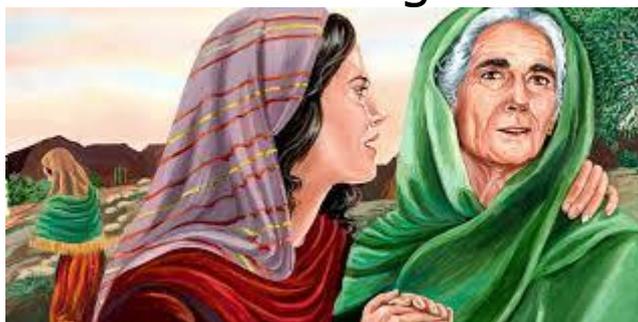


God's strength in weakness: When life is hard discussion guide



based on **Ruth**(Linked to sermon of 13/06/21)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/talks

This was part of a series: God's strength in weakness

Introduction: The story of Ruth is a wonderful tale of love and faithfulness in the face of adversity. It mirrors God's love and faithfulness to us in the good times and the bad. The fact that our heroine, Ruth, is a non-Jew reminds us that even in Old Testament times God was reaching out his blessing to all nations who sought to worship Him. The tale is all about ordinary people like you and I whom God seeks to be involved with and to bless.

Begin with worship. Either read Psalm 139 together and thank God that He is always with us or use this song to begin a time of thanksgiving "There is none like you"
<https://youtu.be/yx8hBj9UXhk>

Now read Ruth 1 and discuss the following and anything else which comes to mind as you read:

1. What disaster has led to Naomi's family leaving Judah?
2. What further tragedies occur?
3. Why would the death of the men in the family be particularly difficult for the women at this time?
4. Read Deuteronomy 23:3-4 What do you think the view would have been of someone like Ruth coming to live in a Jewish community?
5. In staying with Naomi, what might Ruth be giving up? (Ruth 1: 12-13)
6. Both Naomi and Ruth have lost their husbands, how differently do they react to these situations? Why do you think that is? Perhaps this is a reminder that we all have different ways of dealing with difficult circumstances. God doesn't judge us, let's ask God to help us not to judge one another.

Read verses 16-17. Ruth's declaration of faithfulness and love towards Naomi. This cannot have been easy for Ruth, especially in Naomi's state of grief and despair. Think and discuss how in your group you can be there for one another, in good times and bad. You might like to create a prayer chain or prayer triplets. You may like to take this opportunity to split into small groups to pray and talk together.

Come back together to read Ruth 4 and consider the following:

1. How does Boaz "redeem" Ruth and Naomi?
2. How are we redeemed? Make a list of all the ways Jesus has redeemed us (Galatians 3:13-14, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14, Hebrews 9:12)
3. How does God bless Ruth and Boaz's union (Ruth 4:13-18)? (compare this genealogy with the one in Matthew 1)

Finally spend some time praying for difficult situations around the world and nearer to home.

"Throughout the book (of Ruth)there runs the note that God is supreme. He watches over people like Naomi and Ruth and Boaz and directs their paths. God never forgets His saving purposes.....The purpose of history is not haphazard. There is a purpose in it all. And the purpose is the purpose of God." Leon Morris