

## Weekly Bible Study for Highcliffe and Bransgore Methodist Churches

**God in the Hope** – Ruth 2: 10 -20 by Jean Davies w/c Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020

“I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. These words through the prophet Jeremiah to Israelite exiles in Babylon centuries later could as easily apply to Naomi and Ruth. In Ruth 2:10-20, we see how God begins to unfold His plans for Ruth and Naomi, and for Boaz, too.

**Read Ruth 2:10-20 a couple of times, asking the Lord to lead you in this study.**

Naomi needs the hope of a secure future, security of provision and protection as an older widow who is without sons to meet her needs. She also needs the hope of new joy in her life. Naomi (meaning “pleasant”) had become Mara (meaning “bitter”). She had left Bethlehem “full” and had returned “empty”. Her desolation has made her feel that life, and ultimately God, was against her. Ruth needs the hope of acceptance as a foreigner, a Moabitess, whose nation’s ancestry being through Lot and one of his daughters was despised by Israel. Also, as a young widow she has the need to hopefully remarry and have children in a society where to be otherwise would make her very vulnerable.

**QUESTION 1:** What are your hopes in your own life, or that of a loved one, and why?

Our study opens with Ruth bowing down, face to the ground. Why? She has encountered Boaz, the owner of the barley field in which she has worked hard all day, and he has shown her great kindness, giving her protection and provision. Boaz, a man of standing, already knows about Ruth (V11), and he blesses her for what she has done for Naomi. V12b speaks of God’s “wings of refuge” and is particularly poignant when we think of Jesus’ sorrow over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37, Luke 13:34).

**QUESTION 2:** What “field” are you working hard in, e.g. family, workplace, community? How do you need God’s “wings of refuge”; and what words of encouragement do you need to “last the day”? Could you give a word of encouragement to others?

Boaz’s generosity and kindness at the mealtime (v14) and his instructions to his men (v15, 16) that go far beyond the Levitical Law (see Lev 19:19,10) enliven Ruth’s report to Naomi that evening. The “best of all” part of their conversation is her revelation of her benefactor’s name – Boaz (meaning “strength”). Boaz!! What good news this is to Naomi’s ears. She knows that Boaz is a close relative through Elimelech, her deceased husband. He is one of their kinsman-redeemers who, in the Levitical Law was responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of extended family (see Deut 25:5-10). The spark of hope has been ignited for them.

**QUESTION 3:** Have you received good news in these darkening days of Covid-19? Who will you share it with so that they can enjoy it too?

Boaz has sometimes been referred to as a “type of Christ”. The Lord Jesus Christ brings certain hope of a new and eternal life in Himself, welcoming all those weary and burdened by sin and the world to come for rest in Him. (Matt 11:28). He sees His followers as family, as brothers and sisters (Mk 3:33-35). He went beyond the Law, ushering in the New Covenant of Grace so that we can claim “Christ in us, the hope of glory”. (Col 1:27). He allows us to work with Him through His Holy Spirit (compare v19 with Eph 4). As our study ends, we find Naomi rediscovering her joy in the Lord as she proclaims His kindness. Naomi blesses the name of Boaz, and should we not praise the Name of Jesus all the more?