

Ruth: Hope through despair

Ian Flanders worked through chapter 2 and then Lancs continued our series in Ruth by opening up chapter 3 for us. In it we saw a tale of 3 bedrooms!



- Scene 1** – v1-5: Ruth's Bedroom – Plan in obedience
- Scene 2** – v6-13: Boaz Bedroom – Take risks in obedience
- Scene 3** – v14-18: Naomi's Bedroom – Trust in obedience

For each one we asked –
 so (what does the passage *actually* say)?
 so what (what does it mean)?
 so what for me (what does it mean for me personally)?

I'll try & summarise the talk by means of a table:

	So?	So what?	So what for me?
Scene 1	Ruth, in line with Naomi's potentially 'dodgy' plan, heads down to the threshing floor to meet Boaz; their guardian redeemer.	God's providential plans reign supreme, but never at the expense of us making plans and being active.	Plan and act in the everyday, in the light of God's words and character.
Scene 2	Naomi's plan is fraught with risk – what if Boaz or the other workers take advantage of her? Ruth obedient except in 1 way – she tells Boaz what to do, based on God's word and Boaz' kindness (Lev 25v25, 35). Asks him to spread his wing over her – as she takes refuge in the Lord.	God's kindness reflected in kindness of Ruth – looking after Naomi and seeking Boaz. God's generosity reflected in generosity of Boaz as he promises to take in Ruth at great cost.	What does risky obedience look like for you? What does risky generosity look like for you? Cf Mark 8 and denying self, take up cross, follow.
Scene 3	Heads back to Naomi, before it gets light so no-one disgraced, with vast amounts of grain from Boaz. Naomi is full.	God is the provider, worked out through the obedience of his people who walked underneath his word. Naomi, Ruth and Boaz all trusted God and were obedient. Story points to a great redemption to come and one who would bring a fuller redemption.	Plan, take risks and trust in obedience to Go's word.

Here are some possible thoughts and questions.
 Please be selective and adapt them for your group:

Possible Questions

Chapter 2:

– how did we leave it at the end of chapter 1? Give an overview of the opening of the book.

- How does Boaz treat Ruth and why?
- What do we learn about the character of God & how he works in this chapter?
- What challenges and encouragements are there for us?

Chapter 3:

– What were the key lessons and challenges from last week?
 – What questions were left unfinished?

- Outline an overview of this chapter.
- What is this a chapter about?

– Do you think Naomi was wrong or right as she concocts her plan?
 – What does Ruth mean when she says spread your garment over me?
 – What aspects of God's character are clearly reflected in the individuals in the account?
 – How do the Ruth and Boaz point us ahead to Christ?

- How does God work in chapter 3?
- What challenges does this bring for us?
- What would you say to someone who said God's sovereignty means we can just sit back and relax?