



Lesson: Judges: Ruth, Part 1

This week is about Ruth and the story of Ruth is another way in which we see God keeping His promises. Ruth, and her mother-in-law, Naomi, are living in the land of Moab. Tragedy strikes and they both eventually wind up in the city of Bethlehem, Naomi's hometown. Throughout the book of Ruth, we see God providing for Ruth and Naomi. Whether through the practice of gleaning, meeting Boaz, or eventually giving birth to a son, all of this was God's continual acts of faithfulness to Ruth and eventually God's people. As the children will learn, Ruth's son, Obed, would be the grandfather of King David. Many, many years later another king would come from this same family. This king was Jesus, and He was God's promise to the world.

Scripture: Ruth 1-2

Story: *Vos Child's Story Bible*, Chapter 64; *Gospel Story Book Bible*, Pages 100-101; *The Beginner's Bible*, Pages 154-159.

Teaching Points:

- God is faithful and never changes. God keeps His promises.
- God is sovereign (or in control).
- Man is sinful.
- God is kind and merciful.
- God talks with man.
- God wants people to know He is a great God.
- God is holy. God wants His people to be holy.
- God is all knowing.
- God does not need any help.
- God saves His people.
- God provides for His people.

Scripture Memory and Hand Motions for May:

"The Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them." Judges 2:16

- **The Lord** (point upwards)
- **Raised up** (take both arms, palms up, and lift up towards sky)
- **Judges** (act like you are hitting a gavel)
- **Who saved them** (put wrists together, and then break apart like you're breaking free)
- **Out of the hand** (point to the inside of your hand)
- **Of those who plundered them.** (Forcefully reach out and act as though you're grabbing something)

Story

Review

Last week we learned about Samson and Delilah. Samson did not listen to God and did not follow God. Samson ended up giving the secret of his strength away to Delilah. Telling Delilah his secret meant that his enemies, the Philistines, would finally conquer Samson. During the time of Samson and the judges, there was a woman named Ruth. While judges delivered Israel there was much sadness for many people. Ruth had a lot of sadness in her life. But even though Ruth had lots of sadness, we learn something special about Ruth, and most importantly that God always keeps His promises.

In Moab

The Bible tells us Ruth lived during the time of the judges. But it was not a great time to be alive. There was a famine in the land. This meant there was not enough food for people to eat.

An Israelite man named Elimelech (**pronunciation:** eli-me-lect) moved his wife and two sons from the town of Bethlehem, in the land of Israel, to another country called Moab. There in Moab they lived, but then Elimelech died. This left his wife, Naomi, and his two sons alone in a strange country. The two sons married two women from the land of Moab. One son married a woman named Oprah, and the other son married Ruth. Naomi's sons lived for ten more years, but then they died too. Naomi only had Oprah and Ruth as family. She was very sad and very lonely.

Return to Bethlehem

The Bible tells us that when Naomi "heard that the Lord had taken care of his people. He had given food to them in Judah. Naomi got ready to leave Moab and go back home." Ruth and Oprah also got ready to go with her. They left Moab and started to travel to Judah. But Naomi said to Oprah and Ruth, "Go back home. Each of you go to your own mother's house. You have been very kind to me and to my sons who are now dead. I hope the Lord will also be kind to you in the same way. I hope the Lord will give you another home and a new husband." Then Naomi kissed them, and the Bible says they cried. Both women said, "We will return with you and go to your country." But Naomi told them to turn back. Then the Bible says they cried again and Oprah kissed Naomi and walked away. Ruth, however, did not just kiss her; the Bible tells us she clung to Naomi. That means she held on to Naomi and would not let go. Naomi said to Ruth, "Look, Oprah has gone back to her people and to her gods; return with her." But Ruth said these beautiful words to Naomi: "Ask me not to leave you or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you live, I will live; your people shall be my people and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die." Ruth would not leave her mother-in-law Naomi. Instead of returning to her own people, Ruth chose to be with Naomi's people, with the Israelites, God's people. The Bible says when Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her; she stopped asking her to leave and the two of them walked on to Bethlehem.

As Naomi and Ruth arrived in Judah it was the beginning of the barley harvest. That meant that all the fields around Bethlehem were filled with reapers, or workers who would cut down the barley and tie it into bundles. After they arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth went to the barley fields to glean.

Ruth Meets Boaz

Long ago, in Moses' time, God had given his people a law that said if stalks of barley dropped to the ground, the reapers could not pick them up. Instead they needed to be left there for the poor, those who had no barley or food of their own. So, the poor would come behind the workers to pick up the leftover barley. This is called "gleaning." This was a way to care for the poor so they would have food to eat.

Ruth was gleaning in a field owned by a man named Boaz. When Boaz came to his field, he looked around and saw a young woman gleaning in his field. He noticed she had not been there before, so Boaz asked his lead worker, "Whose young woman is this?" The servant answered, "She is the young woman from Moab who came back to Bethlehem with Naomi." The young woman had asked the lead worker, "Please let me glean and gather after the reapers." She worked all morning and had only rested a little. The young woman Boaz had seen was Ruth.

Boaz went to Ruth as she was gleaning and told her, "Do not go to glean in another field, or leave here, but stay close by the other young women." Boaz wanted Ruth to be safe and have food.

The Bible says when Ruth heard his words she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to Boaz, "I am a stranger. Why have you been so kind to notice me?" Boaz explained how he heard about her. How he had heard about all that she had done for Naomi and how she had come to live with a people who she did not know. "The Lord repay your work", Boaz said, "and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel under whose wings you have come for help."

Ruth said to Boaz, "You are very kind to me. You have said kind words to me, your servant. You have given me hope. And I am not even good enough to be one of your servants." But Boaz's kindness did not end there.

When it was time for lunch, Boaz asked Ruth to sit down and eat with the workers. The Bible says he gave her bread. And after Ruth returned to her work in the fields, Boaz told his servants, "Let her glean wherever she wants, and even let some extra stalks fall from the bundles for her." Boaz wanted to make sure Ruth had plenty of barley to glean. Ruth gleaned all day. When evening came, she returned with all her barley to Naomi.

"Where did you glean today?" Naomi asked. Ruth told her all about Boaz. Ruth was so surprised to hear this from Naomi: "Blessed is the Lord, who has not stopped being kind. Boaz is a relative of yours! He will take care of us." That was very important because in those days it was a custom in Israel that when a man died and had no children, just like Ruth's husband did, a relative would marry the lady. God had planned for Ruth to glean in Boaz's field. When Ruth first went there, she did not know that Boaz was a relative. But God did!

Then Ruth said, "Boaz also told me to come back and continue working. He said, 'Keep close by my servants until they have finished the harvest.'" Naomi said to Ruth, "It is good for you to continue working with his women servants. If you work in another field, someone might hurt you." So, Ruth continued working closely with the women servants of Boaz so she would be protected. She gathered grain until the barley harvest was finished. She also worked there through the end of the wheat harvest. And Ruth continued to live with Naomi in the land of Judah.

But this is not the end of the story. Next week we find out what Boaz does to take care of Ruth even more. Even though Ruth and Naomi suffered great pain, God would show His kindness to them through Boaz.

Questions for Review

Have the kids answer "Yes" if it is true, or "no" with the correct answer if it is false.

- God wants us to worship and love Him. (Yes)
- God will never leave us either. (Yes)
- God always keeps His promises. (Yes)
- Ruth lived during the days of Jesus. (No! Ruth lived during the time of the judges which was a long time before Jesus lived.)
- Ruth's husband died. (Yes)
- Once Ruth's husband died, she went back to her mother's house. (No! Ruth followed Naomi to Judah.)
- Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz. (Yes)
- Boaz told Ruth to leave his field and never come back. (No! Boaz told Ruth to come to his field as much as she wanted.)
- Gleaning means to pick up the harvest or grain that the workers dropped on the ground. (Yes)
- Ruth went to different fields. (No! Ruth only went to Boaz's field.)
- Boaz was a relative of Ruth and Naomi and this made Naomi very happy. (Yes)
- Boaz was very kind to Ruth and Naomi. (Yes)
- God always loves us. (Yes)