

## Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

**God in the Joy – Ruth 4:9-17** by Diana Middleditch w/c Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020

It is possible to expect the Book of Ruth to conclude with “They all lived happily ever after”. However this book is not a fairy tale it is part of the thread that runs through the Old Testament, leading to the birth of Jesus.

Ruth had experienced a whole chain of events in her life that lead her to Boaz. Indeed not long ago she had been in Moab and a widow without much hope for the future. She was totally unaware at what lay ahead when she made her decision to follow Naomi to Bethlehem. God was working in her life and led her to Boaz, a wealthy man and a kinsman of Naomi.

As always in any happy ever after story there is a fly in the ointment, Boaz was not the closer relation and according to the law of God the nearest relation has first call, however when he, the closer relation, found out he was expected to marry Ruth he declined, he quite obviously didn't want the responsibility of Ruth and Naomi. He happily handed over his rights to the land and to Ruth. This enabled Boaz to redeem the land that was Naomi's

Having successfully acquired the land he was now able to take Ruth as his wife. This was no hardship for Boaz as he had come to love Ruth.

We can perhaps see ourselves in Ruth, we may not have lost our spouse, or even faced financial or social limitation that she did but we too have received more than we could possibly deserve.

God met Ruth's spiritual needs. She was a Gentile from Moab, she was a stranger in Israel. It is nothing short of a miracle that she was accepted and cared for. God shows her favour. God also gives her a gift of a child and everyone rejoiced and asked that this child would be a comfort to Naomi and nourish her in her old age. This child would carry on the name of the family. He was called Obed “one who serves” and will also be part of the royal Davidic line, therefore the messianic line.

Everyone likes a story with a happy ending and that's what we've got here!

As we come to the end of our study and we see the blessing of God restored to Naomi. Naomi has gone from a bitter, broken woman, to a blessed and famous mother in Israel. It started with bitterness, but it ends with a smiling and blessed Naomi. We have also seen the life of the humble and dedicated Ruth totally turned around. She has gone from a widowed gentile, far from God, to become a mother in a line that would not only produce King David, but would one day give to the world their redeemer, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. But this story is not only about Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. It is also about your relationship with Jesus Christ. It is about your full redemption and what Jesus can do with you.

**Are you like Naomi once was, bitter at God?**

Or perhaps as Ruth, **are you far from the knowledge of the true God?**

Even if you began as far away as these two women were, God can and will turn things around and make something, out of nothing. **Where are you on this journey from Moab to Bethlehem, have you arrived at “joy”?**