

## The Choice: *Live* and *Love* (4:13-22)

In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, God Himself had chosen her. He had chosen her from before time began to come out from among her people, to suffer barrenness, to experience pain and loss. He had chosen her to be His vessel so that others might know that He chooses the weak and the despised (1 Corinthians 1:26-29) to display His grace, strength, and power (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

In the face of great difficulty, Ruth chose to love and to trust the Lord with all her heart, mind, soul, and strength (Matthew 22:37), and to lay down her life for others (22:39, John 15:13, Philippians 2:3-8). God rewarded her for it. Ruth's legacy would be remembered by all and her life *will be emulated* until the end of the age.

*"A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised... Let her own works praise her in the gates"* (Proverbs 31:30, 31). *"Many daughters have done well, but you, [Ruth], excel them all"* (31:29).

Read Ruth 4:13-15.

1. Ruth had been married to Mahlon for approximately 10 years and yet was without children. How was Ruth like Sarah (Genesis 18:11-14, 21:1-5) and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-2, 8-11, 19-20, 27-28), even Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-7, 13-17, 25)? (v.13)

What realization might these women have had about the sovereignty of God after the birth of their child? What awareness might Ruth have had?

2. Why does God often require us to wait for that which we desire most?

3. How does their testimony encourage you to trust God's purposes in delay?
  
4. Read Isaiah 54:2-4, then Psalm 25:3a. How do these promises speak to Ruth's circumstance? To yours?
  
5. Return to Ruth. Why do you think the author's attention returned to Naomi at the conclusion of the book?
  
6. Who is the "*close relative*" to whom are the women referring? What role would he fulfill in Naomi's life?<sup>i</sup> (vv.14-15)

When she looked at Obed, what would she see?

7. What was the women's opinion of Ruth? How did they form this belief?

Matthew Henry said, "See how God in His providence sometimes makes up the want and loss of those relations from whom we expected most comfort in those from whom we expected least."<sup>ii</sup>

8. Of Ruth it was said, “All the people of my town know that you are a **virtuous woman**” (Ruth 3:11, emphasis mine) ... “better than seven sons” (4:15). She is the only woman in the Old Testament credited with that title.

The Book of Proverbs concludes with a detailed description of a “virtuous” woman, a rare and valued treasure. Solomon’s portrayal of her character and works have caused some to attribute his description to Ruth, his great-great grandmother.<sup>iii</sup> Turn now to Proverbs 31 and read verses 10-31.

- a. What is her intent? (v.12) (Matthew 22:39, Philippians 2:3-4)
- b. Describe her attitude. (v.13-14)
- c. What sacrifices is she willing to make for others? (vv.14-15)
- d. Why might she buy a field? (v.16) What does planting and harvesting symbolize in the New Testament? (Luke 10:2, John 4:34-38, Matthew 28:19-20)
- e. Why must a steward be industrious and resourceful? Do you view your role in others’ lives as a stewardship? Why or why not?
- f. How does she care for herself? (v.17, 22)

The word “*strength*” in verse 17 and 25 refer to physical and mental strength. Per Isaiah 26:3, how is this accomplished?

- g. How does she perceive her work and role? (vv.18-19, 24) Why is this important?
- h. List all the people-groups of whom she is mindful. (vv.12, 15, 20) Note the order in which they are listed.
- i. For what is she prepared? (v.21)
- j. Who does she represent, esteem, and support? Why is it important that she is respected? (v.23) (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

- k. Why can she be confidently assured? (v.25) (See Galatians 5:4.)
- l. Describe her speech. By what is it governed? (v.26)
- m. Who and what does she “see”? (v. 27)
- n. How does idleness consequently affect those around us? (v.27)
- o. How is the virtuous woman rewarded? (vv.28-29, 31)
- p. While morality and diligence and love for others is excellent, what indispensable quality will earn her the greatest praise? (v.30)
- q. Can verse 11 be achieved without verse 30? Explain.

Matthew 25:21 says, “[Her] Lord said to [her], ‘Well done good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord’.”

- 9. Just as Ruth was Boaz’s bride, believers in Jesus Christ are His bride. With this in mind, what insight can you gain from this passage about the character and manner of life which all believers ought to strive to live?

Finally, read Ruth 4:16-21.

- 10. “Everything that Ruth has done has been stamped with loyalty to Elimelech’s family and with her love for Naomi.”<sup>iv</sup> How is this demonstrated yet again in verse 16?

11. The name Obed means “servant”. Why might they have given the child this name? How would he serve Naomi and future generations? (Consider the terms used to describe Obed’s purpose in verses 14 and 15. Why are they significant?)
- a. Redeemer
  - b. Restorer
  - c. Nourisher
12. “*There is a son born to Naomi*” (v.17). Why might she have been attributed with the birth? Consider the purpose of the union between Boaz and Ruth.<sup>v</sup>
13. How did the Lord fulfill the people’s blessing in Ruth 4:11, 14, while rewarding Boaz and Ruth? (v.17, 22)

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<sup>i</sup> Boaz was Ruth’s redeemer; the child, Obed, was Naomi’s redeemer.

<sup>ii</sup> Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 380). Peabody: Hendrickson.

<sup>iii</sup> “Many scholars think ‘Lemuel’ was another name for Solomon.” (Wiersbe, Warren W. (2003). *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament Wisdom and Poetry*. (p.389). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications.)

<sup>iv</sup> Nielsen, K. (1997). *Ruth: A Commentary*. (E. Broadbridge, Trans.) (First edition, p. 93). Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

<sup>v</sup> One thought is that the purpose of the book of Ruth was to ensure that David had a genuinely Judaic mother, authenticating his right to the throne. But one must consider that Naomi has no blood-relation to the babe, Obed.