

# Introducing Naomi and Ruth

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon explores the story of Naomi and Ruth, highlighting the importance of faith and trust in God, even in the midst of tragedy and hardship.*

**Duration:** 25:05

**Scripture:** Genesis 38:26, Judges 21:25, Ruth 1:16-17, Ruth 1:20-21, Romans 8:28

**Topics:** "Ruth", "Faithfulness", "God's Providence"

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## Description

Chuck Smith introduces the book of Ruth by exploring the lives of Naomi and Ruth against the backdrop of the moral decay during the time of the Judges in Israel. He emphasizes how God was at work even in difficult circumstances, preparing a lineage for the Messiah. The sermon highlights Naomi's bitterness after losing her husband and sons, and Ruth's unwavering loyalty and commitment to Naomi, showcasing a beautiful expression of love and faith. Smith also reflects on the significance of names and the cultural context of the story, illustrating how God uses ordinary lives to fulfill His divine purposes.

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## Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul  
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life and make you whole  
Welcome to The Word for Today Featuring the Bible teaching of Pastor Chuck Smith Of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California  
Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse by verse study Through the entire Bible  
And on today's edition of The Word for Today We'll begin our study of the book of Ruth  
As Pastor Chuck Smith begins with an introduction To our two main characters, Naomi and Ruth  
We've just finished the book of Judges And in the last five chapters of the book of Judges We've had a couple of insights  
To the conditions of the nation of Israel During the time in

which the Judges ruled The one insight was concerning a priest That had come from Bethlehem, Judah  
And was hired out to the house of Micah And he ripped off from Micah Some of the artifacts of worship that Micah had in his house  
And he went with the men of Dan to be their priest As they established the city of Dan In the northern part of the country  
Religiously, a confusing incident I mean that a priest should be guilty of ripping off his friend Of the various artifacts and so forth  
Is unconscionable The next incident that is recorded And the last one recorded in the book of Judges Is that tough, tough incident  
Where a priest from Mount Ephraim Went down to Bethlehem, Judah To retrieve his concubine Who had committed whoredom  
and had left him To entice her to come back home to him And how

that as they stayed at the city of Gibeah At Benjamite City The men of the city as the men of Sodom Came and beat at the door and wanted The host to release this priest In order that they might have homosexual relationships with him How that instead they sent the concubine out Who the men raped all night And who was lying at the doorstep dead in the morning And the civil war that took place between The tribes of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin During the time of the Judges it was a time of moral decay As is evidenced by the stories It was a time of religious confusion And it was marked by the fact you remember And at that time there was no king in Israel And every man did that which was right in his own eyes Period of anarchy In this black background God was at work God was preparing a

family through which the Messiah would come And God often times works when we cannot see his work When we look around and we see the moral decay We see the corrupted conditions It seems that God has forsaken man And yet God is at work And God was working So the book of Ruth Chronologically fits back in the time of the Judges Because it is not only giving us things that were happening During the time of the Judges to show that God was at work But also it is an introduction to the book of Samuel For it will bring to us the introduction of David Who became the great king of Israel Who was crowned in the book of Samuel as the king over Israel So it's sort of a bridge Between the book of Judges and the book of Samuel However, it does not appear in that place in the Hebrew Bible In the Hebrew

Bible there are five books known as the Mignoth And they are read at the feast times And they are in a section by themselves One is the book of Esther One is the book of Lamentations Another one is the book of Ruth The book of Ruth was traditionally read at the Feast of Pentecost And probably in a sense that would be very fitting Because the Feast of Pentecost does celebrate The gathering in of the harvest At the time of the grain harvest It really celebrates the harvest being gathered in And Ruth has to do with the time of the grain harvest And so the book is traditionally read among the Jews At the time of Pentecost So it came to pass in those days when the judges were ruling When there was moral corruption When there was confusion in the land of Israel From a religious standpoint That

there was a famine in the land God often times used famine to wake people up to their moral decay The Lord said when my judgments are in the land It will cause my people to turn to righteousness And God often used famines to get the attention of the people There was a certain man of Bethlehem Judah The word Bethlehem means house of bread Beth is house and Lehem is bread And Judah is praise So the house of bread and praise Who went to sojourn in the country of Moab He and his wife and his two sons And the name of the man was Elimelech Which means my God is king That would be quite a name His name was a witness my God is king And his wife's name was Pleasant Naomi The name of his two sons were Malom which means sick And Chileom which means pining Again children were often named after the

circumstances of their birth When Jacob and Esau were born They were twins Their mother was having a rough pregnancy And she prayed unto the Lord and said Lord what's going on This is rough and the Lord said there are two nations in your womb They're diverse from each other and they're fighting with each other And when they were born the first one to be born was covered with hair And he was reddish in color but he was so hairy they called him Harry Esau And that means hairy in Hebrew When the twin brother was born He reached out continuing the fight and grabbed Harry's heel And they said look at that heel catcher And so he picked up the name Yaakov heel catcher And so they often named their children by the circumstances of birth And when my God is king and Pleasant had their first child

He probably didn't look very well and said oh he looks sick And so he picked up the name Melon sick When the second child was born he looked like he was ready to die So he picked up the name Pining They moved to Moab and continued there And Elimelech Naomi's husband died So he probably wasn't too well himself And she was left with her two sons And they took them wives of the women of Moab The name of the one was Orpah which means a fawn And the name of the other was Ruth which means beauty And they dwelt there in Moab for about ten years Now sickly and Pining died Both of them and the woman Naomi was left of her two sons and her husband So she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab For she had heard there that the famine was over in Bethlehem The

Lord had visited his people and given them bread So she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters-in-law with her And they went on their way to return to the land of Judah But Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law Go and return each to your mother's house And may the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me And the Lord grant you that you might find rest each of you in the house of your husbands And then she kissed them and lifted up their voices and wept So here was a thing where Naomi was saying to the girls Look girls, you don't need to feel responsible for me I'm going to go back to Bethlehem And you girls should go back to your own mother's homes And I pray that God will be gracious to you even as you have been gracious to me and

to my sons, your husbands And I pray that God will give you husbands and you might have children and have a nice family life But don't feel obligated to go with me or to take care of me There was evidently a very close relationship between Naomi and her two daughters-in-law And they wept together and they said unto her surely we will return with you and to your people And Naomi said no turn again my daughters Why will you go with me?

Are there yet two more sons in my womb that they may be your husbands? Turn again my daughters and go your way for I am too old to have a husband And if I would say that I had hope And if I should have a husband and even tonight I would bear sons Would you wait for them to grow up to marry them? Would you wait from having husbands? No my daughters, it grieves me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me And they lifted up their voice and wept again And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law but Ruth clave unto her Now, going back to the book of Genesis Jacob's son Judah Had a son Who married a young girl named Tamar And this son died before Tamar had any children So the next son in line, Onan, took her as his wife But he was reluctant to do so, he didn't want to do so And so he refused to have a son Or to allow conception to take place And thus God killed him because he would not raise up a son for his dead brother Now Judah had one other son But having two sons already wiped out by this gal Tamar He wasn't willing yet to give the other son He said he's too young right now, wait for him to grow up and when he grows up, you know, then he can marry you But as time went on the son grew up and Judah did not give that son to Tamar as a husband And so you remember the story how that she dressed in the attire of a prostitute And went out and sat on the wayside and Judah came by And struck up a proposition with her That he'd send a little goat to her and all And so she said, well, how do I know you'll do that?

And he says, well, I'll give you a pledge So she says, okay, I want the ring for a pledge Guarantee you'll send the goat back And so she took Judah's ring as a pledge And Judah went on to her and then he went his way and he got to his Men with the flocks and he told the one guy take a goat back to the prostitutes that's on that corner back there And when he came back She wasn't there and the guy inquires, where's the prostitute usually hangs out in this corner? Isn't there a little prostitute around here that we know of?

Tamar had become pregnant by Judah And word came to Judah, they said, hey, did you know that Tamar is pregnant? He said, that's terrible, she shall be put to death So Tamar came to Judah and she said, the man who owns this ring is the man who made me pregnant He recognized the ring And he said, you've been more honorable than I have In that, you know, I should have given you the son, I didn't She had a son named Perez Born unto Judah of Tamar That will figure into the end of the story of Ruth Incidentally, just as a side note, that's where the custom of wedding rings comes from It's a pledge, it's a guarantee I made a promise, I made a vow, and this guarantees that I plan to keep the vow Give me your ring as the guarantee You know, that you're going to keep the vows When a guy is, you know, all excited in love and passions are high He'll make all kinds of promises, get a ring, gals The pledge whereby I know you'll keep these vows These promises So what Naomi is saying, hey girls, I'm an old lady No sense coming back with me, I can't have any more children I mean, I don't plan to get married And even if I did, even if I had a son right now He wouldn't want to wait, he wouldn't want to, you know, rob the cradle Wait until he grew up and marry him So you go back home and find husbands there and be happy So they lifted up their voices and wept again And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, Naomi, but Ruth claved to her And Naomi said, behold, your sister-in-law is going back to her people And unto her gods, return after your sister-in-law She's gone back to her home, her customs and so forth But Ruth said, do not entreat me to leave you Or to return from following after you For wherever you go, I will go Wherever you lodge, I will lodge Your people will be my people And your God will be my God Ruth's making a spiritual commitment She had come to trust in the God of Israel No doubt, through the witness of her husband and all She had come to believe in trusting God She did not want to go back to the gods of her people She did not want to go back to her family She wants to go with Naomi Where you die, I will die And there will I be buried And the Lord do so to me And more also, if anything but death Parts you and me So this glorious, beautiful commitment of Ruth And it's one that is traditionally now Just a beautiful expression of fidelity and of love Wherever you go, I will go Wherever you lodge, I will lodge Your people will be my people Your God, my God And God forbid that anything but death should part us You remember something else from the ceremony?

Until death do us part And so when she saw that she was Firm in her mind to go with her She quit trying to argue with her So the two of them Came back to Bethlehem And it came to pass when they were come to Bethlehem The house of bread That all of the city was moved about them And they said, is this Naomi or pleasantness? And she said unto them Don't call me pleasant Call me Mara Which means bitter For the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me I went out full And the Lord hath brought me home again empty Why should you call me pleasant Seeing the Lord has testified against me And the Almighty has afflicted me So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess Their daughter-in-law With her which returned out of the country of Moab And they came to Bethlehem In the beginning of the barley harvest Now One thing I note here And that is Naomi is blaming God For the problems that have befallen her She's blaming God for the death Of her husband And her sons She talks about The hand of God against her And how God has dealt Bitterly With her It is an unfortunate thing that so often In the time of death We somehow seek to blame God Especially in untimely deaths And Ruth was bitter And it is possible for a person to become bitter against God At the time of death Of one of their loved ones Especially the person's children We somehow blame God For the tragedies We forget that death came by sin By one man sin entered the world And death by sin So that death passed into all men for all sin And in a primary sense Man is responsible for death Not God Had man not sinned Then death would not be an issue Death came as the result of sin Not only death but the sorrows and the miseries And the griefs But so often we blame God because we reason That God could have averted If he had so desired or was inclined to do so Our reason for our attitude of death Being as it is Is our lack of understanding Of the glory of the eternal And being there with God Really For a child of God Death is not some horrible monster But it's a blessing We'll return with more of

our verse-by-verse study Through the book of Ruth As we continue with the tragedy that confronted Naomi and Ruth And we do hope you'll make plans to join us But right now I'd like to remind you That if you missed any part of today's message Or perhaps you'd like to order a copy For that special friend or loved one You can do so by simply contacting One of our customer service representatives And they'd be more than happy to assist you With the ordering details Simply call 1-800-272-WORD And phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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Box 8000 Costa Mesa, California 92628 And be sure to include the call letters Of this station with your correspondence And now, on behalf of The Word for Today We'd like to thank all of you who share In supporting this ministry With your prayers and financial support And be sure to join us again next time As Pastor Chuck Smith Continues his verse-by-verse study Through the book of Ruth That's right here On the next edition of The Word for Today Now once again, here's Pastor Chuck Smith May the Lord bless you And cause you to grow In grace and in knowledge Of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ May you increase In your understanding And knowledge of Him May you be freed From that power of darkness The corruption That is in the world through lust May you grow up In Him in all things In strength and In glory May you increase day by day In His richness In His love In His grace In His word In Jesus' name Hey, have you ever seen a person Who was once a drug addict or an alcoholic And then all of a sudden they became a Christian And they're like a different person They're responsible, they're happy They're excited about life They've been changed from the inside out If you know someone who is struggling with sin Whether it be with drugs or alcohol Prescribed painkillers, an eating disorder Or a problem with gambling or pornography I'd like to recommend ordering This year's One Step to Freedom conference And DVD entitled Inside Out Hear guest speakers Pancho Juarez, Jerry Brown And myself, Tommy Cota And see for yourself some extreme And amazing life-changing stories Of people who have been changed From the inside out To order this year's conference for a friend or a loved one Call the Word for Today At 1-800-272-WORD Or visit us online At [thewordfortoday.org](http://thewordfortoday.org) Again, the number to call Is 1-800-272-9673 This program has been sponsored by The Word for Today In Costa Mesa, California

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