

FIRST things FIRST Daily Devotionals

Devotional Guide for May 6-12, 2024

These devotions are prepared for you each week by Pastor Kevin to use for your own personal devotions with the Lord, and are designed to prepare you for the message next weekend.

Monday, May 6TH “In the days when the judges ruled...”

Scripture: Ruth 1:1-5 NIV

“In the days when the judges ruled...” This opening statement from Ruth 1:1 places the events of Ruth’s story in the chaotic era, reflected in the book of Judges. Judges 21:25 reveals the situation of that time: **“In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.”** This is the background of the story of Ruth. The book of Ruth opens with huge sadness that sets the scene for the story of a childless widow named Naomi. From the start, the book of Ruth’s underlying question is this: **“Where is God in all this?”** The same might be asked in relation to our own culture today.

Question: How do you see today’s culture in similarity to this era?

Tuesday, May 7TH “Where you go I will go”

Scripture: Ruth 1:6-22 NIV

The main story begins with two brief scenes in which Naomi voices her anger and grief for the first time. She keeps encouraging her two daughters-in-law ‘to return’ (repeated 12 times), to go back to Moab or back to Judah. As the story unfolds, Naomi continues to persuade the two young widows to return to Moab, rather than accompany her to Bethlehem. Why should they sacrifice their futures to share her hopeless one? Orpah obeys and returns, but Ruth’s beautiful declaration of commitment, in verses 16-17, finally silences Naomi. And in her declaration, Ruth renounces all her past ties to Moab and foreign gods to embrace Naomi’s country, family, and faith.

Question: Have you ever left something behind to follow a new path?

Wednesday, May 8TH “Blessed is the man who took notice of you!”

Scripture: Ruth 2:1-23 NIV

The story takes a positive turn with the providential first meeting of Ruth and Boaz. Ruth’s work proposal and her report to Naomi bracket the meeting. In the previous chapter, Naomi cried out against God, but chapter 2 then shows subtle signs of Godly, kindly divine providence. Ruth recognizes Boaz’s authority and has gratitude for his unexpected generosity. *(continued on other side...)*

When she asked how and why she has earned such favor in his eyes, Boaz indicates that she has earned a positive reputation in Bethlehem, for her commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi. For the sake of her safety, Naomi instructs Ruth to stay near Boaz’s female workers in the harvest... no doubt because Ruth is a Moabite woman and there was widespread immorality, all during the period of the judges.

Question: Have you seen God’s hand arranging details in your life to reveal His favor for you?

Thursday, May 9TH “The Lord bless you my daughter!”

Scripture: Ruth 3:1-18 NIV

In the previous chapter, Ruth initiated the foray to the field to gather grains of wheat laying upon the ground... but now a revived Naomi, seizing what seems to be a golden opportunity, takes the initiative—and for a new purpose. Ruth’s gleaning initiative benefited Naomi; now Naomi’s plan will benefit Ruth. When Boaz realizes there is a woman lying at his feet, and discovering it is Ruth who asks him to spread the corner of his garment over her, this symbolic gesture is an agreement to marry. Ruth finds refuge in Boaz’s protection, after the example of the Lord’s protection under His wings. The appeal to Boaz, as guardian-redeemer, may be implicit in Naomi’s plan, or it may be Ruth’s own innovation; it invites him to agree to marriage by “covering” her. Upon her return to Naomi, Ruth is counseled to be patient, because Boaz “will not rest” (v.18) until he settles the matter. Ruth’s destiny is in Boaz’s very capable hands.

Question: What do you make of this unusual engagement scenario?

Friday, May 10TH “Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife”

Scripture: Ruth 4:1-22 NIV

Quite wisely, Boaz arranges the way he can marry Ruth as his wife. The other guardian-redeemer waives his prior right to the property, and a brief ceremony celebrates public acceptance of the outcome. Boaz declares that Ruth is now his wife and that the purpose of their marriage is to produce an heir for Ruth’s late husband Mahlon. The closing scene (vs.14-17) finds Naomi and the town’s women (but not Boaz and Ruth) welcoming Obed as Naomi’s “son.” It thus offers a happy reversal of the unhappy arrival scene from the first chapter. Obed turns out to be the grandfather of the great King David, thus bringing redemption not only to Naomi and Ruth, but also to the nation of Israel—and to all the world through Christ!

Question: How familiar were you regarding the story of Ruth?

Mother’s Day, Sunday, May 12, 2024

8:30 and 10:45 am (Livestream @10:45 am)

Ruth 1:6-18, 2:8-13, and 4:9-17 NIV

Pastor’s message: **“Ruth—A Little Story and A Big Redemption”**

