

Small Group 7th June 2019 – Ruth 1

The book of Ruth is a study of love – Naomi’s love for her daughters in law, Ruth’s love, the love of Boaz and God’s love and provision.

Chapter 1 is about suffering and loss. The book “A Loving Life” by Paul E Miller begins by saying that suffering is the crucible of love.

Does anyone feel able to speak of a time of difficulty or loss, perhaps a time when you felt very alone, and how God taught you then?

Word. Turn to Ruth 1.

This book is set in the time of the Judges – a world of paganism, 1100BC – what we call the Iron Age. “Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” The Moabites lived on the other side of the Jordan from Israel and were descended from Lot by an incestuous relationship – looked down on by the Jews.

Ruth 1, v1-5.

Why was what happened such a disaster for Naomi?

Why did the Israelites hate the Moabites? Deuteronomy 23 v2-4, Numbers 25 v1-3

Ruth 1, v6-14.

What loving actions do we see in this passage?

Why does Naomi urge her daughters in law to stay in Moab?

What does Naomi think God is doing in v13?

When God does not meet our expectations it opens the door not just to despair but also to cynicism, to shutting down our hearts towards God.

We have to hang in there with the story that God has permitted in our lives. As we endure, as we keep showing up for life when it makes no sense, we learn to love and God shows up too.

What glimmer of hope did Naomi have – v6?

Ruth 1, v14-22.

What love do we see operating here – v16,17?

What does this decision mean for Ruth? What will she face in Israel?

‘Love’ here is not a feeling, it is an action – a sacrificial action – a forerunner of Christ.

How is God acknowledged as involved in all that happens in the whole chapter?

Facing change.

Have we experience of facing change?

What reasons do we have to be faithful in change?

Do you know anyone who is going through a period of desolation and emptiness, that we could pray for?

How can we be like Ruth?

Psalms 46, v10,11: Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our fortress. **Song** (overleaf.)

Prayer