



God Looks for Faithful People – He Finds Them in Unlikely Places

By Matthew K. Boyle on June 3, 2024

TODAY'S READING: Ruth 1

When you hear the word “faithful,” what comes to mind? When you look at the examples of faithfulness demonstrated throughout the bible, who is the first person you think of? Chances are, Ruth would not be at the top of the list. Typically, the more prominent figures—such as Moses, Elijah, Paul, and certainly Jesus—rank highest.

But in your reading today, Ruth stands out as an unlikely candidate. As a Moabitess, she had no direct connection to the people of Israel. She knew nothing of God’s faithfulness to his people, except perhaps through stories that had migrated between the religious cultures of the day. We see a glimpse of this happening in verse 6: “...for [Naomi] had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food” (ESV).

It is likely that Ruth heard stories of God working and, like Mary, pondered these things in her heart (Luke 2:19). We can’t definitely affirm that God was working in her heart since the text doesn’t tell us, but the passage suggests it. We know God actively looks and works in people from all nations. The bible tells us: “For the eyes of the Lord roam throughout the earth, so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His” (2 Chronicles 16:9, ESV).

What did God see in Ruth’s heart? What does he see in yours?

Contrast this with Elimelech (Naomi’s husband), Mahlon, and Chilion (their two sons)—all Israelites *who did have a direct connection to God* under the nation’s banner. Yet they left Bethlehem (meaning house of bread), ironically because there was famine (i.e. no bread). What does that suggest about their faithfulness to God? Did they trust that God would provide for them?

Faithfulness begins with trust, even if a small amount. God looks for that and increases that trust and faith over time. Just like he did with the simple, small, seed-like trust of Ruth. If we were able to peel back the curtain to see what God was doing in that moment, we would see her faith blossom, bursting forth with the telling words she speaks to Naomi:

“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. 17 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” (vss. 16-17, ESV).

We know that Ruth’s faithfulness resulted in her becoming an ancestor of Jesus, a testimony to the beauty of God seeking those whose hearts are oriented toward him—even in the unlikely of places.

What level of faithfulness might God see in your heart today?

PRAYER: Lord, thank you for being faithful to me despite my desires, at times, to be otherwise toward you. Help me to think about your goodness and faithfulness, and in dwelling (pondering) on these things in my heart, grow in trust and faith in you for all things. Amen.

TOMORROW'S READING: 1 Samuel 1

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