

LIFE GROUP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Advent Series

These questions are for the **December 4, 2022**, sermon, “The Bethlehem Story, Part 2.” Please read the sermon passage (Ruth 1:16-21, 4:13-17) together out loud.

Passage Outline

BECAUSE GOD IS AT WORK FOR THE GOOD OF HIS PEOPLE IN THE DARKEST OF DAYS, NOTE

1. Naomi’s Bethlehem pain. (1:1-7)
 - a. Naomi experienced great personal loss, including Elimelech and two sons.
 - b. Now living in Moab, Naomi had to make a decision about what to do next.
 - i. Note that she did not overanalyze her past decisions.
 - ii. She made a future-focused decision based upon how she God providing for his people back in Bethlehem.
2. Ruth’s Bethlehem courage. (1:16-18)
 - a. Ruth, a native of Moab, makes a bold decision based upon her faith in God.
 - i. She decided to go with Naomi, regardless of her race.
 - ii. She decided to commit to Naomi, without a clear plan for income.
 - iii. She committed to die where Naomi died, and to be buried there.
 - b. The call to Christ followers is complete devotion to Yahweh, no matter the cost.
3. Boaz’s Bethlehem redemption. (4:7-12)
 - a. Boaz serves as a “kinsman redeemer” of Naomi / Mahlon / Ruth.
 - i. Kinsman: close family member.
 - ii. Redeemer: one who acts / pays on behalf of another, bringing freedom.
 - b. Boaz’s role of redeemer points to the ultimate redeemer, Jesus Christ (through David).
4. God’s Bethlehem grace. (4:13-17)
 - a. Naomi experienced great loss and pain, but her faithful suffering points to God.
 - b. God provides a baby boy, born in Bethlehem in the lineage of David, who leads to Jesus.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: When our pain is great and we suffer faithfully, God gets the glory. Naomi was bitter and felt that God’s hand was “against her” (1:13), but she never doubted that the LORD (1:21) is God. How have your sufferings actually served to bolster your faith in God?
2. Based on #1, above: Though Naomi made a series of bad decisions that may have contributed to the consequences she endured, she did not look back with regret or blame. She looked forward with faith, even though she was “empty” (1:21). What do you learn from this faithfulness?
3. Based on #2, above: Because of her faith in God (1:16), Ruth (a Moabite) makes a bold and public lifetime commitment to God and Naomi. She is all-in. Talk about a current example of a young person who is “all-in” with God, and how that commitment is encouraging you.
4. Based on #4, above: God rewards Naomi’s faith with a baby boy (Obed) who is the grandfather of David. This is meant to emphasize God’s covenant faithfulness—he will send a “son” who will redeem all those who trust him. How has God’s faithfulness has changed everything for you?