



**Reaching,
Restoring,
Raising Up**

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L.I.F.E. Group Questions—Matthew 5

Our L.I.F.E. Groups that meet in homes use the following questions from the sermon for discussion and application. To find a group pick up a L.I.F.E. Group brochure in the Welcome Center.

1. Share with the group how you can tell when you don't have peace.
2. Talk about why peace is not the same as avoidance, appeasement, or absence of conflict. What does the statement "peacemaking is about pursuing relationship not agreement" mean?
3. Which of the five principles of peacemaking do you need to work on most—taking initiative, being interested, being issue-centered over person-centered, being innovative, or being intent on reconciliation over resolution? Why are each important?
4. Do you typically use the lawyer, theologian, psychologist, or historian approach when you fail in the peace process?
5. Discuss why peacemaking provides fellowship with the Father, promotes personal happiness, and presents you as God's son. Do you need to make peace with anyone?
6. Talk about anything else that impressed you from the message if you have time.

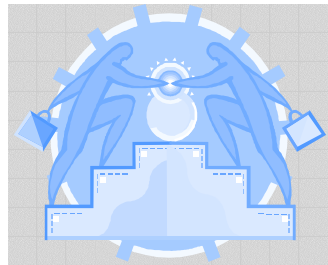
**You Can Join an ABF Anytime — Find
Yours Below and Join Us!**

Adult Bible Fellowships

Locations, Times, Descriptions

9:00

10:45



**ADULT BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS
- CONNECTING AROUND THE WORD -**

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|---|
| Rm104 | | Rm 104 | Open—Bower-Chappell |
| Rm 110 | 30s-50s—Waller-Crary | Rm 112 | Women—Byrum |
| Rm 201 | 30s-40s—Sims | Rm 201 | Lay Pastor Training |
| Rm 202 | | Rm 202 | Blessings in Disguise—Graham |
| Rm 203 | Young Singles —Franklin/Reynolds | Rm 203 | 30s—Tripp-Tripp |
| Rm 204 | | Rm 204 | Singles—Bentzel |
| Rm 205 | 40s&Up—Christensen-Hasler | Rm 205 | Open—Regis-Anderson |
| Rm 206 | | Rm 206 | 30s—Heritier-Sharp |
| Rm 207 | | Rm 207 | 20s—Alexy/Jones |
| Rm 208 | 40s-50s—Wicks | Rm 208 | College—Ayres-Getchell |
| Gym 101 | Women—Knox-Anderson | Gym | Engaged/Young Married —Houston/Baker |

March 6, 2005

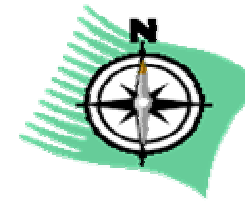
God's Super Heroes

Discovering from Judges and Ruth how God uses everyday people to accomplish great things for Him.

Celebration Fellowship

We Are Family

A preview of Ruth 1-4



Volume 3, Issue 26
March 6, 2005

Inside this issue:

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The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God's pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God's family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

As Sister Sledge sang in the 70's, when you give love like a family, then you can say "we are family", even if you're not related by blood. This is essentially the story of Ruth, a woman from Moab, who became part of the "family" of Naomi, her mother-in-law, after the death of her husband. While her sister-in-law decided to stay in her homeland when Naomi returned to Israel, Ruth made the choice to go wherever Naomi went, in great part due to her desire to find refuge under the wings of Naomi's God, Yahweh. She became like

a daughter to Naomi, who had been bereaved of her husband and two sons, giving not only comfort to her, but financial support as well. Following Naomi's advice she went to pick up the leftovers from the harvest, and, by the providence of God, found her way into the field of Boaz, their kinsman. She caught Boaz' eye, and he gave her special treatment, and thus she had a very successful first day. When she reported all of this to Naomi that evening, she was excited, knowing that this was the hand of the Lord. She di-



When God uses us we become superheroes for Him!

rected her to get closer to Boaz, and, even though much older, he took the steps to secure Ruth's hand in marriage. In a picture of what Christ does for us, Boaz "redeemed" Ruth and Naomi, and his inheritance became theirs. Although not blood relatives, these three could certainly say, "we are family".

Things Could Get Worse

As the humorous story goes, when the pessimist was told to "cheer up, things could be worse", they cheered up, and sure enough, things got worse. Israel's story, as the book of Judges closed, was like that; as bad as things had been for them, things only got worse. The first illustration of this was the story of Micah, who stole eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother. When she pronounced a curse on whoever had stolen it, he confessed the sin, and returned the silver. She reversed course by pronouncing a blessing on him for giving it back, but then he made an engraved image out of the silver. Although this violated the second commandment, they set up a shrine with the image as the central object of worship. Then, when a Levite was passing by, he drafted him to become his personal priest, another violation of the Mosaic Law. The priest also broke the Law by consenting to this, and Micah's mother was wrong to

allow it—but pleasing her son was more important than following God's Word. This story shows just how confused everyone's thinking was, all because they had forgotten God's Word. The next story shows the same thing; the tribe of Dan had sent out scouts to look for a different inheritance in the land of Canaan. Although God had allotted Dan a small area near Zorah and Eshtaol, they had been unable to defeat the Canaanites, and had been confined to the hills (Judges 1:34). As these spies searched they came to Micah's house in Ephraim, and, recognizing the voice of the Levite, they asked him to inquire of God about whether their journey would be successful. The priest, eager to please, told them that they had the Lord's approval, so they traveled to Laish. Because this place was remote, spacious and fruitful, and the people were vulnerable, they reported that God had given it to them. Apparently

(Judges 17-21)

their decision was based on the ease of obtaining the territory, rather than the on the fact that it was the land God had determined for them. Often we act that way, making the decision that requires the least effort, rather than the one that is right. Subsequently, the tribe armed themselves, and immediately set out; but as they passed through Ephraim they stopped at Micah's house and abducted the priest, along with the engraved image, household idols and shrine. Their low spiritual condition was demonstrated by the tribe as they enticed the priest with this arrangement, and by the priest as he succumbed to the prestige and job security that would come from ministering to an entire tribe. Then the Danites showed their lack of mercy as they launched an attack on Laish and completely annihilated them. They committed another deplorable act as they set up Micah's graven image, even though the appointed place of worship was at Shiloh. The next story

(Continued on page 2)

Judges 17-21 (continued from pg 1)

that shows how bad things were in Israel involved a Levite from Ephraim who went to retrieve his concubine, who had become a prostitute. As seen by his willingness to restore her, he was a good man. When he went to get her from her father's home in Bethlehem, he stayed there for four days, a day longer than he wanted due to her father's persuasiveness. On the fifth day, however, he was determined to get back home; so they left and journeyed all the way to Gibeah of Benjamin, refusing to spend the night in Jebus, a foreign town. They were going to spend the night in the square at Gibeah, but an old man took them into his home. That night some worthless men demanded that the Levite come out so they could have sexual relations with him; but the old man offered his virgin daughter or the concubine instead. The Levite sent out his concubine, and they ravaged her all night until she fell dead at the doorstep the next morning. The Levite placed her on his donkey, took her home, cut her into twelve pieces, and sent a piece to each of the tribes of Israel. It was his call to them to consider what to do in the face of the worst evil that had been committed since the tribes left Egypt. While this was a gruesome act, sometimes people must

be called to put a stop to evil by whatever it takes. All Israel gathered at Mizpah and decided to go up against Benjamin when they refused to hand over the men who had done this. Ten percent stayed back to supply food for the troops, while the rest of the troops readied for battle. The troops of Judah went up first, but were soundly defeated by Benjamin, causing them to turn to God for confirmation. He told them to go up again, but the next time they were defeated as well, although they had eight times the number of troops of Benjamin. As they wept before the Lord and inquired again, He told them to attack the next day. This time they set an ambush, and as Benjamin thought they were about to win again, the trap was set, and they were completely annihilated by

Israel. Sadly, this civil war resulted in the loss of all the women of Benjamin, so that all the tribe would be wiped out. Therefore, Israel took an audit and discovered that Jabesh-Gilead had not fought with them against Benjamin, so they killed all their inhabitants, except the virgin women. They gave them to Benjamin, but were still short of the needed number of women. So, they directed the Benjamites to go to a feast at Shiloh held each year, and to seize unsuspecting virgins there to be their wives. The fathers of Shiloh would be innocent because they had not broken the vow to give Benjamin their daughters, and Benjamin would be able to rebuild their tribe. While this seemed like a good solution, it only illustrates the problems that arise when people leave their orientation to the revealed Word of God. The ruling idea of that day was that everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Sometimes these were good ideas, as is seen here, but at other times, as in the case of the rape of the concubine, the results were horrible. There is no lesson clearer in the book of Judges than the fact that man's ideas never measure up to the wisdom of God revealed in His Word. It shows that when mankind follows his own course, things always get worse.

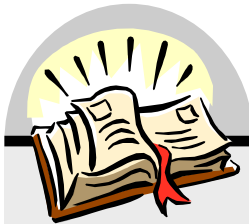


"Sometimes people must be called to put a stop to evil by whatever it takes."

Study Questions for Ruth 1-4

This beautiful love story in the Bible reveals how God redeems and rewards those who trust in Him.

1. Read Ruth 1:1-5. What situation caused Naomi's family to go to Moab (v1), and what happened to them while they were there (v3, 4, 5)? How would you have felt if you had been Naomi?
2. In Ruth 1:6-14 what did Naomi do (v6-7), and what did she encourage her sons' wives to do (v8-9)? How did each respond at first (v10), then later (11-14)? What does this say about Ruth?
3. From Ruth 1:15-22 to whom was Ruth committed, besides Naomi (v15, 16, 17)? Upon their return, how did Naomi describe herself and why (v20-21)? Was this really true? Apply this to our lives.



"Man's ideas never measure up to the wisdom of God revealed in His Word."

4. Using Ruth 2:1-7 what did Ruth do (v2-3), and to what did it lead (v3, 5-6)? Why do you think she wanted to do this, and what principle does this reveal to us?

5. According to Ruth 2:8-16 what did Boaz do for Ruth and Naomi (v8, 9, 14, 15, 16)? What was Ruth's response to him (v10, 13), and why did he treat her so well (v11-12)? What can we learn from Ruth here?

6. Looking at Ruth 2:17-23 what was the immediate result of Ruth's labor (v17-18)? How did Naomi respond to Ruth's report of the day (v19-22), and what further need of Naomi's was met (v20)?

7. Read Ruth 3:1-13. What did Naomi want for Ruth (v1), and for that to happen, what did she tell her to do (v2-4)? What was Boaz' reaction to Ruth's actions (v7-11), but what problem existed (v12-13)?

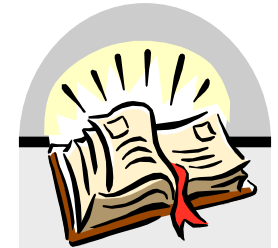
8. From Ruth 3:14-18 where did Ruth spend the night (v14), and what did Boaz do for her the next morning (v14, 15)? From these actions, and what Naomi said about Boaz (v18), what kind of man was he?

9. In Ruth 4:1-6 what did Boaz do (v1-4), and what was the reaction (v4)? What did Boaz say that changed his mind (v5-6)? Why?

10. Using Ruth 4:7-12 what did Boaz acquire (v9, 10), and how did he do it (v7-8)? What was the blessing conferred on Ruth and Boaz by the elders gathered there (v11-12)? Why was this significant (see 1:4)?

11. According to Ruth 4:13-22 how did God bless Boaz and Ruth (v13), and Naomi (v14-15)? In what way was Ruth especially blessed (v21-22)?

12. Looking back over Ruth, what important things did God do for Ruth? Name some qualities of both Ruth and Boaz that should be followed in our lives. What can we expect when we act the same way?



Memory Verse

"Blessed is the Lord, who has not left you without a redeemer today."
Ruth 4:14