

## ULC Sermon Study Resource

### *Ruth // Providence of God*

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*October 30, 2022*

**Prayer:** Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

**Icebreaker:** What's the best (or worst) part of Halloween?

**Reading:** Ruth 1:1-18

#### **Outline:**

- I. God's Providence and Ruth's Context (v. 1-6)
  - A. The context of the story of Ruth is filled with political turmoil, economic disaster, and an abundance of personal tragedy. Naomi's husband and sons die, making her a widow in a foreign land, and leaving Ruth with no husband or protection.
  - B. Yet, while all of this harm and pain is present in the lives of Ruth and Naomi, God provides and "visits his people". God is at work in the mundane, and everything we have been given is from God's grace.

**Q: *Where specifically in your life do you see God working in the mundane?***
- II. God's Hiddenness and Ruth's Kindness
  - A. We oftentimes don't recognize God hidden in the world around us. However, every detail about the world around us shows us God's providence.
  - B. We can either view the world as opaque with no greater meaning behind it, and accept our suffering in despair. Or, we can recognize that every good thing in our life, even the mundane things, is a sign of God's providence.

**Q: *Do you find yourself more often recognizing God in the hidden parts of life, or viewing the world as opaque?***
- III. God's Kindness and Ruth's Loyalty (v. 14-17)
  - A. Orpah, Naomi's other daughter-in-law, makes the logical decision to leave Naomi and return to her own people. However, this also means Orpah left God as well. While Orpah left Naomi and her God, Ruth fully trusted in God's providence and vowed to stay with Naomi and follow her God.
  - B. Ruth's story, like many of ours, is filled with tragedy and suffering. And yet, God is present and provides. Through the suffering of Jesus, God provided for us and is present in our sufferings as well.

**Q: *When have you most powerfully felt God's providence?***

#### **Reflection/Application Questions:**

- 1) How can we show others who have been through extreme suffering the providence of God?
- 2) How can we remind ourselves of God's presence in the mundane?
- 3) How do we prevent ourselves from succumbing to viewing the world as opaque?
- 4) How can we find hope in the story of Ruth?

#### **Suggestions for further study:**

- Exodus 4:31 Q: How does this verse remind us of God's faithfulness in suffering?
- 2 Kings 2:2-6 Q: How does these verses show us how to be faithful to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

God, thank you for your providence in every part of our lives. Please help us to remember your presence in the mundane and even more so in the sufferings we face in life. Continue to strengthen us in any sufferings we may face, and teach us to trust in you as Ruth does. Amen.