

# JOURNEY

Part One: We are all walking with God

Ruth 1:1-2

Three key backstories to the Book of Ruth

*'when the **judges** governed'* – 400 years of attempted **theocracy**

Judges 2:6-10, 4:20-21

Israel's first 400 years in the **Promise Land**

Ruth lived **early** in this period of Israel's history

Judges 2:8-12; Matt. 1:5

Theme: *'Everyone did what was right **in his own eyes**'*

Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, 21:25

Israel's repeated cycle of **calamity**

Judges 2:11-23

*'there was a **famine** in the land'* – a **divine sign**

Life's **predictable** pathway: choose **blessings** or **curse**s

Lev. 26:1-13; Deut. 28:1-10, 23

*'went to sojourn in the **land of Moab**'* – entering **enemy territory**

Moab was founded by **nasty people**

Genesis 19:30-38

Moabites worshipped **Chemosh**, sacrificed their children

Moab's terrible **influence** upon Israel

Moabites were forbidden to enter **Temple Courts**

Deut. 23:3, 6

Land of Moab was **enemy territory**

Details to notice

Geography: **Promised Land** vs. **Enemy** territory

Direction Traveled: **Away** from God, **Toward** God, **Back** to God

Quality of life: **upward** spiral vs **downward** spiral

## Life Group Discussion Questions – January 14, 2024

**Ruth 1:1-2** Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi; and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there.

### DISCOVER

1. The historical account of Ruth was likely passed down orally. What stories have been passed down for multiple generations in your family? What will be lost if we don't pass down stories?
2. Define "theocracy". The 400 years of judges were an attempt at theocracy. Why wasn't God's rule fully realized? Would you think it unfair if God punished our city, state, or nation for neglecting Him despite millions proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior? Explain your answer.
3. Moabites were a terrible influence on Israel. What groups have a terrible influence on Christians today? How do we minister to these groups without becoming like them?

### EXPLORE

1. Read Deuteronomy 23:3, 6. What was wrong with Elimelech leaving the Promised Land? Should Elimelech have known better than moving his family to Moab, even temporarily?
2. Ruth 1:1 states there was a famine in the land. Why does God allow innocent people to suffer for the sins of others? Was Israel being temporarily or eternally judged by God, and why does that matter? How do we question God's judgment more than we give Him praise for blessings? When you pray, do you spend more time asking God to fulfill wants or needs, or thanking Him for blessings? Explain your response.
3. Read Judges 2:11-23. There was a cycle of following God, falling away and then pleading with God to have mercy. What brought the sons of Israel back into God's favor? How do we live through some of the same cycles?

### EXPERIENCE

1. What life journeys have you taken that led you closer to God? Farther from God? Was there a Moab in your walking away from God? How was God involved whether you were drawing closer to Him or farther from Him?
2. What happens when you disobey? Is it any different if we physically disobey God or just mentally live in the wrong place?
3. What promises does God make to his children that are jeopardized when we are disobedient? What blessings are we assured of if we carry out God's plan in our lives?
4. We are either walking toward God, away from Him or back to Him. Quickly describe periods of your life when you have been in each of the three phases. What are some of the ways that we go into forbidden territory when we struggle? In what ways do we justify leaving the Promised Land to go into enemy territory?
5. Do you believe that God still is active in the sense of making life difficult for those people, nations or groups that disobey Him?

### PRAY

*Pray...God, in many ways, it seems like we dwell in enemy territory. We want to please You and share the good news with those who don't believe without falling prey to worldly ways that would distance us from You. May we be listeners to Your Spirit and changed people that proclaim Your goodness and Your offer of eternal salvation to the ends of the Earth. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. Amen.*

Auburn Grace Community Church – January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024