

**THE BEST IS YET TO COME**  
Andy Deane · 1/8/2023 · Ruth 1-2

The Book of Ruth reminds us that when you think God is farthest from you, or has even turned against you, the truth is that he is laying a foundation for greater happiness in your life.

**#1 The best is yet to come, so setbacks aren't the end of our story.**

**Ruth 1:1-5**, *"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. 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. Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband."*

- The story of Ruth is a series of difficult setbacks.
- As believers, we also are not promised to escape the pain of life.

**#2 The best is yet to come, so don't stop hoping.**

**Ruth 1:6-18**, *"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...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...At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her...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. 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." ..."*

- Naomi exaggerated her hopelessness and was blinded to how God might still help.
- Far from being against her, God will soon work through Naomi's sad circumstances to bring about Israel's greatest king, David.

**#3 The best is yet to come, so don't forget good theology.**

**Ruth 1:19-22**, *"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?" "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me..."*

- She rightly attributes her situation to God's sovereignty, but only what He's taken away, not what he's provided.
- Naomi knows three important things about God: (1) God exists. (2) God is sovereign. (3) God has allowed this.
- She forgot the story of Joseph in Genesis 50 where his troubles were used for his (& the nation's) good.

**#4 The best is yet to come, so just take the next step.**

**Ruth 2:1-3**, *...Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor." Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek."*

- Ruth tries to be helpful and proactively plans for the next meal.
- What felt like normal steps and decisions to Ruth, was actually God leading her toward His solution.
- During our worst setbacks it can be helpful to simply take the next practical step that is needed.

**#5 The best is yet to come, so trust God still has a plan.**

**Ruth 2:4-17**, *"Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!" ...Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?" The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' ...So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and*

*don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me...I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled." At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?" Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."*

- God preserved a wealthy and godly man to protect Ruth (Boaz).
- Ruth asked, *Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?* (10)
- Boaz answered, God rewards those who run to Him for help.
- This is the message of the gospel: Matthew 23:37, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.*

#### **#6 The best is yet to come, so look for God's kindness.**

**Ruth 2:18-23**, *"She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered...Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said. "The Lord bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers." ...*

- Naomi's faith is rekindled as she sees what God is doing: *"He's not stopped showing his kindness to the living"*
- Boaz was one of Naomi's *"guardian-redeemers"* (20)
- The custom was for when an Israelite husband died, his nearest relative was to buy their land, pay debts, avenge death, marry widow to continue the name (see Deuteronomy 25).
- In Ruth's story we see a reflection of our own: like Ruth, we too need a Redeemer who will do what is necessary to remedy our helpless condition. Jesus is that Redeemer for us!