



**WHERE'S
WALDO?**

Old Testament Survey

Ruth

God in every chapter of your story

Background

- ❑ Narrative style
- ❑ God's sovereignty and provision is key
- ❑ God is present in each chapter



Main Point

We find God in our relationships



In the days when the judges ruled,[a] there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.

Ruth 1:1 NIV



The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

Ruth 1:2 NIV



Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 1:3-5 NIV



Tell the Story

- ❑ **Famine in Judah**
- ❑ **Naomi's immediate family dies**
- ❑ **Naomi is alone, no support, in a foreign land**



When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

Ruth 1:6-7 NIV



Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.” Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.”

Ruth 1:8-10 NIV



Tell the Story

- ❑ Famine ends in Judah
- ❑ Naomi decides to return home
- ❑ Ruth and Orpah insist on staying with Naomi



But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons

Ruth 1:11-12 NIV



Would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!" At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

Ruth 1:13-14 NIV



Tell the Story

- ❑ Naomi can't provide for the women
- ❑ She isn't sure how she'll care for herself
- ❑ Orpah leaves and Ruth stays



“Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”

Ruth 1:15 NIV



But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

Ruth 1:16-18 NIV



So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

Ruth 1:19 NIV



“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

Ruth 1:20-21 NIV



So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth 1:22 NIV



Tell the Story

- ❑ Naomi wants Ruth to abandon her
- ❑ Ruth fully commits to Naomi
- ❑ Naomi wants to be known as “Mara” - bitterness



Where is God?

- ❑ The relationship between Ruth and Naomi
- ❑ God didn't create us to be alone
- ❑ God is in our relationships



Naomi's Perspective

- ❑ We all have things go wrong in life
- ❑ Think about the relationships in your life
- ❑ Who is there in tough times
- ❑ God puts people in our lives



Ruth's Perspective

- ❑ Ruth feels a passion and loyalty to Naomi
- ❑ We can always pray for and listen to others
- ❑ Is God calling you to go further with someone?
- ❑ God will guide you in that relationship



Closing

- ❑ Relationships matter
- ❑ We all have Naomi moments
- ❑ Is God calling you to be Ruth to someone?



Audio file

[Ruth 1 Relationships Audio.mp3](#)

Transcript

So games are fun, right? We many of us like to play games. We think about games as stuff to do with other people, just things we enjoy. I remember a game I played as a kid that more so came from a book and it was where's Waldo? Who did where's Waldo? Yeah, right. So the whole point of where's Waldo is you got to find this guy, Waldo. Apparently it started as where's Wally is. A British thing? And then we Americanized it to Waldo. I didn't know that until I looked this up, but then you're looking at a picture like this or any type of picture, and the whole idea is you gotta find Waldo. And it can be difficult, right? Because you're you're. He's blending in or he's with a bunch of. People that maybe or. To look like him, or you're not focused to find him, but in some way he reveals himself with him. It's usually the fun way that our friend Waldo is dressed, but he always reveals himself. So where's Waldo? We're gonna take. And instead of where's Waldo? We're going to call something. Where's God? And that's going to be our new miniseries on the book of Ruth, we just did Ecclesiastes for a few weeks. We're kind of in this Old Testament survey. I'm calling it where we're taking short little looks at different things in the Old Testament and today we will start Ruth and it's going to be. Each week we're going to see where is God in this chapter of Ruth, because God is mentioned. In the book of Ruth, but nobody's really directly praying to him a lot, and he's not doing a lot of speaking or any speaking to different people, right? We're not doing that. That's not happening in this book yet. He is so very present in every chapter of the book of the Ruth, and he's also present in every chapter of our lives. Of our own story. So we've kind of titled this one Ruth God, in every chapter of your story, because in every part of our lives, he's. There as well. So I hope we can kind of make this one a more practical different areas of your story where we can look for God now before we dive into chapter one, which is where we'll be today, let's do just a little. Bit of background on the book as a whole. I like to do this as we dive in. We don't know who wrote the book of Ruth for sure. There's some different theories we don't, actually. Know this is a narrative, so it's told that's the genre we talk about. It's told from a narrator perspective, but also with a lot of dialogue. There's really. Three big main characters we're going to meet. Two of those today and I actually think this one as a story is a super easy read. This has like kind of a natural story arc to it. If you were going to sit and read a book of the Bible straight through Ruth, 4 chapters actually goes pretty quickly. Julie talked about Leviticus last week. I would not recommend trying to do that in one sitting. I did it in seminary. We had to. It was unpleasant. I'll be honest, Ruth, you could totally knock out because it got this cool story arc to it. There's a couple of themes in it. Family is a big one that comes up, but the main one, I think is God's sovereignty and God's provision. Over everything, the fact that God is just in control. We're going to hear about a few cultural customs as well, those kind of help us tell the story, but we're going to be here for four weeks. There's four chapters. We're just going to dive in to a chapter each week and each week what we're going to do, we're gonna read through the whole thing. I'm going to help us tell the story. And kind of. Break it down. What's going on? Then we'll look for. Where is God in that chapter? And then? Where is God in that chapter of our own story of our own lives? And we're going to see where God will reveal himself. In that part of our story and today chapter one is going to be about relationships. So what I would say today, the thing for you to think about overall is that God

reveals himself through relationships and to clear this up. This is not our relationship with God. I'm saying that God reveals himself through our relationships with other people. And that's we're going to look at today. So let's dive in and we're going to read Ruth one, we're going to start with verses one through 5. It will be up here, behind me. If you want to follow along in your Bibles. It is bookmarked and those Bibles on the table. I'm in the NIV translation as usual. So Ruth 1 verses one through 5 says this. In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, so a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab the man's name was Elimelech. His wife's name was Naomi. And the names of his two sons were Malon and Kilian. They were Ephraimites from Bethlehem Judah and they went to Moab and lived there. Now, Elimelech, Naomi's husband died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpa and the other Ruth, after they had lived there about 10 years. Both Malon and Kilian also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband. Alright, we'll stop there for a minute. What's going on so, there's famine in the land of Judah. So the family that lives here in Judah has to go somewhere else. To find food or they make the decision to go. So they leave Judah and they head to Moab. Moab is not known. Biblically is a great place to go, but for some reason they know that there will be food there, so we have this. That's going to go and we have a levite who is the father of this family, Elimelech. The name means God is king. It says he's from Bethlehem. Interestingly enough, Bethlehem means House of bread or House of food, but they have to leave because there is no food with the famine. Then we have Naomi. Naomi's name means pleasant or lovely. She is the wife. And mother, then they have two sons, Malon and Kilian. We don't know a lot about them. As you saw in here, they pass away pretty early. But we have these four and they're a family now. Some people are saying this family never should have left you to begin with. That was God's land. They shouldn't have left. They made a mistake. We don't really know. But the important part of this story is what happens next, which is Naomi's there with her family. And first thing that happens is her husband dies. So we're putting the focus on Naomi because it says Elimelech, Naomi's husband dies. That wording would not have been common in this time. The fact that Elimelech is referred to as Naomi's husband puts the focus on Naomi, so her husband dies first thing that's rough. Now the sons marry Moabite women. This would have been frowned upon. They they would have been told you shouldn't marry women from Moab or foreign women. They wouldn't have been allowed into the Jewish congregation. But they married anyway. Orpa and Ruth, we don't know a whole lot about Orpa. Ruth, as you may guess, based on the title of the book, is going to be one of our main characters. Her name means refreshment or comfort and friend, and that's going to become a little bit clear as to how her name plays in it. Do it later. So they married these women and the sons die. We don't know how many of the men die. It doesn't say that. But the point is now on Naomi. She's alone. She is a woman without any sort of provider and she's in a foreign land. These are all not great things culturally at this time. The men were the big providers. She's foreign. She has no men in her life. She doesn't have a husband, doesn't have family. She is in a really difficult place over the course of time, she went from a family and a land that was very familiar. In Judah, with their family to a foreign land in Moab with nobody around here, think about it like this. There are times in our lives when we may have to step into the unknown, but we knowingly do it and we kind of like, OK, I'm going to dive into this. I don't know what it's going to be like, but I'm just going. To go, I'm going to have faith. I'm going to do it right. Naomi is a little different side of it. Because Naomi is now in the unknown and she didn't want any of this, it happened to her. She's there. It's like she jumped in. OK, rough spot. I have to leave my homeland and now everything else I had is taken away. That's where Naomi is. So she is in a very difficult spot. Alright, we're gonna keep going now and reading and see what happens. We're

going to read the rest of the chapter. I'm going to break it into smaller chunks for us to talk this one out a little bit. So let's read Ruth one this would. Be versus 6 through 10. To see what happens next. When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters in law prepared to return home from there with her two daughters in law, she left the place where she had been living, set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. Then Naomi said to her two daughters in law, go back each of you to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to. Me. May the. Lord Grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband. Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud and said to her, we will go back with you to your. We'll stop there. All right, so quickly. Happens Naomi somehow gets word that the famine has ended in Judah, that God has provided for now, for the people in Judah, she takes the initiative. This is Naomi's decision to head back to Judah, her daughters in law start to make the trip with her and at. Some point she. Just says go home, go back to your mother. He's basically. I'm not your mother and I can't provide for you in this way, right? I can't. I'm not that you can go home. You could find new husbands. She's basically telling them you have no commitment to me. You are free from commitment to me. She even wishes them well, she says. This May God show you loving kindness. The Hebrew word here hassid means loving and kindness and loyalty. So she gives them this blessing to go and like all good in-laws when it comes to their mother or father-in-law, they listen, right? No, they refuse, cause we all listen to her in-laws, right? My mother-in-law's probably not listening. I'm probably OK on that. So they refuse. They don't go. 11 through 14, so they refuse. Now what? Naomi said return home my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons who could become your husbands? Return home. My daughters. I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me, even if I had a husband tonight and gave birth to sons. Would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried? For them, know my daughters, it is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me. At this they wept aloud. Then Orpa kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. All right. Let's see, Naomi insists they leave, she says. I can't provide more sons to be your husband. This is getting at a custom called a leave a right marriage, which would basically say a childless widow could marry the brother of her deceased husband to kind of keep the family name going to have children and keep up that lineage. But she's saying and only saying I can't do that. And I think it pains her. I think this is hard for her to say, but she's like, I can't provide any of this for you. She probably doesn't even know how she's going to be cared for when she gets home. She doesn't know what her reception will be like. She's at the age where, like she said, she probably wouldn't be married again. Her parents have already passed away, so she doesn't know what's going to happen with her, and she feels God's hand is against her. She says she's bitter. She shows some legit human. I can understand it. She's gotta just feel like. I believe in God because she believes God can provide for people because she wishes God's blessing on Naomi and Ruth, but for some reason she's like I don't feel it for me and she's bitter. About it. So, or believes and Ruth stays and it's easy to read this and think orpa should have stayed too orpa really did what she was supposed to do. She showed respect and obedience and heeded the advice of her mother-in-law. She went back home. Ruth, on the other hand, showed some loyalty we don't know at this point whether it's going to be misguided. Or what's going to happen but she. Remained loyal. Alright, let's finish up the. See what happens here verse. 15 look, said Naomi, your sister-in-law, is going back to her people. And her gods? Go back with her, but Ruth replied. Don't urge me to leave you or turn back from you where you go. I will go where you stay. I will stay. Your people will be my people. Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die. And there. Now be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it

ever so severely. If even death separates you and me. When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her so the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed. Can this be Naomi? Don't call me Naomi, she told them. Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me. The Almighty has brought misfortune upon me, so Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law. Arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning all right, and that is the end of the chapter. So Naomi. Again, wants Ruth to leave her. In essence, she's telling Ruth abandoned me. Just just leave me here and. Go. But Ruth fully commits to Naomi. She's saying she will become Naomi's family in everything she's saying, your God will be my God. So converting to following God. She says things like where you're buried. I will be buried.

Right.

This was a big deal where you're buried was a big deal culturally at the time you would be buried near your family. She's saying I'll be buried near you and she has no idea what this is going to be like. Now we have Ruth, who's a Moabite, traveling to Judah. So now she's going to be the foreign woman with no husband, with another woman who doesn't know what her reception is going to be like. But she's not letting Naomi be alone, so eventually, Naomi acquiesces. I gotta believe this is somewhat, begrudgingly, finally being like I'd find just whatever I don't want to fight anymore, as I can't do it. So they arrive, and some women, as I kind of a man, she's coming in and there's women that see her coming and say is this Naomi? Is this her? The woman we knew? And she stops him and says I don't want to be Naomi. I don't want to be known as pleasant or lovely anymore. I want to be Mara, which? Means bitter. She's like I. Left this place full. I had a family. I was provided. Or and now I am empty. She is bitter. If we define bitter, it's something sharp or pungent. Taste or smell, not sweet. I think we can all think about times when we have been bitter in our lives. I'm going to use slightly lighthearted one. We'll go back to 14 year old Jeff, because why wouldn't we go back to high school? Because everything was the end of the world in high school, right? I was 14 freshman in high school. As a big soccer player, that's pretty good. I'm gonna lie. I had a string of a couple of bad games, and then the world really dropped. We're coming up on the homecoming dance. My girlfriend breaks up with me. Right. Thank you, Brad. Brad gets a disdain there. So I have a run of bad games. Girl breaks up with me. The dance is coming and. I'm just like. Everything's terrible. Life is bitter. I don't get it. So I have a buddy. That brings me a burned CD. This is back in the day before MP3, so we actually burned. A physical CD and dropped it in my mailbox that had a bunch of just like angry bitter songs on it cause that was what we processed. Most of them were rap. Songs that I can't. Quote here based on the wording. One in particular, but but he did this right. It was supposed to help me feel better when I was bitter, because nothing's going well. But the point is we all get in these moments of just. Bitterness when we feel like. Naomi had Ruth go with her. The plan was to help her, which was what this CD was supposed to do for me, not abandon her in her bitterness. Alright, so that's kind of where the story is. We have Naomi, who's upset and bitter. Ruth won't leave her and wants to be there for. So where's God? Where is God here? I see him in the relationship between Naomi and Ruth. They've known each other for a while. The relationship isn't totally realized yet. I don't think that's coming. But this is where he is, because God didn't create us to be alone. And the fact that Naomi finally acquiesced and let Ruth come with her. I think God's hand is behind that. Naomi wanted to be alone and was finally like, fine. I'll let Ruth come with me. It's also God's hand is on Ruth saying you're not going to abandon her. You're gonna push even a little harder. Harder than Orpa did. Orpa left. You're

going to push him a little more so Ruth won't let Naomi be alone. And I think. We can see in this relationship because we tend to look for God in the supernatural and the miraculous a lot, and he's he's there in that way for sure. God does miracles, he acts in crazy ways that we can't comprehend, but I think he's also there in practical ways. I fully believe he is there in just the relationships we have with other people and I know I have missed that. Sometimes. So I want to look at this from both perspectives, from Naomi's and from Bruce and see God in these parts of our stories. So when we look at Naomi's perspective. Everything has gone wrong. She was full. She's empty. She is bitter. She wants to be alone. Right, I get this way. OK, when things get really rough, I like to isolate and I can do this easily. So I work primarily from home. As a pastor, I'm at home with my kids. I can go into my little cocoon of isolation and loneliness really easily, and I don't have to come out, but the fact is. God wants us out of those and he brings people to help us out. So when we get bitter. The task is to try not to isolate. To try to get through some of that bitterness when we get snippy, we get short when we're not in a great place and this happens. It's understandable. But think about the relationships in your lives, friends, families, coworkers, your neighbor, your barista. It doesn't matter who are some of these people in your life. Is there someone that just seems to be there for you when things start to get rough? Is there a person that you find yourself gravitating towards? When things get rough, you just like man. This is who I might actually want to. Go be with. It's not an accident that these people are in our lives. God puts people in our lives. There's a lot of people in our lives. God puts there some people in our lives. I'm going to guess some of us wish he didn't put there, but there are some people in our lives that got put there to work through, to reveal himself through. To us. So we have to try to see him that way now. It's not going to be everybody in your life. There are some people in your life that are just there to be friends or acquaintances and that's great, but God will reveal himself through other people. To you, we have to pay attention to the people around us in tough times. Don't neglect that. Think about who. Is maybe like that Ruth to you? When you're in a sense of being, Naomi, when you're kind of bitter. Who here has ever eaten a raw Brussels sprout? Alright, a couple. Undercooked completely raw. What's it taste like if? It's completely raw. Gross. Good, fantastic description. Hey, look at that bitter. A raw Brussels sprout is bitter and off, putting and gross, according to Carmen. Totally great, great description. This is how we can feel sometimes but. When you cook a Brussels. Sprout and maybe you cook it in something. It takes on something totally different. I put a nice Maple glaze on it. These things end up tasting almost like candy. Bunch of Maple syrup, some oil, little mustard, and they're delicious at times in our lives, we. Are like a raw Brussels sprout. We will be bitter. Put that on a T-shirt. Let's add that to the list. We get bitter. We maybe we feel gross or we're off putting and we know it. But God can reveal himself in another person and let me. Say this it's not wrong or bad to feel that way. Sometimes we all will get there to that feeling of bitterness and just grouchiness or whatever, but God can reveal himself in another person in the Ruth. That's like that glaze that's there to sweeten, or just help out a little bit. But pay attention for that and look for God revealing himself to you. Through someone else. That's if we're in the Naomi. 's perspective. But what about Ruth? Ruth is there for Naomi in a very difficult time. We're going to see much more of how she sticks by Naomi in the coming weeks as we. Get into. This book, now Ruth, actually this is kind of tricky because Ruth is told to go and she doesn't she. Stays and pushing too hard with someone can have a negative effect, and that's really where I think God is in this relationship with Ruth and Naomi because Ruth feels this loyalty and God guides her to stay, even if she doesn't know what's God's guys are to stay with and guys, they owe me to let her stay and they only doesn't get more upset. She just eventually agrees, and I think this is where God is moving. Ruth is choosing to walk, step for step with Naomi while she's bitter through a very difficult time. We may have times in our lives

where God wants us to be like this to somebody else now. We can always pray for someone. We can always just be there to listen. But at times, God may prompt us to give even more. It's not going to happen in every scenario, but there may be times where God's like to give a little bit more to this person. We have to have our eyes open to the people in our lives that are going through difficulties. And we can always show people God's love and kindness and grace and patience. We can always do that. But we want to be sensitive and. If God wants us to do a little more, maybe he has you dive in fully with them to whatever they're experiencing. Maybe we're just supposed to be near and pray for them. And he'll work in another way. But we ask him for guidance. See if we need to be a type of Ruth to that Naomi or Mara in our lives. See if we need to be the one to sweeten it a little bit. We add sweeteners to things, right. Some of you maybe added sweetener to your coffee this morning. Or you sweeten the food like we talked about sweetening the Brussels sprouts or different things. The trick is with the sweetener to use the right amount you can over sweeten something right and it becomes super off putting. I worked at a coffee shop for a long time and we added honey to a drink and I remember getting a phone call and this woman called and complained that we. Way too much. Honey in her drink. Like, OK, we'll we'll like, copy your drinks. Like, no, I just wanted you guys to know how terrible it was because it really made her drink off pudding. Cause there was too much. It's gotta be in the right amount. If you use too little doesn't actually do anything. It doesn't sweeten it. There's a recipe, there's an amount to get it right. And when you do it in the right amount, that sweetener is incredibly effective. So we'll have opportunities to be like that sweetener to someone. We don't want to use too much because we don't want to be overbearing because that can actually be harmful to that person, but we want to do enough to help them. Here's the cool part. God is like our recipe guide with this. When we go to God and talk to him about it, he can guide us in the right way, the right amount and how to be there for that person. How to be the Ruth for that person? He's like that measuring cup and that guidance piece that we need. So if God is nudging you. To be a Ruth or to be a sweetener to someone to reveal himself through you to that person. Don't neglect that nudge. God's in these relationships. God's in it. And we will all have times when we feel like Naomi when things go South and we're mad, we're upset, we're sad, we're bitter. So think about is there a Ruth in your life? Somebody that's kind of gravitating towards you or you want to go gravitate towards and at times we maybe call to be a Ruth to someone? Again, it won't be all the time, but there may be times where God is calling us to be there for someone a little bit deeper to show. Him to them, so pray about. It and take God's guidance. We don't have to do that. All on our own, we. Have God's guidance to help us. So these relationships are put in place by God let God reveal himself through your relationships with others. Let's pray this more. God, I thank you for the first chapter of Ruth here. Got that we can come here. We can dive into the Super cool story and just see you in it. Got to find you in every chapter. And then to find you in every chapter of our stories of our lives and God, I pray this week specifically for our relationships. God for the people in our lives, for family, for friends, for coworkers, for the people that we come into contact with God, I pray that you. Would reveal yourself in these relationships and nudge us to the people we need to be there for and bring the people to us that we need as well. God, we would be sensitive to both those things. So God, again, I thank you for these words and for today your name.