



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of December 11, 2016

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Ruth 2:4-18, "Refuge"

⁴ And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."⁵ Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"⁶ And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab."⁷ She said, "Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers." So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women."⁹ Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"¹¹ But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you

left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before."¹² The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"¹³ Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

¹⁴ And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over."¹⁵ When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her."¹⁶ And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley."¹⁸ And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

- What words would you use to describe Ruth after reading this passage? How would you describe Boaz?
- When Boaz spoke to Ruth for the first time what did he already know about her (v.11)?

- Ruth was a young widow and new to the Jewish faith. After her first encounter with the Jews of Bethlehem, what impressions would she have about them? About the God of Israel?
- Ruth finds refuge under Gods' wings (v.12). What does this mean for Ruth? Describe a time when you found refuge in God.
- It is worth noting that both Ruth and Boaz have covenant responsibilities rather than individual rights in mind as they interact. Does that encourage or challenge you in any way? Why do they have this approach to life?
- What do you make of Boaz's extremely generous treatment of Ruth? Was it because she was a relative, or was he interested in her, or was he a "redeemer"?
- How does Boaz's treatment of Ruth point us to the character and work of Jesus Christ? Ruth's treatment of Boaz?
- **This is the third Sunday of Advent.** Advent is a time that helps us to remember Christ's first coming and reflect on the mystery of the Incarnation. It also teaches us to look eagerly for His second coming when He will return to redeem His creation and exercise His rule with all power and authority. When Christ comes again, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. Do you find yourself longing for Jesus to come again? Why, or why not?
- Each Sunday in Advent, the congregation joins our voices in a **Declaration of Faith** at the beginning of the worship service. **This week, we read responsively from the [Belgic Confession](#).** This statement is a summary of Christian belief written in 1561. Read this statement together as a group. What does it say Christians believe about people? About God?
- Each Sunday in Advent, we read a passage from the Gospel of Luke in anticipation of the coming of Jesus Christ. **This week's Gospel Reading is [Luke 2:25-35](#),** Simeon's song (known as the *Nunc Dimittis*) as he waited for the "consolation of Israel". What impact does seeing the infant Christ have on Simeon? What does Simeon prophesy regarding the ministry of Jesus?
- As a part of worship **[we sing songs and hymns](#)** that further amplify each Sunday's message. **This week, we sang the powerful carol, "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence",** which calls us to look through Christ's first advent to His second coming. This advent hymn was written at least as early as 275AD and has been a part of Christian liturgy since the 4th century. [Read](#), [listen to](#), or [sing](#) the hymn, and enter into a time of prayer looking for the Lord's coming and giving Him glory.

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
 To hear sermons and access past study guides visit www.wepc.org/archivedsermons

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on Ruth 2:4-18.

What We say Reveals what is in our Hearts. What God says Reveals what is in His Heart.

- Let's look this morning at the words of our main characters. We have seen what is in Naomi's heart and we have had hints of what is in Ruth's.
- We have been waiting for Boaz to come onto the scene and when he arrives, the author wants us to hear him.
- His first words uttered in the story are words of blessing.
- "The Lord be with you."
- He greets his workers (and us) with God.
- His conversation with Ruth and his answer to her question continue his attitude of blessing. He goes beyond what the law required for gleaning and he sees to it that she is satisfied with more than enough to eat.
- Hear Jesus' words of blessing.
- A story that began and continued with famine and death is now centered upon satisfaction and fullness.

Ruth's Question

- "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should notice me, since I am a foreigner?"
- Boaz answers with, "all that you have done for your mother in law since the death of your husband..."
- Remarkable. But there is something even more remarkable that makes her care of her mother in law possible: it is where Ruth has hidden herself.
- She has taken refuge under the wings of the God of Israel.
- You left your father and mother and the land of your birth.
- "These words are the most significant literary allusion in the book. They explicitly echo God's first words to Abraham in Genesis 12:11, 'Go forth from your land and your birthplace and your father's house.' Now it is a woman, and a Moabite, who reenacts Abraham's long trek from the East to Canaan. She will become a founding mother of the nation as he was a founding Father." (Robert Alter)
- This is a common teaching in the Old Testament.
- For example, Psalm 57:1 says, "Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in Thee my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of thy wings I will take refuge." Notice the word "for." Be merciful to me, for in Thee my soul takes refuge. Why should God show mercy to Ruth? Because she has sought refuge under His wings. She has counted His protection better than all others. She has set her heart on God for hope and joy. And when a person does that, God's honor is at stake and He will be merciful
- But we must ask how Ruth's love for Naomi and her leaving her own family relate to her seeking refuge under the wings of God. The most likely suggestion is that Ruth was able to leave the refuge of her father and mother in Moab because she had found a refuge under the wings of God which was far superior. And evidently she saw a need in Naomi's life and sensed God calling her to meet that need.
- Ruth humbles herself in finding refuge under the wings of God.

Why Have I Found Favor?

- God finds this attitude irresistible.
- He gives grace to the humble.
- Grace runs downhill.