



Lesson 1 – April 28, 2020

Introduction

History and Background

Ruth's story takes place in the days when the judges ruled - between 1200 and 1300 BC. This was a time of violence, oppression, bloodshed, and lawlessness.

Judges 21:25: In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

The book of Ruth has often been presented as the story of two desperate, needy women who are rescued by a man—a hero who comes into their lives and solves all their problems. I want you to see that Ruth and Naomi are two incredible role-models for us today.

The book of Ruth is told from Naomi's point of view. It's about her family, her homeland, her losses, her people, her relative kinsman-redeemer and her land that she is selling. But instead of thinking of Naomi as a bitter, complaining woman, we will see her as the female counterpart of Job. It is the story of two women on their own in a patriarchal culture.

What is a patriarchal culture is?

Much of the world today is immersed in a patriarchal society. This is accomplished mostly by keeping women ignorant, keeping them isolated, and keeping them in bondage.

What is an Ezer-Warrior? Why do we call Ruth an Ezer-Warrior?

The word translated “helper” is the word “Ezer” in the original. And we see it the first time in **Genesis 2:18**, where it refers to the woman, Eve:

The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

The word Ezer appears in Scripture twenty-one times, twice for the woman, three times for nations Israel turned to for military assistance when they were under attack, and sixteen times for God. Its meaning is *helper*.

Given the way this word ezer is used in Scripture, it means much more than helper; it means strong helper. Ezer represents the strength and valor of a warrior. God created women to be warriors—ezer warriors.

Quoting Carolyn Custis James, author of *The Gospel of Ruth*: “We are all *ezers*—from our first breath to our last. We follow Jesus, and He calls us to advance His kingdom no matter where our story is playing out.”

Read Ruth: 1:1 – 2

Why did Elimelech go to Moab?

He had good intentions, but he went outside the boundaries of God’s plan.

Proverbs 14:12: There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

When trouble comes we can do one of three things:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Read Ruth 1:3 – 13

Naomi's Reaction to Her Predicament

"I'm going home." Her decision was right, but what about her motive?

Read Ruth 1:14 – 18

Orpah's decision to return

Ruth 1:14

Ruth's Decision to Go with Naomi

Ruth 1:15 – 18

What was waiting for Ruth in Bethlehem?

Why would Ruth make this choice?

Read Ruth 1:19 – 22

Naomi's Homecoming Speech

Count the number of "me's" and "my's" in verses 20 and 21.

What was Naomi focused on as she returned to her home?