

Remnant Life Church

July 1, 2021

Ruth

Pt 4

“Ruth”

Ruth 1:16-22

We have looked at the over-all story of Ruth

We have talked about Naomi and Boaz and their roles in this account

Tonight, we come to the final part with the central character, the heroine of the tale, Ruth

READ – Ruth 1:16-22

Now these words have been heard at more weddings than can be counted

- They are used because of the devotion that Ruth proclaims
- They are read because they are statements that define loyalty
- And they are used because at the core of Ruth’s words is the foundation of love

But that is not how we are going to look at Ruth this evening

- Make no mistake, her words are about all those things – devotion, loyalty, and love
- But they are also about one other thing rarely identified with Ruth
- Yet, it was a willingness on her part to act that brought her to the place of being the wife of Boaz, the mother of Obed, and the great grandmother of King David

I’m talking about a woman who was willing to take great risk

- Both Ruth and Naomi took risks in the time they lived with each other, and it was because of that risk that great reward was ultimately realized
- Many times, your willingness to take a risk is what will put you in the place to receive the reward and the blessing God has for you

There are several wonderful accounts throughout history of a women who were willing to risk themselves for a better situation

1. In 1791, Fort Lee, which was in the area that is now the city of Charleston, West Virginia was under attack by the Native American tribes of that region. Colonel George Clendenin assembled his men to ask for a volunteer to ride to Lewisburg, over 100 miles away to get explosive powder. They were almost out, and their very survival depended upon a renewed supply. Well, no one volunteered, for they all believed it was a suicide mission. Then a high-pitched voice from the back of the assembly cried out, "I will go!" The voice was that of Anne Bailey. She was no ordinary young woman. The local Indians called her “Mad Anne” because she was willing to take so many risks. She fought both the British and the Indians, and would often roam the countryside alone in order to learn the ways of the Native Americans. She became so skilled and crafty at being a scout that she was often able to outwit the Indians themselves. And this is what she was able to do yet again. She made her way over the 200 total miles, by horseback, brought back the powder, and Fort Lee was saved. Today, if you go to Charleston, you will find a museum and a main thoroughfare

named after this brave young woman who took risks that not even a professional soldier was willing to take.

2. Pocahontas was a member of the Powhatan Indian tribe of eastern Virginia in the late 1500's into the early 1600's. While she barely lived out of her teen years, dying of pneumonia at the age of 20 or perhaps 21, she took the risk of being the first Native American woman to marry a white man. Her husband John Rolfe took her to be his wife, the ceremony most likely taking place in Jamestown, and then took her with him back to England. Their wedding brought an extended period of peace between the settlers and Indians in America, and she became a celebrity of sorts in London, as people were fascinated with her uniqueness and charm. There were those who were not happy with the marriage, but not in the way you think. Many thought it improper that a commoner (John Rolfe) should marry a princess, which is what Pocahontas was.

Ruth, too, was a risk taker in the same way these two women were –

- And just as there were radical differences in the historical marriage of Rolfe and Pocahontas, so too there were great differences in Ruth and Boaz, but the risks were worth taking -
 - Boaz was a Jew, Ruth was a Gentile – this was a very radical form of intermarriage that all dedicated Jews would not even consider
 - Boaz was an Israelite, Ruth was a Moabitess – these countries had long been enemies
 - Boaz was middle-aged, Ruth was quite young – not uncommon in that time
 - Boaz was very wealthy, Ruth has nothing
 - Boaz had deep family roots in that region, Ruth was a stranger, a foreigner, and an outsider
- The potential for problems and difficulties in this marriage were very high
 - If there had been anything like pre-marital counseling in that day it would have quickly revealed the seemingly insurmountable issues they would face
 - Some might even advise against the whole thing
- But Ruth was willing to take the risk
 - Why?
 - Because she had a strong role model of someone who was not willing to live life quietly, out of the way, just trying to deal the best they could with a terrible situation
 - Her mother-in-law, Naomi
 - And Ruth's dedication and loyalty to her meant she would learn what it meant to not settle

What were the risks Ruth took?

1. First, she was willing to leave her homeland and follow her mother-in-law to a foreign land
2. Second, she embraced that land and its religion, although she knew neither of them
3. Third, she was willing to go into the fields to glean - dangerous
4. Fourth, she listened to Naomi and presented herself to Boaz for protection

5. Fifth, she was willing to fully immerse herself in that new culture, with no hope of return to her past life, by marrying Boaz

The reasonableness of risk is relative (or directly related) to the values of the individual taking the risk.

- Like the man who was arrested for speeding. He was asked by the judge if he had an excuse. "Yes your honor," he said. "My wife's church was having a rummage sale, and I was hurrying home to save my golf clubs."
- Now this man would probably need the judge to also be a golfer to have any hope of escaping his fine, but to the driver of the car, the risk of the ticket and the fine was reasonable!
- But look at what God did through Ruth because she was willing to take the risks:
 - She left her home, to be present in the land where the prophets said Jesus would emerge over 700 years before he was born (Micah 5:2)
 - She would be instrumental in her family knowing the ways of God
 - Like she and Naomi, her God would be their God
 - She received enough food for her and Naomi to survive the famine – her own health to bear a healthy son
 - Her marriage to Boaz would continue the line to David and, ultimately, to Jesus
 - Her life would serve for countless generations to come as a model of a life lived in commitment, loyalty, and dedication

The book of Ruth is considered by many literary scholars, both biblical and secular, to be one of the most beautiful short stories ever written.

Through it all, Ruth, like Esther, powerfully presents the concept of divine providence

- IOW - the Hand of God active in all events of the world
- Whether we see Him directly, or the author even mentions His name, He is present and active in the lives of His people

I think this is a very important truth that all Christians should recommit themselves to embracing

- Our world is seemingly spiraling out of control
- Evil is not only embraced but celebrated
- And to follow the teaching of God's word is to be labeled a narrow-minded person of hate

Let this be a source of hope for you

- Let it be the instrument, the weapon to fight despair, depression, and hopelessness
- On the contrary, we are a people promised eternity with God, in the magnificence of His perfect creation.

Live your life everyday knowing that to be the truth of a promise given to you as a child of God, under His providential care.