

Commentary Notes - Ruth

by Walter Beuttler

The sermon explores the themes of redemption and divine providence in the Book of Ruth through the lives of its key characters.

Scripture: Judges 21:25

Topics: "Divine Redemption", "Godly Character"

Description

Walter Beuttler preaches on the book of Ruth, highlighting the divine intervention in times of trouble and the ultimate necessity of God's messianic King. The story revolves around the themes of rest, redemption, and union with a redeemer, with Boaz symbolizing Christ and Ruth representing the Gentile Church. Despite challenging circumstances, individuals like Ruth and Boaz were able to maintain godly character and walk with God, showcasing that environment and social status do not determine sainthood.

Transcript

A. THE BOOK OF RUTH

1. The book of Ruth is of unknown authorship and was evidently not written until after the birth of David, 4:22
2. This remarkable story unfolded itself during very troublous and difficult times when the throne of the nation was denied to God and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes"
3. God is "evidently cognizant of man's inevitable failure and of the ultimate necessity of divine intervention by God's messianic King"
4. For this reason God is quietly working toward bringing to the throne of Israel a man after his own heart and ultimately a Redeemer
5. "Rest" is the key word of the book, 1:9, 3:1, and is found only through redemption and union with a redeemer
6. Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, is a type of Christ. Ruth, the Moabitess and a poor Gentile, is a type of the Gentile Church

B. MESSAGE OF THE BOOK

1. The individual is able to keep God on the throne of his heart while men collectively reject his throne rights
2. The individual is able to walk with God even though others fail to do so
3. "Environment does not determine sainthood" for both Ruth and Boaz lived in an environment utterly at variance with their godly character
4. Low social and economic circumstances do not preclude sainthood for Ruth possessed a godly character notwithstanding her poverty and the fact that she was a mere immigrant from a despised country
5. Wealth and social status need not be detrimental to godliness for Boaz was "a mighty man of wealth"
6. "While social and economic circumstances, as all others, play their part in the moulding of a human life, they do not determine the final issues"

(With due acknowledgment to Pulpit Commentary and G. Campbell Morgan -- Living Messages of the Books of the Bible)

REST FORSAKEN, 1:1-5

A. NAOMI'S DEPARTURE TO MOAB, 1:1-5

1. In 1:1 the story of Ruth is placed:

- (1) During what time? In the days of the judges
- (2) In what circumstances? The disciplinary judgment of God

2. Ascertain the meaning of the following names:

- (1) Beth-lehem-judah, 1:1 - "House of bread and praise"
- (2) Elimelech, 1:2- "My God is King"
- (3) Naomi, 1:2 - "Pleasant"

3. The meaning of the name Elimelech suggests what concerning his parents? That they were godly and, contrary to the nation as a whole, respected the sovereignty of God

4. Why was this family designated as "Ephrathites," 1:2? Because they were from Bethlehem in Judah which was formerly called Ephratha

5. Familiarize yourself with the geographical location of Bethlehem and Moab

6. List the circumstances of Naomi which formed the crisis in which the story of Ruth began:

- (1) 1:1 - Famine and distress in "the house of bread and praise"
- (2) 1:1 - Emigration from the land of promise
- (3) 1:2 - Immigration to a land outside of God's promise and blessing

(4) 1:5 - Bereavement of husband and sons within a relatively short time (1:4)

7. Give the implication of the statement "and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband," 1:5: Naomi was now left in a pitiful plight of insecurity and emptiness

8. Comment on the implication of Naomi's plight: Out of the will of God there could be no real blessing and prosperity - only an eventual crisis with compelling reasons to return to the land of promise and blessing

REST CHOSEN, 1:6-22

A. NAOMI'S RETURN TO JUDAH, 1:6-22

1. What caused Naomi to return to Judah, 1:6-7?

(1) The pressure of her circumstances

(2) The report of the Lord's visit to his people

2. Why does Naomi speak of "rest" in 1:9? Because a young woman had no prospect of a life of happiness and security apart from a devoted and loving husband

3. Note Naomi's statements concerning God in:

(1) 1:13 - "The hand of the Lord is gone out against me"

(2) 1:20 - "The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me"

(3) 1:21 - "The Lord hath brought me home again empty"

(4) 1:21 - "The Lord hath testified against me"

(5) 1:21 - "The Almighty hath afflicted me"

4. Why did Naomi feel this way about God? She did not, and could not, understand divine providence

5. Naomi's attitude toward God should teach us what in the light of subsequent events?

(1) Not to misjudge the character of God

(2) Not to misinterpret divine providence

(3) To trust the wisdom and integrity of God

6. Account for Naomi's circumstances in the light of divine providence: The pressure of Naomi's circumstances compelled a choice in the will of God for the accomplishment of his immediate and ultimate purpose

B. RUTH'S CRISIS, 1:8-22

1. Naomi's urging in 1:8-9 constituted what? A test of the strength of their conviction and depth of devotion

2. Account for the sisters' diverse action, 1:10-18:

(1) Orpah's affirmation in 1:10 sprang more from a sense of duty, fleeting emotion, and uncertainty of mind which could not long withstand Naomi's pathetic appeal

(2) Ruth's far reaching decision came from a resoluteness of conviction grounded in love which no reasoning, remonstrance, and dissuasion could possibly alter

3. Ruth's statement in 1:16-17 implies what:

(1) That her devotion knows no reservation

(2) That her decision is irrevocable

4. What is remarkable in 1:22? The providential timing of their arrival "in the beginning of barley harvest"

REST SOUGHT, 2:1-3:18

A. RUTH'S SERVICE, 2:1-23

1. Who was Boaz, 2:1? A wealthy Bethlehemite and near kinsman of Naomi

2. What remarkable truth is contained in the statement "and her hap was," 1:3? The fact of unconscious providential guidance

3. Ruth's excellent character is seen in that she possessed what qualities in:

(1) 2:2? Submissiveness (6) 2:13? Appreciation

(2) 2:2? Initiative (7) 2:14? Modesty

(3) 2:10? Humility (8) 2:17? Diligence

(4) 2:11? Kindness (9) 2:23? Obedience

(5) 2:12? Faith (10) 2:23? Endurance

4. The excellent character of Boaz is seen in that he possessed what qualities in:

(1) 2:4? Courtesy (6) 2:11? Appreciation

(2) 2:5? Observance (7) 2:12? Godliness

(3) 2:8? Kindness (8) 2:13? Friendliness

(4) 2:9? Thoughtfulness (9) 2:14? Consideration

(5) 2:19? Graciousness (10) 2:16? Generosity

5. Ruth's gleaning "unto the end of the barley harvest" provided what for Ruth and Boaz? Frequent opportunity for a growing intimacy

B. RUTH'S COURTSHIP, 3:1-18

1. What does Naomi have in mind in:

- (1) 3:1? Ruth's need of a husband
- (2) 3:2? The duty of a kinsman (Deut. 25:5-10)

2. Ascertain the custom referred to in 3:4: The owner slept on his threshing floor to guard his crops

3. How might Naomi's bold expedient be justified:

- (1) She knew of the affection between Ruth and Boaz
- (2) That Boaz (apparently a timid man) was diffident about approaching Ruth
- (3) That Boaz confided in Naomi about his intentions and reluctance

4. What light does 3:4 shed on Naomi's opinion of Boaz? That she had confidence in his wisdom and moral integrity

5. How may Ruth's action in 3:7-9 be explained:

- (1) She was entitled by Hebrew law to call upon the nearest kin to fulfill his responsibility
- (2) She was sure of the feelings and intents of Boaz, as well as of his timidity

6. Ruth's request in 3:9 amounts to what? A marriage proposal, not then regarded improper under her circumstances

7. What does 3:10 suggest concerning Boaz?

- (1) That his age might account for his reluctance
- (2) That Ruth's initiative was therefore necessary

8. Boaz is doing what in 3:12-13? He respects the rights of a nearer kinsman and submits himself to his decision

9. What is obvious from 3:14? That there was some risk of a scandal involved

10. Naomi's exhortation to Ruth in 3:18 shows what? A restless but understandable anxiety of Ruth while awaiting the fateful decision

REST SECURED, 4:1-22

A. RUTH'S MARRIAGE, 4:1-16

1. Why did the other kinsman decline to marry Ruth, 4:1-6? Because he did not want to break up his estate among more children

2. Why did the writer of the book deem it necessary to explain a custom, 4:7? Because the custom was no longer in use when the book was written

3. The statement "in former time," 4:7, shows what? That the book was written long after the events which it records had transpired

4. Explain the custom in 4:8: It was part of an ancient ceremony in token of attestation of a promise made or an act performed

B. GENEALOGY OF DAVID, 4:17-22

1. The most important fact in 4:17 is what? That Ruth became a link in the line of Christ

2. In general, what may be said of the genealogy in 4:17-22?

(1) It is the most important part of the book with David as the focal point

(2) It constitutes the triumph of the power of divine providence

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