

# Sermon Discussion Guide- Week of May 12, 2019

## A Love That Does Not Let Go

Pastor Johnson 8:15, Pastor Hall 9:30, 10:55 am

### Getting Started- Life Updates, Prayer Requests & Opening Question (15-20 min)

- Anything to share about personal events in the past week? About follow-ups from last Sunday's meeting on "A Most Excellent Way?"
- Are there any joys or concerns that you would like to share with the group for the closing prayer time or for group members to hold in prayer during the week? (please note them below for later)

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Opener Question: Do you have friends of the family who are so close that you count them as family? How did some of your relationships like these begin and how have they continued over time?

### Review the Sermon (15 min)

Please read aloud the sermon scripture, Ruth 1:1-22. Because of the length of this week's reading, it is attached as a 3<sup>rd</sup> page. Know that it is ok to skip some questions below in order to manage the time for discussions in each section.

See page 3	
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- If you had to give a one-minute summary of the sermon message this week, what would you say?

- Verses 1-6 describe three childless widows- Naomi and her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. In a society where women could not possess land, what hope of income could childless unmarried women have at that time?
- Why did Naomi intend to return to Bethlehem (vs. 6)?
- While they set out on the journey together, Naomi was able to convince Orpah to turn back and go to her homeland in Moab. Why did Naomi try to send back her Moabite daughters-in-law back to Moab (verse 13)?
- Naomi was able to convince Orpah to return but not Ruth. Judging from verses 15-19, why do you believe Ruth was unwilling to leave Naomi's side?
- The sadness of Naomi was evident in her words to Orpah in verses 13-14 and to the townspeople of Bethlehem in verses 20-21. Naomi was in a dark place. To what did she ascribe the cause of their loss and hardship? Do you believe it was a true assessment? Why or why not?
- Although she seemed to miss it at the time, how was God's tender care and provision being extended to Naomi in her time of extreme grief?
- What human patterns, problems and political boundaries are transcended in this story of godly sacrificial love?
- How was Ruth's love for Naomi similar to God's love for us?

### **Other Related Scriptures (10 min)**

- Would a volunteer please read out loud John 19:25-27.
- How was Jesus' love for his mother, as well as humanity, shown in this passage?
- How are the boundaries of family expanded in this passage in ways that are defined by faith rather than biological ancestry?
- Since Jesus had other siblings, why might Jesus' have chosen John for this particular role?
- How might this role have been a blessing to John as well?

### **Personalizing and Applying The Message (15 min)**

- As you reflect upon the sermon and the additional reading above, what are points of encouragement or challenge for you personally?
- Has there been a time when you or someone you know been so blinded by grief that hope and the blessings of God were present but went unnoticed?
- In such times as these, how have the presence of companions been a help to you or to them?
- Who outside of your immediate family would you be able to bless this week with a Christ-like loving action?

### **Witness & Closing Prayer (5-10 min)**

- Ruth and Naomi traveled to another land out of poverty and their scarcity of food and counting on the charity of others and the harvest gleaning rights of left overs on the land in God's law. How might we show the love of God to strangers this week through what we choose to share?
- The group leader or another volunteer who took notes on the prayer requests shared earlier in the meeting, may now lead the group in closing prayer.

## Ruth 1:1-22

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. <sup>2</sup>The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there. <sup>3</sup>Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>4</sup>They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, <sup>5</sup>both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

<sup>6</sup>When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. <sup>7</sup>With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. <sup>8</sup>Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. <sup>9</sup>May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud <sup>10</sup>and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." <sup>11</sup>But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? <sup>12</sup>Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—

even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— <sup>13</sup>would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has turned against me!" <sup>14</sup>At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

<sup>15</sup>"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." <sup>16</sup>But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. <sup>17</sup>Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

<sup>18</sup>When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. <sup>19</sup>So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?" <sup>20</sup>"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. <sup>21</sup>I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me." <sup>22</sup>So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.