

Day 4: Look for the Ruths in Your Life

Read and Reflect: Ruth 1:22a

Naomi felt empty, but she wasn't alone. Ruth was walking beside her, perhaps silent but undoubtedly faithful. Sometimes God's provision is not a miracle—but a person. Who's standing beside you? Who has God used in your life as a Ruth?

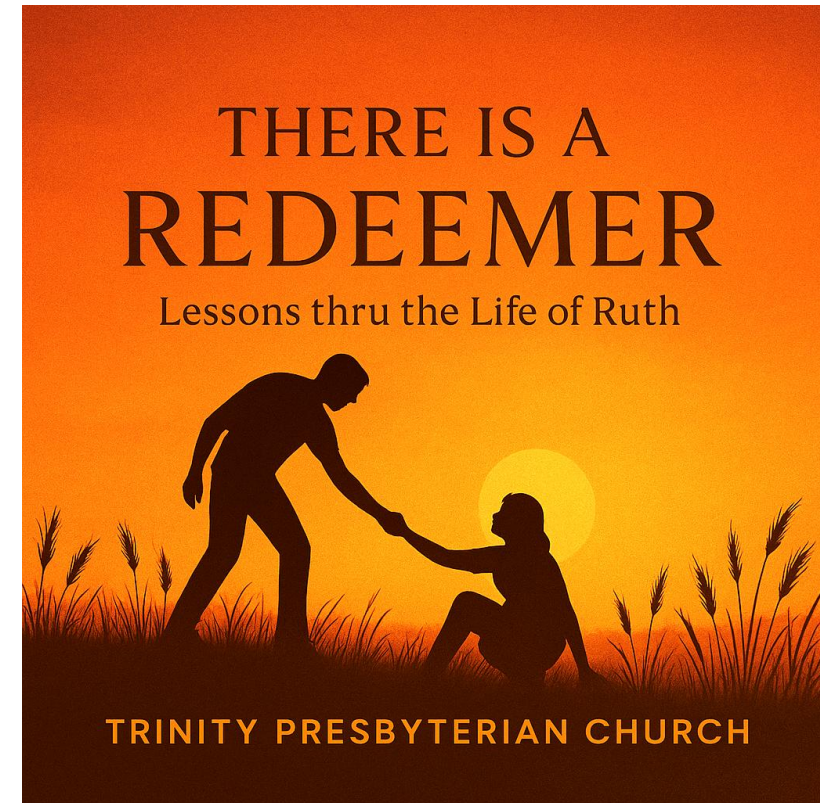
Reach out to someone who has supported you through a difficult season. Call them, text them, or write a note of thanks. Let them know they've been a sign of God's grace.

Day 5: The First Signs of Harvest

Read and Reflect: Ruth 1:22b

The chapter ends with a hope-filled whisper: "It was the beginning of barley harvest." God doesn't fix Naomi's life overnight—but something is stirring. Hope begins in small ways. A friend. A moment of peace. An open door. Your harvest might be closer than you think.

Take a walk today and look for signs of new life—flowers, birdsong, sunlight. Or maybe sit in silence and listen for the assuring voice of the Lord that says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you!" (Hebrews 13:5) Let those small signs be a reminder to you that God is near, and He is still writing your story.



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THERE IS A REDEEMER:
Delight Eclipsed by Despair
Ruth 1:19-22

SERMON NOTES

Main Idea:

Even when sorrow and suffering clouds our hearts,
God is quietly preparing a harvest of hope.

The Town's Reception (v. 19)

"Can this be Naomi?"

- Naomi's suffering significantly changed her, even in ways recognizable to the women in Bethlehem.
- No matter the impact suffering has on us, God still sees you, knows you, welcomes you back, and is committed to finishing the good work He started in us.

Naomi's Bitter Complaint (v. 20-21)

"Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara. For the Almighty has made my life very bitter."

- Naomi rejects who she once was and redefines who she now is. She allowed her sense of self to be determined by her experiences and emotions, not by God's design and determination. "Pleasant" has become "Bitter".
- God must empty our hands of anything that is not Him, in order fill our hands with nothing but Him.

The Hope of Harvest (v. 22)

"...it was the beginning of the barley harvest."

- Bread from the barley harvest is about to return to Bethlehem, "the house of bread".
- God's grace (giving us what we do not deserve) is on full display as Naomi is about to "reap" (benefit from as God's blessing) what she did not "sow".

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Day 1: When Life Leaves You Unrecognizable

Read and Reflect: Ruth 1:19

The people of Bethlehem were shocked at Naomi's return. Time, sorrow, and loss had changed her. "Is this Naomi?" they asked. Have you ever felt that way—like grief has rewritten your story, your sense of self? Others may not understand what you've been through, but God does. He sees past your pain to your heart, and He loves you.

Write down one word that describes how sorrow has affected you. Then, write a second word describing how you hope God might restore you.

Day 2: Naming Your Bitterness

Read and Reflect: Ruth 1:20

Naomi doesn't sugarcoat her sorrow. She tells the truth: "Call me Mara." It's raw, but it's real. Sometimes we think faith means pretending everything's okay. But lament is not the opposite of faith—it's an act of faith. Naomi still believes in God enough to speak to Him. So can you.

In a journal or on a note card, finish this sentence: "Lord, I feel bitter about..." Don't edit yourself. Let it be a moment of truth with God.

Day 3: When God Seems Distant or Harsh

Read and Reflect: Ruth 1:21

Naomi says, "The Almighty has brought calamity upon me." She's not denying God's sovereignty, but she's struggling to understand His kindness. Maybe you've felt the same way. Remember: fear asks "Can God?", while faith declares, "God can!"

Recall a time when God brought something good out of something hard. Write it down and thank Him for how He worked in ways you couldn't see at the time.