

## SUNDAY

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May 15, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 3 (You may want to re-read chapters 1 & 2 to refresh yourself with this story)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Who are the players in this story? What position in "society" do they hold? What is their relationship to one another? Where do you see God at work in this story?

**KEY CONCEPT:** God's sovereign plan is always being worked out in the world.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** How much of the Ruth story to this point (chapters 1-3) do you think are just a random series of unconnected events vs. God bringing about His plan in some way for His purposes? How easy is it to see God at work in our midst during the present time vs. looking back and connecting the dots later and seeing the evidence of His fingerprints? Where have you seen God's hand at work in your own past? Do you think He is at work right now in some particular way? How are you allowing God to use you in some way to achieve His plan and purpose?

**PRAY:** When we pray the Lord's prayer, we say "Thy (your) will be done..." Have you thought that you can be a part of the answer to this prayer? Today open your heart and mind to the idea that God wants to work His will in and through you. Yield yourself to Him in prayer, asking for Him to reveal how you might be available to Him. When he answers that prayer with revelation, decide to obey His leading, however it may challenge you (as it did Ruth in staying with Naomi).

## MONDAY

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May 16, 2011

**READ:** Judges 17: 6

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** The time of the Judges was the context within which the book of Ruth was written. What does this verse reveal to you about this time in Israel's history? What does it mean when it says "everyone did as he saw fit?"

**KEY CONCEPT:** During Ruth's time, the Jews by and large were not worshiping God or heeding the covenant that had been established with God. People lived for themselves...doing what seemed right in their own eyes.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Do you see parallels in our culture today to what was going on in the time of the judges? Can you understand why Ruth's sacrificial choice to stand by her mother-in-law would have been seen as noble and apart from the norm of the world in those days? What things can you think of that seem quaint or old fashioned today that used to be the standard (i.e. sealing a deal with a handshake, a man's word is his bond, etc.). Do you tend to "go with the culture" or stand for an absolute standard of right and wrong when making decisions that have a moral component? How does one keep from "doing what seems right in his own eyes?"

**PRAY:** When we don't have a standard of measurement, drift occurs. What seems right to one person may not to another. Arbitrariness sets in. People are cheated or wronged. Relationships are damaged and trust diminishes. Today, start the practice of reading one chapter of the Book of Proverbs each day, and then take time to pray to God about what you have read, asking Him to help you honor Him in all you do.

## TUESDAY

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May 17, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 3

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What was Naomi suggesting that Ruth do? What was she hoping for outcome of that suggestion? What risk was Ruth putting herself in by following Naomi's suggestion...how could things have turned out differently?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Risk is a part of life. Trust, hope, and sometimes desperation, are catalysts for taking risks that may or may not turn out for the best. If we are obedient to God, we put ourselves in a good place to receive His blessings.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** What role did trust, hope, and desperation play in what Naomi suggested to Ruth. How do you think that Ruth's self-less life choices (to help Naomi) affected how things turned out for her on the threshing floor? What role do you think God played in this scenario? Do you sense God's pleasure when you live in an "others-centered" fashion? Have you ever risked much and sensed God's provision in how things turned out? How might you do something that would be a blessing to someone else this week? (Note: a Core Value of McLane Church is a commitment to be inconvenienced for the sake of the Gospel.)

**PRAY:** To decide to honor God with our lives will put us in a place where we are faced with a choice. Sometimes the choice will appear very risky or costly (see Matthew 19: 16-22). Other times, perhaps it is just being willing to be inconvenienced in some way. In every situation, we can choose to say yes or no to God. If Jesus is the Lord of our life, our answer will always be "yes." Today, approach God in prayer and offer Him a wonderful gift, the gift of a willing spirit.

## WEDNESDAY

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May 18, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 3 (esp. verses 1-9)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** A kinsman redeemer was a relative who volunteered to take responsibility for the extended family (see Deut. 25: 5-10). The nearest relative did not have to marry the widow. If they did not, the next nearest could, but they did not have to either. If nobody married the widow, she might have ended up living in poverty due to the male-based inheritance laws in effect at that time.

**KEY CONCEPT:** Jewish law provided for the welfare of widows and the impoverished through kinsmen-redeemers and gleaning fields. Consider that our sin impoverishes us in the face of God's holiness, and He provides a redeemer for that sin in Jesus Christ.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Have you ever considered the idea of your sin as a spiritual impoverishment? The idea of poverty implies the lack of something (usually money or material goods). While we feel and see the effect of material poverty, how can we do the same with our spiritual impoverishment? Do you feel the need to have your spiritual poverty redeemed by God? Have you accepted God's gift of grace and mercy in Jesus Christ?

**PRAY:** Spend time today considering your sin from a perspective of spiritual impoverishment. Even if you have trusted Christ for your salvation, sin finds a way to touch our lives (by commission or omission). Ask God for His forgiveness for that sin, and thank Him for the promise of its redemption through the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

## THURSDAY

May 19, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 3: 1-6

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** How did Ruth receive the suggestion that Naomi made to her? What does that suggest about the nature of their relationship?

**KEY CONCEPT:** A strong, trusting relationship between two people allows each to speak openly into one another's life.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Do you think that it was difficult for Naomi to ask Ruth to go to the threshing floor? How do you think Ruth felt when Naomi asked her to do something that would change her life? What does it take to develop such a trusting relationship that Naomi and Ruth had. How have you responded when asked by someone you love to do something radically different or difficult?

**PRAY:** Ruth followed Naomi's advice because she knew Naomi was kind, trustworthy, and filled with moral integrity. If you need someone with wisdom to speak into your life, pray to God today that He might help you know who that person is. Also consider praying that God will help you develop those character traits which will allow you to speak wisdom into another's life.

## FRIDAY

May 20, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 3 (esp. verse 18)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What was Naomi's expectation of Boaz? Why do you think she felt that way about him?

**KEY CONCEPT:** A positive reputation is built upon a lifetime of integrity, trustworthiness, and dependability.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Are there people in your own life that you know will always do the right thing? Think about these people and try to understand what makes them that way. Did they have a good upbringing? Are they people of faith, with a foundation on God's Word? How does their lifestyle of integrity affect their relationship with the people in their life (co-workers, employers, family & friends)? Are you one of those people who others know will be trustworthy and faithful?

**PRAY:** Thank God for the people He has put in your life who are foundations in whom you can trust. Ask God to bless them...refreshing them physically, emotionally, and spiritually as they continue to stand for righteousness in a dark world. Pray also for God to help you strengthen your own reputation through right living and good choices.

## SATURDAY

May 21, 2011

**READ:** Ruth 1:16-17; 3:5-6; Esther 4: 15-16; Luke 1:26-38

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What is it that is common to Ruth, Esther, and Mary in these three passages? You may need to read more of Esther to get the context of what she says in these verses.

**KEY CONCEPT:** Sometimes we are called upon to do hard things that have the potential to be costly to us. How we respond can make a big difference in the lives of others as well as our own.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Ruth is risking shame and humiliation, Esther risks death, and Mary risks the shame of being unmarried and pregnant. What is it in each instance that calls these women to rise above the circumstances and respond the way that they do? When have you been called (by a person or by God) to do something that had peril of some sort involved? What caused you to make the decision you made? In retrospect, did you make the right choice, or do you wish you'd done things differently? What did you learn that may affect how you decide such things in the future?

**PRAY:** Life comes at us quickly, often presenting difficult choices that demand decisions be made by us. Start each day in prayer, asking God to grant you wisdom to understand what is right...not just what is helpful to you...when you are faced with these situations. Pray also for the courage to choose what is right, even when it may be costly to you in some way.



Personal Devotional Guide - May 15 - 21, 2011  
McLane Church :: Erie County, PA

The story of  
RUTH