at SAC:
 1. Prayer Engagement
 2. Holy Spirit Empowerment
 3. Difference-making Faith
- How has your thinking been influenced as a result of focussing on these key areas?
- Share how you have participated in an experience through this transforming perspective?

Before you read the text (Ruth 1)

- **Get into the narrative:** Inject yourself directly into the story. Your family is in a similar struggle with Ruth's family – famine in Bethlehem. You and your family are close friends with them. You decide to uproot yourselves and move to Moab along with them. You watch their story unfold right in front of you.

Now, read the text as a player in the drama:

- What part of the story grabbed you the most?
- List all the ways that Naomi experienced losses that resulted in disconnecting her from who she used to be?
- What emotions might you experience as these friends go through such unfortunate events?
- Ruth's family had to make some crucial decisions. As their friends, what kind of advice would you have given to Ruth and the widows?

So what about Naomi and Ruth? Getting Illumination Across Time, Culture, and Language

- What do you admire about Ruth and Naomi?
- Why was "the whole town (was) stirred because of them" (Naomi and Ruth)?
- Why did Naomi and Ruth not fit the mold in Bethlehem?

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DISCUSSION

The Pain of Disconnectedness: (This stuff can get pretty close to where we might be right now!)

- Can you share some instances where you felt disconnected, isolated, alone, without support—when you didn't seem to matter?
- Do Pastor Matt's two terms resonate with you: "spiritual widowhood" and "spiritual infertility"?
- Which one of these transformations is one which you desire most? Add to this list if necessary:
 - * From insignificance to significance
 - * From brokenness to wholeness
 - * From bitterness to freedom
 - * From hopelessness to expectation
 - * From anxiety to peace

Conclusions:

Prayer Engagement:

Enter into a time of prayer for each other regarding these disconnections we are now experiencing. Be sensitive for the appropriate setting for such prayers in your group - one on one, triads, men separate from women etc.

Holy Spirit empowerment:

As you walk through this next week, how can you specifically practice one of these transformations under the guidance and encouragement of the Holy Spirit?

Difference-making faith:

Doubtless you will know "not-yet-believers" who are experiencing some Naomi experiences. How might you be able to minister to those needs?