

Ancient Cliff Notes

Ruth

September 23, 2018

Courage Church, Detroit, MI

scriptures: Ruth, Deuteronomy 23:3-6,
Matthew 7:11, Numbers 22-25.

We are continuing through our series
“Ancient Cliff Notes” - going through some
of the stories of the Old Testament asking
these questions:

What happened then?
What does it mean for us now?
and How does it point to Jesus?

That is our objective in this series...
to make ancient stories applicable to
our modern lives, and point us to our
everlasting, eternal Savior. And
today’s story is certainly no exception. Today is the story of Ruth.



The book of Ruth is a short, 4 chapter book in the Old Testament that follows immediately after the book of Judges. It takes place during the time of the judges which is the same time period of the first four sermons we did in in the series.

And what I will do today is, I will set us up a little before reading a very famous passage that you most likely have heard before, but hopefully you will understand its significance **EVEN MORE AFTER TODAY...** and then after the reading of the scripture we will plow through everything that follows it.

So the story of Ruth begins with a woman named Naomi. And in a lot of ways, the story of Ruth IS the story of Naomi.

Naomi is from Israel... but her and her husband escaped a famine in Israel and moved to Moab. They had two sons.

And all in just the first five verses of the book of Ruth... Naomi's husband dies... BOTH OF HER SONS MARRY MOABITE WOMEN (one named Orpah, the other named Ruth), and within ten years BOTH OF HER SONS ALSO DIE.

So Naomi, Ruth and Orpah are all widows now.

And this is bad for everyone, but it is PARTICULARLY BAD FOR NAOMI, who is much older in age and is now left with no parents to go back home to... not a lot of chance for RE-MARRYING because she is much older...

AND NO CHILDREN TO TAKE CARE OF HER.

which made her the MOST VULNERABLE type of widow.

No care from any direction.

But she has these two daughters-in-law... and they both recognize that even though they are in a vulnerable place as well... Naomi is in an INCREDIBLY vulnerable place. So they both commit to staying with her and being a support for her.

But she basically tells them both "you girls are young... you have your whole lives ahead of you. Go home. Go back to where you came from, find new husbands, remarry... Don't throw away your life on an old lady like me"

She gives them both permission to move ahead without her.

So Orpah kisses her and departs... but the Bible says that Ruth clung to her. (1:14).

And this is where we will pick up on our reading. With Ruth chapter 1 verses 16-18.

Naomi tells Ruth "do what Orpah did... get out of here, go back to your home and back to your gods..." and this is how Ruth responds:

“Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.”

Lets pray, and then we will talk about what happens on the other side of Ruth committing to stay with Naomi... and the journey that they go on.

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If you were to open up a commentary on the book of Ruth or do some research trying to figure out “WHY DOES THIS BOOK EXIST? Why was it written, and why did it stand the test of time?”

why would the short story about a woman who’s husband dies and her loyalty to her mother in law be so important that it would make it into the Bible...

There really are two answers that stand out by Rabbi’s and scholars throughout the centuries of studying this book.

One of the answers that the Rabbi’s give is they simple say: “*chesed*” - that word we studied last week when we did Hosea. God is abounding in steadfast love.

The idea is that this book was written, and was included in the scriptures, “To teach us how great is the reward of those who do deeds of kindness [*chesed*].”

Remember the imagery for “*chesed*” - a mother swan who plucks out her own feathers and lines her nest with them so that her young can rest in comfort.

Our daughter Fiona got a baby doll from my parents for her birthday, and she just absolutely loves this doll. They gave it to her last Sunday... and

that night, after we put the kids to bed we eventually went up and checked on them and found that Fiona had laid her baby doll in her bed, and she was sleeping on the floor of her bedroom.

Its amazing how that motherly inclination exists even in a 5 year old.

That is exactly what *chesed* is. Steadfast love. Giving up your own comfort for the sake of something that means a lot to you. And I was just thinking about this this week... that if my daughter would do that for a baby doll... something that only in her imagination has life at all...

how much more do we as parents, do that for our living, breathing, flesh and blood children?

And as Jesus says in the sermon on the mount that IF WE, BEING EVIL know how to give good gifts to our children... how much more does God our Father in Heaven shower us with love and give us good things?
(Matthew 7:11)

This story, from front to back is the story of God's faithfulness on a family that should have been forgotten.

So that is the first answer that the Rabbi's give. And we are going to spend some time working toward the second answer... but to start, we need to go all the way back to the Torah.

There was a huge rivalry recorded in the book of Numbers (Numbers 22-25) between Israel and Balak who was King of Moab. Balak hires a guy named Balaam to curse Israel, but God tells Balaam that he can't curse Israel, because they are blessed. Balaam says he can't go, but Balak makes Balaam come anyway, and so instead of cursing Israel, he blesses Israel.

Balak gets mad... tells him to try again... and so Balaam BLESSES Israel, again... and again a third time. He is not able to curse Israel.

Then Balak, from Moab, is so frustrated and is trying to figure out a plan for how to stop Israel, so what happens is, instead of the curse, King Balak

has the Moabite women work to weaken the Israel armies by seducing the men and inviting the Israelites to make sacrifices to other gods... (Numbers 25:1-3) - so what happens is, because of these Moabite women, the Bible says that Israel YOKES ITSELF to a different god than the God of Israel... they yoked themselves to Baal.

and in a similar way that we get Moses in Exodus 32 coming down from Mt. Sinai and seeing his people committing evil... the way that he responded by SMASHING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS... here... Moses sees this, and in his anger he writes these words that are recorded in the book of Deuteronomy, 23 beginning in verse 3. This is what it says:

“No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord. Even to the tenth generation, none of them may enter the assembly of the Lord forever”

which we will hold on to, and come back here...

and then verse 4, 5, and 6 he explains the reasoning... saying this:

“because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam; instead the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loved you. You shall not seek their peace or their prosperity all your days forever. ”

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So because the Moabites hired Balaam to speak a curse against them, even though it did not work... Moses is so angry about this and everything that follows, that he writes down this passage that ends up making it into the Bible saying that God will not accept any Moabite OR ANY DESCENDENT, EVER of a Moabite.

And I have got to tell you, even though this verse is one that we usually skim right over IF we even read it at all... its actually one of the MOST CONTROVERSIAL passages in the entire Bible...

its one of the hardest verses to sort out, and here is why:

Ruth is why.

Because if you read through the story of Ruth you know that the writers make it absolutely ABUNDANTLY CLEAR that Ruth is a Moabite.

1:22 “So Naomi returned, and Ruth **the Moabite** her daughter-in-law with her...

2:2 “and Ruth **the Moabite** said to Naomi...”

2:5 “Then Boaz said... “Who is this young woman” and the servant answered “She is the young **Moabite** woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of **Moab**.”

2:21 “And Ruth **the Moabite** said...”

it goes on and on and on... several more times in chapter 4... Ruth the Moabite.

it would seem that the writers are trying to tell us something very very specific here...

this girl is part of a race of people THAT WILL NEVER, EVER BE ACCEPTED BY GOD... according to the scriptures. She doesn't fit with the rest of the people.

So when Ruth says to Naomi, “I will go where you go, your God will be my God” - Naomi... who *is* Jewish is trying to stop her and wants her to go back to Moab because in her mind, EVEN THOUGH SHE LOVES RUTH... she is thinking:

“you CAN'T go where I am going...

and my God won't accept you.”

But Ruth insists.

So lets cliff notes through this story... this one will be fun to one day do as a series... but this is the basic gist of the story:

Naomi and Ruth come to Bethlehem. And it causes a stir because everyone recognizes Naomi because she was from there (and Bethlehem is a very small town), and they start saying "Is this Naomi?" and this is what she says... she says "don't call me Naomi... watch this.

The name "Naomi" means PLEASANT. Okay?

but when they start calling her by her name, she says "Don't call me that... Call me "Mara" - which means BITTER.

Don't call me pleasant. Call me bitter.

She said "when I left this place I was full... but I am returning to you empty" (1:20-21)

in other words... life has beaten me down... it has taken my joy. It DID NOT GO THE WAY THAT I THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD GO. IT DID NOT GO THE WAY THAT I HAD PLANNED.

and the more I was let down, and the more my circumstances blew up in my face, the more angry I became... and so now, a woman who was named after being a sweet person... a pleasant person... is asking people to call her bitter. That could be its own sermon.

But God takes bitter Naomi, and he does something amazing. He shows here as clear as possible "I am NOT finished with you yet!"

He shows Naomi:

"I use the broken pieces to write the best stories of redemption - and I have My hand on you Naomi... and I have My hand on you Ruth... your story is not over... it is only just beginning."

and here today no matter where you came from and no matter what fell apart yesterday and no matter what you screwed up on Tuesday...

even if you barely limped into this place because you are so angry at God for the way that your life is going... I want to encourage you this morning that the story is not over.

That God isn't threatened by your anger, even if it is directed toward Him, he is not mad about it... he is moved by it... and He wants to wrap his loving arms of *chesed* around you - because He truly is like a mother swan who plucks its own feathers and lines its nest with them so that its young may rest in comfort...

that is what we are about to see Him do in the lives of Naomi and Ruth and that is exactly what He wants to do for you.

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So there is a guy named Boaz (who by the way is the son of Rahab, - the prostitute that housed the Israelite spies on that scouting trip of the promised land. The story of this family truly is a journey through a Narrative of Grace) and Boaz has a field and Ruth goes to this field to glean and gather food...

And when Boaz sees this girl Ruth, he asks his servant working the field: "who is she?" -

and the servant responds (we read this earlier): "She is the young **Moabite** woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of **Moab**."

She is a foreigner, but she is gleaning food for Naomi who is a local so we let her glean and gather.

And its clear that Ruth caught Boaz's eye, because he goes to the field and he tells her "keep gleaning here." He tells her that it is not safe for her to glean anywhere else... remember... she is a Moabite...

So then Ruth goes home and she is telling Naomi about her day... and Naomi says the same thing: "KEEP GLEANING THERE - in any other field you would get assaulted" - oh and by the way... Boaz happens to be on the short list of kinsman redeemers.

The best way to understand what a Kinsman Redeemer is to think of the word "kin"

today if we say "next of kin" we are talking about a persons closest living relative.

For instance, and I know that this sounds a bit crazy today but it was the way things were done in that culture... if a man dies and he is married but doesn't have any kids yet... that man's brother, or cousin, or whoever his closest living relative was, would then be under MORAL (and sometimes even legal) obligation to then marry his widow in order to give that person that has died, an heir.

And this is very important!!! Catch this, because its important to understand why they had the rules that they had.

The word "widow" in the Hebrew language is the word *almon* (al-moan) and it actually comes from the concept of something being concealed or hidden or even *silenced*.

So what it carries with it is the idea, not just of a person being alone... but actually of a person being "erased" - not erased as in "destroyed or killed" but erased as in FORGOTTEN. Because if there is a widow and she hadn't had children yet, the family line ends there with you. There is no passing the mantle, there are no future generations.

So the Kinsman Redeemer would step in and would make sure that the widow and the husband she had lost are not erased from history.

So they would have a child and that child would actually continue the family line of the FIRST husband.

The kinsman redeemer also had the right to buy back land that someone in the family had lost... they could redeem that for them.

In Hebrew it is the word “*go-el*” (gah-al) and what it is, is: “a person who acted as protector, defender, avenger or rescuer for other members of the family, especially in situations of threat, loss, poverty, or injustice.” (Wright, *The Mission of God*, page 267)

It ALSO is a word used in Exodus to describe God, and how he RESCUED Israel from Egypt.

its an amazing, rich concept that summarizes what God is to Israel. He is the one who REDEEMED THEM.

and of course, the story of Ruth is a story of Redemption. But it happens in a bit of an odd way.

Naomi tells Ruth, basically, to seduce Boaz. She tells him to crawl into bed with him after he has had plenty to drink, and to do whatever he tells her to do. Again, the situation is loaded... it could be a whole sermon...

So Ruth does that.

And ultimately what she is doing comes across to us almost as a marriage proposal... like, “Boaz will you be my kinsmen redeemer?” but the problem is that she is doing it wrong... and she doesn't have all of the information.

and this is what happens, and its actually remarkable what Boaz does.

Boaz actually resists her. He resists her... but he does NOT reject her. And there is a very big difference.

Boaz knows the law, and he knows that if they do this now, it won't be legal... but the thing is this... Boaz actually really likes Ruth. He actually WANTS to redeem her. And this is what he tells her. He says “Ruth... I want this... I want to redeem you. I want to make you my wife... but the thing is, I am not first in line. There is another. IF the first redeemer rejects the opportunity to redeem you, then I will redeem you.

Which implies that Boaz did his homework... going into this unexpected moment when Ruth showed up Boaz already had redeeming her on his mind... he had already looked into it it seems, because he knew right away that he was NOT first in line.

He also knew that when you get redeemed, it needs to be in public. He tells her “don’t tell anybody you came here... because honestly... this looks bad.

but yes, I am in. lets do this the right way... tomorrow.”

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So the next day, Boaz goes to the town.....

and the other redeemer, the unnamed redeemer comes by and so Boaz stops him, and he sits him down and Boaz lets him know that there is a piece of land that he is the first in line to redeem and asks the man if he wants to redeem it. Again, Boaz knew right when Ruth asked him that he wasn’t first in line... yet the person who IS first in line didn’t know anything about it!

Now, watch this... watch what happens. The man right away says “yes. I will redeem it” - who wouldn’t accept free land being handed down?

Then Boaz says this in 4:5 -

“Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth **the Moabite**, the widow of the dead, in order *to perpetuate the name of the dead* in his inheritance.”

in other words... so that you can have children IN HIS NAME. So his family line does not get *erased*.

Now this is a major curve ball for our nameless redeemer here. Boaz tells him that IN ORDER TO REDEEM THE FIELD, you also must redeem Ruth... which means marrying Ruth, which means having children with

Ruth because there were no children with her first husband, and the family line is about to end unless you have children with her...

oh and, by the way, those children will be Moabites... meaning that you will pass down your inheritance to Moabites... your family line will now be Moabites... all of your descendants will all be Moabites... oh and remember Deuteronomy 23... No Moabite or ANY DESCENDENT OF A MOABITE FOREVER will ever be accepted by God!

and do you know what this nameless redeemer says?

“I cannot redeemer it. lest I impair my own inheritance.” (4:6)

“this is a bad investment” - it would destroy my inheritance -

it is not worth it.

she is not worth it.

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TWO TAKEAWAYS ABOUT THIS... the first point is one that I heard Shane Willard make and it really spoke to me so I will reframe it a bit for us here... BECAUSE SOMEBODY NEEDS TO HEAR THIS... and the second one, as I was studying it and putting the pieces together my mind just about exploded. So first...

Please notice this... and please consider this in your own life...

Because there is no way that Ruth was the first person, OR the last person, who had someone tell her that she was not worth it...

Driving home from school on Friday, our daughter Fiona was trying to think of the name of one of the boys in her class... she said “daddy, what is his name?”

I said “I have no idea” and then she named another boy and said “his friend”

Again... I don't know kiddo... what are you wanting to tell us about this boy?

And she said "he told me that he doesn't want to be my friend" and she was so sad about that - and Dawn just looked at her and was like "baby you don't even know his name" - like... don't let someone who's name you don't even know get into your head like that!

But she was still sad because someone didn't want to be her friend.

And I am sure that we all in one way or another experienced that type of rejection as a kid, but this should teach us something as adults.

Be careful who you let speak *criticism* into your life.

Now... We DO NOT want to surround ourselves ONLY with people who will always tell us what we want to hear... we need friends who will be friends, who will help us when we fall and who will set us straight when we are wrong... but be leery of words that cut you down from the people who have NOT earned the right to speak into your life in that way.

Words carry an enormous amount of weight, and when people toss around belittling and destructive words like they are tennis balls... if you give them the space to do it then those words have the power of life and death and what can happen is they can lodge into your heart and rob you of your purpose.

Don't read over what happens here too quickly... by this redeemer NOT redeeming Ruth, he was saying that "the public shame I will face for not doing my obligatory duty for my family... THAT IS WORTH IT... but she isn't."

In this story we have this nameless character... who makes this statement about Ruth that says that she is not worth it... but who is he? Who is he to her? Who is he to the story?

He is a guy that was in a position to redeem her, but chose not to, because he didn't think that she was worth it.

and what if Ruth, at hearing that... realized... "its true. I am not worth it. I am a bad investment"? - What if Ruth, at hearing that decided... "I shouldn't have come to Israel"?

Be very careful who you let speak critically into your life.

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Now, there is not an ounce of information anywhere in history about that guy, besides that.

Which brings me to the second takeaway from this little section that is often over-looked related to the fact that nobody knows anything about this guy:

There is something VERY important buried in the Hebrew language used in Ruth 4 verse 1.

Ruth 4:1 says this, this is how its translated in English:

"Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, **friend**; sit down here."

but this man is the first in line to be the redeemer and the redeemer has to be a relative, and Boaz is the second in line to be the redeemer so Boaz is also related to this person... Boaz knows this guys name... but we don't GET his name.

In English we say that Boaz calls this man "friend" - but there is another Hebrew word for friend, its the word "*rea*" (ra-ah) - its used close to 200 times... the writer doesn't use the word "*rea*" - instead he uses a phrase that is only used 2 other times in the Hebrew Bible... what it actually says is this: turn aside, *Ploni Almoni*.

We know the book of Ruth was written several generations after it actually happened, because it ends by listing several of her descendants... so the

writer already knows the outcome of the conversation when he is recording it.

To this day, *Ploni Almoni* are the Hebrew words you would use for “John Doe” - a person without a name. But when its used in the Bible, it is used TO INTENTIONALLY CONCEAL INFORMATION.

The other two times the phrase is used are for military purposes. One of them is in 1 Samuel 21:2, when King David is talking to Ahimelech the priest, and he is explaining that the King charged David to not tell anyone what he had been charged to do... and then when he describes the place he was going, he says “I have made an appointment with the young men for **such and such** a place.” - in Hebrew: *Ploni Almoni*

He does not disclose the location, ON PURPOSE. “we are going to a specific place... but I am not telling you what that place is.”

The writer is doing something very specific here in Ruth. Because this is NOT just a nameless redeemer who says Ruth is not worth it. HE IS THAT... but there is more too it than that.

the word Almoni comes from the same word as *almon* (al-moan) - the word for WIDOW.

but its not saying that the nameless redeemer was widowed. Its saying that he was erased. His name was concealed... it was left out... on purpose.

By not doing justice because of how much it would have cost him...
By not doing the RISKY thing even though it was the RIGHT thing...

he kept his world the way that it is was but ultimately he lost his name and missed out on a chance to be a part of something that would change the whole world, and today he is remembered as nothing more than a John Doe who rejected Ruth and the chance to do justice by her side,

because it seemed like a bad investment.

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the people who never take the risk on the thing that, by all of the worlds standards would be considered “a bad investment” -

their names never make the history books.

Whatever it is that God has called you to today, it is going require you to do something, somewhere along the line that isn't comfortable to you. That doesn't necessarily seem like a good investment when you look at the life that you have built.

But I want to encourage you this morning that no matter how many nameless people have spoken death over your destiny... there is only one voice that will always be faithful... and if God is telling you to do something, run AFTER it with all of your heart.

But if we run from it, we lose.

if we fear loss so much, that we let it dictate our decisions... WE LOSE.

if fear of things not being as comfortable as they are right now hold us back from the things that God put on our heart to do... we will kill our destiny thinking we are protecting our future.

Don't do it.

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So the redeemer rejects her, and Boaz marries her... he takes her as his wife... he marries a Moabite.

And Boaz and Ruth have a son, and they name him Obed.

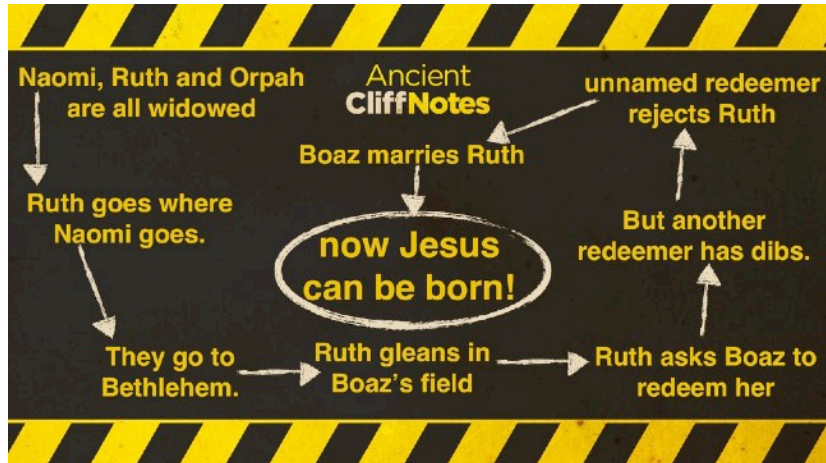
and Obed had a son, and they named him Jesse.

And Jesse had a son, and he named him David.

and anybody who knows anything about the line of David knows that from the time of David, the prophecies for the coming Messiah all insisted that He WOULD COME from the line of David...

and sure enough, when you get to the New Testament... and you get to Matthew chapter one and the story of the birth of Jesus... and it all begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ... our personal Lord and Savior... the one who ultimately

would redeem Israel... the one who would die for the sins of the entire world... on that Genealogy is King David... and a couple generations before that, BY NAME, you find Ruth listed.



The majority of the names on the genealogy of Jesus only shows the Father because that was how genealogies were usually written... usually in genealogies its ONLY THE FATHER... but Ruth's name was specifically written because its a demonstration of the kind of Kingdom that THIS GOD WAS COMING TO USHER IN.

ONE WHERE THE MOABITES GIVE US THE MESSIAH.

But I thought that NO MOABITE WILL EVER BE WELCOMED... not ten generations from now... not ever.

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Listen to me closely church. The Bible is the Word of God. It is true. But you have to understand how to read it before you start using pieces of it as a way to judge others... especially on terms of "who is in and who is out" and "who is good and who is bad"

Jesus died for the people who Moses said weren't welcome. Jesus WAS A DESCENDENT of people who Moses said that NO DESCENDENT OF would ever be welcome.

You and I, if we aren't careful... with the best of intentions and with trying our very best to be Christians and to follow the Bible... we can use the words written in this book AS WEAPONS AGAINST THE PEOPLE WHO NEED THIS BOOK THE MOST.

The people who NEED US THE MOST...

The people who need to experience the Love of God... which is very different than a few angry words that Moses wrote in a raging moment seem to paint God as.

Reading something that Moses wrote as an angry response to something that happened to his people; and then applying it across the board and beginning to define people within that lens, would be like reading Hosea like we did last week, and leaving God angry because that's how he was in chapter one even though by chapter three we are getting the greatest image of grace in the Old Testament.

The image that the Old Testament paints God as is *Chesed!!!*

He is abounding in steadfast love!!!

We have to understand how to read the Bible... Its not static. if it were, non of us would shave, we would all be miserable because we wouldn't ever eat bacon, and all our steaks would be well done and all chewy and nasty.

Its not always "God said it, I believe it... that settles it." Sometimes it is that... but you have to know the context of what you are reading before you start yielding it against other people.

The Bible is a wrestling of wills, and human hearts trying to figure out how to handle it when their friends are getting killed by oppressors... and their wives are bound up in slavery and their children are being taken from them.

It's a wrestling of what to do with the people WHO YOU LOVE, and who God has said HE would put his hand on them, and guide them and even *marry them*, and yet THEY JUST KEEP BETRAYING HIM.

it's God looking at all of these humans who had made messes of their lives and made enemies, and made mistakes, some of which are beyond anything we could even imagine...

and having to figure out: "what LIFE can I breathe into this?"

"how can I inspire *this*, add life to this... to draw them closer to me, and closer to the life that I have for them?"

"How can I turn this into something that helps *them* create the world I dream of for them?"

And personally I think that it's very telling that God would work around a law that was written out of anger - in order to perpetuate the line of David and culminate at Jesus.

Because as the New Testament makes abundantly clear... in Christ there is no male or female. There is no Jew or Gentile.

Moabite. Ammonite. Israelite. Detroit dweller... suburb dweller...

The Moabites can be Christians just like the Jews can be Christians.

Our identity is not found in who we once were, who someone else says we are, or where we came from... it is found in who JESUS IS.

And who Jesus is, is Lord. He is God, who loved THE WHOLE WORLD so much that He became a man, lived a sinless life, and died FOR MY AND YOUR SINS, so that we could have eternal life with Him in Heaven one day... and so we can bring what is in Heaven down to earth, TODAY.

And Jesus breaks through the most impossible situations and creates from them the most beautiful stories.

Naomi... you may think you are empty now.. I am going to fill you!

Moses you may think that i will never accept a Moabite... but I'm actually going to save the whole world through one...

This story shows us that GOD IS NOT LIMITED by the words that we say in our anger to try and limit Him... That He is absolutely NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS... and that His love is always, always bigger and always better than we can, in our human understanding ever come up with.

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One of the last things that we read in the book of Ruth, is some women talking to Naomi, and they say this:

“Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”

The story of Ruth is the story of Naomi. Of a woman who lost everything, but who had someone who stood by her side, and was willing to go to the hard places JUST TO STAY BY HER SIDE... who was willing to go to a place where she WAS hated, even outcast... JUST TO STAND BY HER SIDE.

But ultimately, this is a story of A GOD WHO REDEEMS. Who himself rises up on behalf of the oppressed and marginalized. Who rules in an upside Kingdom, where the first will be last and the last will be first... where whoever loses his life will gain it...

where the widow will be remembered forever, but the redeemer who denied justice was erased.

Where a Moabite's name is listed in the Genealogy of the savior of the world... and where God is *chesed*.