

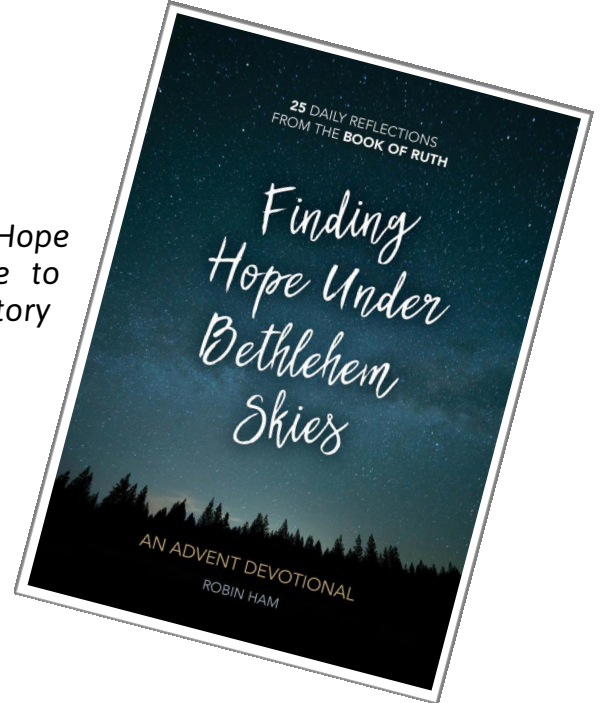
Small Group Notes - Ruth 1

This week we begin a new series for Advent - Finding Hope Under Bethlehem Skies. We are encouraging people to download the ebook devotional and follow along the story of Ruth day by day from the first of December.

<https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/products/28441/finding-hope-under-bethlehem-skies>

Each day also has a Christmas song chosen to accompany the theme of the day.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7LWSR2h2macrgtTUarllfg>



We will be preaching on Ruth over the next weeks and also looking at Ruth in our small groups.

Introduction

On Sunday we considered the Advent theme of hope. At the moment do you feel hopeful or are you lacking in hope? Why?

In what ways have you experienced feeling hopeless in the past?

Read Ruth 1 Together

-What different things in verses 1-7 would make the situation feel hopeless?

-Can you begin to imagine finding yourself in a similar situation? How do you think you would feel?

-In a bleak situation like this, how we think about God is crucial. Compare what Ruth (vv.16-17) and Naomi (vv.20-21) say about God...

-Do they each see God as in control of events? How do they express this?

Ruth?

Naomi?

-What is their attitude towards God, given all that has happened?

Ruth?

Naomi?

-How do they see the future?

Ruth

Naomi

Naomi's words are very revealing. She believes she has been severely disciplined by the Lord. She and her family have gone to Moab, to the land of the enemy, in search of food. They had left the land of God's blessing and now she was returning without husband or sons - empty.

She regards the whole situation with bitterness and regret. Her life is in ruins and she is in no doubt about who has done this to her. Four times in her short speech she attributed her misfortune and affliction to the Almighty.

Ruth, on the other hand, seems keen to align herself with this same God of Israel who has taken her husband from her. Her loyalty to Naomi, and her desire to submit to Naomi's God, is in stark contrast to Naomi's own bitterness and disillusionment.

Think It Over

- Naomi does not expect much from God. Do you find yourself viewing God in this way. Knowing that God is God but forgetting that God is good?
- Are there times when you feel like changing your name to 'bitter'? What is your attitude to God in these times?
- What does the chapter tell us about how God works?
- In what ways is Ruth's behaviour an example to us?
- How might our reflections this evening help when we feel all hope is gone?

Turn to Prayer

Share how you need to pray in response (try to be as specific as possible given everything you have discussed so far) and then turn to pray.