

April Teaching Theme: Easter/The Book of Ruth

讲员 Speaker: Pastor Peter Linghui Tian

题目 Topic: Ruth 1

经文 Scripture: Ruth 1

Monthly Theme: We started this month with the wonderful celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, the climax of the Church calendar. We have now transitioned to the season commonly called “Eastertide,” the 50 days from Easter to Pentecost, a time of continual celebration of the Resurrection of King Jesus. We will spend the next 4 Sundays walking through the Old Testament Historical book of Ruth - a powerful story about Loyal-Love, Generosity, Reversal, and Redemption.

四月 **April – 舊約歷史書卷：路得記 Old Testament Historical Book: Ruth**

April 4th – 復活的故事 The Easter Story (復活節 Easter)

April 11th – 路得記 1: 信心與忠誠 Ruth 1: Faithfulness and Loyalty

April 18th – 路得記 2: 慷慨對待移民 Ruth 2: Generosity to the Immigrant

April 25th – 路得記 3: 救贖主 Ruth 3: The Redeemer

Resources:

[Sermon Video](#)

[Sermon Slides](#)

Video:

[The Book of Ruth](#) (Bible Project) [English - 7:11]

[The Book of Ruth](#) (Bible Project) [Mandarin - 6:29]

Discussion Questions (Pastor William R. Horne):

- (1) Read Ruth 1 together. What observations do you make and what stands out to you? How would you summarize the story thus far?

Interlude to Q2: I (Pastor Will) don't like to unnecessarily use the Hebrew or the Greek in lessons but in the book of Ruth the word/concept of *Hesed* is incredibly important for understanding the heart of the book. *Hesed* which I translate as loving-kindness (kindness in the NIV) is a key to the narrative that we will examine in part each week this month. Each movement of the story reveals to us an aspect of *Hesed* (loving-kindness). God (Yahweh) is the one who ultimately models *Hesed* (loving-kindness), but in the book of Ruth, we will see in both in reference to the divine and human relationships.

“Unfortunately, it is a Hebrew word that no one English word can begin to convey accurately. Being expressive of relationships, the term connotes altogether the notions of covenantal loyalty, faithfulness, kindness, goodness, mercy, love, and compassion.” (Younger, K. L., Jr.)

- (2) Thinking about the expanse of meaning associated with *Hesed* (loving-kindness), how is *Hesed* (loving-kindness) modeled here in Ruth 1?

- (3) In Ruth 1, we see *Hesed* (loving-kindness) modeled in commitment & loyalty to the other. Ruth stays devoted to Naomi despite her having better personal odds “returning to the home of her mother.” In what ways can we practice this type of “commitment & fidelity” in our own lives? In what ways are we tempted to do the opposite?
- (4) Re-read Ruth 1:20-21. What do you think about Naomi’s words here? In our time and culture, we are often pushed to ignore our pain, yet in the Bible grief, lament, and acknowledging pain are important parts of life. The Christian practice is to, “**Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.**” (Romans 12:15). What are some ways we can better practice acknowledge our pain and the pain of others?
- (5) Something lurking in the background of our story thus far is a view of God’s sovereignty and providence for people. “**Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them...**” (1:6). Naomi then returns to her home, “Bethlehem,” which literally means “House of Bread” (more wordplay!). Let’s close our time together naming ways God has provided for us. (This is an important practice for us to regularly pause in thanksgiving).

Important Notes (Pastor William R. Horne):

Notes on Q1:

- *Setting (Time & Place):* “**When the judges ruled**” (Ruth 1:1) [runs parallel to the book of Judges when “**In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.**” (Judges 21:25). When we read the book of Judges we see these times were characterized by chaos, oppression, evil, and violence in Isreal.] The starts in Moab [Israel’s enemy - a nation that came from Abraham’s nephew Lot (Gen 19)], and a return to Bethlehem in Judah (Southern Isreal), during the “barley harvest” (v.22)
- *Characters:* Elimelek (Family Patriarch), Naomi (wife), Mahlon (Son), Kilion (Son) [Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah (Israelites)], Orpah (Daughter-in-Law), Ruth (Daughter-in-law) [Both Moabites]
- *Circumstances:* Famine forced Family to leave Israel for Moab. Death and the Lord’s providence motivated a move back to Isreal. (10 years in Moab)
- Note: In this time and context, a widow was among the most vulnerable in society as their providence came from a husband. Life was very hard for a widow, especially an older widow with little hope of remarriage. This is also why God commanded the people of God repeatedly to care for the “**the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner in their midst.**” (The “Quartet of the Vulnerable”)

Notes on Q2: Key: Ruth 1:16-17 “**But 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.”**”

(Note: she commits both to Naomi and to God (Yahweh).)

Notes on Q3: Practice Ideas:

- (i) Being people of our word. When we say we will do something we do it. This also includes being wise in our “promise-making,” don’t be quick to say “yes” if you aren’t sure you can commit to something. In Jesus’ words, **“Let your Yes be Yes, your No be No.”** (Matt 5:33-37)
- (ii) Sticking with people and our community through the hard times.
- (iii) **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves...”** (Phil 2:3)

Notes on Q4:

- Wordplay: Naomi’s name means “pleasant, beautiful, good,” and she denies that identity asking to be called “Mara” which means “bitter,” as it better describes her state (1:20-21).
- At this point of the story, Naomi is full of grief over her losses and returns home in a state of hopelessness. Many have viewed Naomi as “lacking faith” in her hopelessness and complaint. However, I (Pastor Will) believe it is better to view Naomi as living in the fullness of faith in her pain. “She takes God so seriously that, with Job and Jeremiah (and even Abraham, Gen. 15:2), she resolutely and openly voices her complaint. One should not minimize what this poor woman has gone through! The pain is real.” (Younger, K. L., Jr.). *This doesn’t mean that everything in her complaint is right or correct, but we can acknowledge our God is big enough to handle it! :*
 - (a) Practices:
 - (i) Not being afraid to name and acknowledge our pain, grief, and emotions. (Speaking it, Journaling, etc.)
 - (ii) Not minimizing other people’s pain and emotions. Choosing to feel the other’s pain and walk with them.
 - (iii) Being fully open and honest with God in prayer about where we are at (He knows, but honesty before God become honest before yourself!)
 - (iv) Having/Building a close community that we can be real and authentic with even when in situations of pain, suffering, and grief.
 - (v) When we see suffering in the world, refuse to look away or ignore it. (This is really hard, but we cannot ignore the suffering of others). ****All of these practices are best done in community, not in isolation.****

Sermon Summary (Elder Yin):

人生的抉择

田传道 4/12

“当士师秉政的时候，国中遭遇饥荒。在犹大的伯利恒，有一个人带着妻子和两个儿子往摩押地寄居。这人名叫以利米勒，他的妻名叫拿俄米；他两个儿子，一个名叫玛伦，一个名叫基连，都是犹大伯利恒的以法他人。他们到了摩押地，就住在那里。后来拿俄米的丈夫以利米勒死了，剩下妇人和她两个儿子。两个儿子娶了摩押女子为妻，一个名叫俄珥巴，一个名叫路得，在那里住了约有十年。玛伦和基连也死了，剩下拿俄米，没有丈夫，也没有儿子。”

路得记 1:1-5

每天遇选择，小选择会影响大选择。会影响我们生活。路德记载6个人物，他们作了不同的选择，以利米勒

路德

那奥米

今天看以利米勒的选择。

一，士师秉政的时候

那时候以色列没有王，各人任意而行。没有王和军队保护。其实他们有王，王是耶和華。百姓厌弃耶和華。

"耶和華对撒母耳说：「百姓向你所说的一切话，你只管依从；因为他们不是厌弃你，乃是厌弃我，不要我作他王。」"

撒母耳记上 8:7

以色列要把神赶出去，不让神成为他们引导的国家，后果就是各人任意而行，行恶。任意在信仰上，不要神，选自己要的神，迦南地的神。在自己家建立殿，自设祭师。性随便。罪恶。把神赶出生命中行为也接着腐败

二，国中遭遇饥荒

以色列人离开神后，他们被交在敌人手中。是不是上帝小气？你不听我，我就惩罚你。我们的神是不轻易计较的神，如是的话，我们就一天也没有平安。如神按我们意念审判我们，我们站立不住。以色列人之所以受敌人欺压是因为失去了上帝的保护。而不是神加害与他们。(不要因神不计较而轻慢神arthur)。以色列人不被欺负是因为有神保护。如果没神保护就陷入困境。

"耶和華使以色列人安静，不与四围的一切仇敌争战，已经多日。约书亚年纪老迈

约书亚记 23:1

"王住在自己宫中，耶和華使他安静，不被四围的仇敌扰乱。"

撒母耳记下 7:1

周围不敢害他们因见神是他们的保护，你有神的保护吗？arthur

同样饥荒也不是神的审判而是他们选择离弃上帝。

"你若留意听从耶和華—你神的话，谨守遵行他的一切诫命，就是我今日所吩咐你的，他必使你超乎天下万民之上。你若听从耶和華—你神的话，这以下的福必追随你，临到你身上：

你身所生的，地所产的，牲畜所下的，以及牛犊、羊羔，都必蒙福。你的筐子和你的抔面盆都必蒙福。"

申命记 28:1-2, 4-5

跟着神有祝福。"人所行的，若蒙耶和華喜悦，耶和華也使他的仇敌与他和好。"

箴言 16:7

"约瑟住在他主人埃及人的家中，耶和華与他同在，他就百事顺利。他主人见耶和華与他同在，又见他和他手里所办的尽都顺利，约瑟就在主人眼前蒙恩，伺候他主人，并且主人派他管理家务，把一切所有的都交在他手里。"

创世记 39:2-4

"我的律例，你们要遵行，我的典章，你们要谨守，就可以在那地上安然居住。地必出土产，你们就要吃，地上安然居住。你们若说：『这第七年我们不耕种，也不收藏土产，吃什么呢？』我必在第六年将我所赐的福

给你们，地便生三年的土产。第八年，你们要耕种，也要吃陈粮，等到第九年出产收来的时候，你们还吃陈粮。」

利未记 25:18-22

跟从上帝得各种祝福，为什么以色列得祸因赶走神，得不到神的保护。地，空，周围国家，不効力了。

三，以利米勒的抉择

名字是耶和華是我的神。有地位的人。富有的人。好的家庭。

饥荒时没有记录他祷告神而是从伯利恒到摩押，罗得后裔之地，是上帝不祝福之地，为什么去那？是物质缺乏？其实属灵的缺乏-饥荒。

我们是否有属灵的饥荒 浊水沉后？arthur水的比喻

没有饥荒时大家都看不出真的属灵景况，但饥荒使我们知道谁的灵命有饥荒。近来的灾难使我们生活中很多挑战，政治上的，病毒上的，经济上的，行成信仰中危机，如是清水不会混浊，如果有沉淀的水，一有摇动就成混浊。意思是，如果我们内心有罪，环境顺利时现不出内在的问题，当环境有风波时我们会现出问题。不要抱怨环境，而是看自己里面有没有罪。

四，以利米勒选择的后果

以利米勒搬家去摩押地，表面上看是为救全家
但罪有假面具的。有时表面上看上去没有问题。但祸在其中。

"当士师秉政的时候，国中遭遇饥荒。在犹大的伯利恒，有一个人带着妻子和两个儿子往摩押地寄居。这人名叫以利米勒，他的妻名叫拿俄米；他两个儿子，一个名叫玛伦，一个名叫基连，都是犹大伯利恒的以法他人。他们到了摩押地，就住在那里。

这两个儿子娶了摩押女子为妻，一个名叫俄珥巴，一个名叫路得，在那里住了约有十年。"
路得记 1:1-2, 4

住了十年，成为摩押地居民，也许饥荒结束后还住那里，不由自主。好象所多马，罗得逐渐逐渐搬到了所多马。

古以利米勒作了错误的选择，一开始就错。后果就是灭亡我们如何做选择的？arthur

诗33：12-19。"以耶和華為神的，那国是有福的！他所拣选为自己产业的，那民是有福的！~~耶和華~~往观看；他看见一切的世人。从他的居所往外察看地上一切的居民—他是那造成他们众人心的，留意他们一切作的。君王不能因兵多得胜；勇士不能因力大得救。靠马得救是枉然的；马也不能因力大救人。耶和華~~耶和華~~顾敬畏他和仰望他慈爱的人，要救他们的命脱离死亡，并使他们在饥荒中存活。"

诗篇 33:12-19

ian

"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."

Ruth 1:1-5

Everyday we face choices, our decisions can affect our days and future.

Some seemingly small choices may impact the bigger picture of our life.

First chapter in Ruth, there were six figures.

1. Elimelek, moved family to Moab because of famine
2. He and his two sons died there
3. Naomi moved back to Bethlehem
4. Oprah, stayed back
5. Ruth moved to Bethlehem with her mother in law Naomi

Today we focus on the decisions made by Elimelek.

1).In the days when Judges ruled

The background of Ruth.

Judges 21:25 in those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

It was not they had no king. Their king was Jehovah God.

1 Samuel 8:7 they rejected God as their king.

They had driven God out of their life. Refused to let God lead their life.

They considered themselves their own king. They don't want to believe and worship God. They chose to serve the local gods, even built temple at their own home. Appointed Levites as their priests.

C19. About the life of a concubine of a Levite. Event near Gibeah in Benjamin, messy life of sexual immorality

2).there was a famine in the land

Whenever they forgot about God, god removed his protection, people were in the hand of famine and their enemies.

Our lord is not such a narrow minded God, punish those who disbelieve, if so, none can live a peaceful life.

Our God is merciful. None can raise hands to say we haven't sinned since last Sunday.

The Israelites were oppressed by the people and nations around them, not by God's design, but the result that they lost the God's protection after they had forsaken Him.

Not god sent famine, not God's judgement, but they lost the blessing of God

Bethlehem, means baker's land, land of bread.

Deuteronomy 28:1

The blessings of God: When you fear God and follow his commands, you are blessed when you come in and go out.

He causes their enemies to make peace with them.

Lord gave success in everything he did. (Like the life of Joseph)

Blessings of the land, the harvest from the crops of the sixth year, was enough to last for three year's consumption. Levites25:18

When the Lord is present with you, the blessings are with you.

3)the decision of Elimelek. His name means Jehovah is my lord and my king, a wealthy family in Bethlehem, owned land and property, not a nobody, but well-known and respected person in town.

When facing famine, he made a decision to move away from Bethlehem to Moab.

Scripture didn't say that he prayed before moving.

Moab is 70-80km away, the descendants of Lot with his first daughter. People of Moab were not allowed to enter God's temple.

Why moved there? Just because of the materialistic famine or the spiritual famine?

Clear water comparing with muddy water, when stirred (outside force), muddy water gets muddier, when splashed out, can stain the surrounding.

See the real you when facing trials. Elimelek was a person centered his life in Lord, the famine revealed this.

Our life in this past pandemic, also presents lots of challenges to our faith. We shall not complain our circumstance.

Let's be clear water.

Depend on God

Instead of complaining our situation, we shall learn our lessons, exam our hearts

4)the effect of Elimelek's decision

He meant to provide better life for his family. But his two sons died

Sins change us, a slow process.

They moved to Moab, lived there for a while, settled there for 10 years.

Not just traveled there, as a tourist,

They moved and settled down.

They moved slowly to sins

Like Lot, he also moved gradually to Sodom, eventually lived a destructive life.

Summary:

Psalms 33:12-19

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine."

Psalms 33:12-19 NIV

The blessings is the present of God with us, therefore His protection.