

Living The Dream

Text: Ruth 2:8-14

The Plain Truth

God's dream is to do a _____ work in _____,
so later He can do a _____ work through _____.

One Year Bible Reading

Apr. 26: Judges 6:1-40, Luke 22:54-23:12, Psalm 95:1-96:13, Proverbs 14:5-6

Apr. 27: Judges 7:1-8:17, Luke 23:13-43, Psalm 97:1-98:9, Proverbs 14:7-8

Apr. 28: Judges 8:18-9:21, Luke 23:44-24:12, Psalm 99:1-9, Proverbs 14:9-10

Apr. 29: Judges 9:22-10:18, Luke 24:13-53, Psalm 100:1-5, Proverbs 14:11-12

Apr. 30: Judges 11:1-12:15, John 1:1-28, Psalm 101:1-8, Proverbs 14:13-14

May 1: Judges 13:1-14:20, John 1:29-51, Psalm 102:1-28, Proverbs 14:15-16

May 2: Judges 15:1-16:31, John 2:1-25, Psalm 103:1-22, Proverbs 14:17-19

April 25 & 26, 2015

Living the Dream

Life Group Lesson • Week of April 26

Did you know God is romantic? No one can write a love story like God, and as with everything the Lord does, His love stories are the best—they are pure, more deeply stirring, and go way beyond anything we could ever orchestrate. The Lord cares about every relationship in our lives, but ultimately desires that we are drawn to Him—the One who loves us with the truest of loves, who will look after our hearts without any selfish motive, the One who is our “kinsmen Redeemer.”

There is a beautiful love story in the Old Testament found in the book of Ruth. And yet, it begins tragically with a woman named Naomi losing her husband, and two sons in a foreign land. They had left their home in Judah when severe famine had forced them to resettle in Moab. After ten bitter years Naomi returns to her home in Bethlehem—not with her sons, not with her husband—but with her widowed daughter-in-law, a young foreign woman who refuses to leave her side.

Read Ruth 1:1-22

In a world that expects instant gratification, know that our Lord isn't in a hurry to meet our demands. As Christ-followers we must understand that having “God's favor” upon us doesn't mean things are always going to go our way. Experiencing “God's favor” is much deeper than that. At first, it may seem as if there is no benefit to following God, since God's children face trials and even tragedy like anyone else. But we mustn't give up. Through tough times, we must faithfully hang on and look to Christ who has our best interest at heart, and a much bigger picture in mind.

1. Many times life's journey takes twists and turns that leave us confused and disappointed. Like Naomi we may be in a place we would have never “special-ordered”—but we're in it, none-the-less. Naomi returned to her homeland bitter and empty (v20-21), with a young foreign girl clinging to her side. Think of a time life left you bitter and empty. How would you describe that season?

What did you learn about the personal presence of Christ during that time?

Although Naomi returned in grief, possibly deep depression, and probably wanting to isolate herself in sadness, she would soon learn what a valuable gift her daughter-in-law was. **Read Ruth 2:1-12** and respond to the following discussion questions.

2. *Living the Dream* may not start out like a dream, but more like a difficult assignment, requiring hard work and determination. When did you realize God's call upon you was going to require hard work and determination?

How did the Lord faithfully supply you with focus, energy, and human resource—other people who shared the same passion for God's work?

How is the Lord opening your eyes even now to see the value of the relationships around you?

While young Ruth is hard at work in Boaz' field providing for the physical needs of she and Naomi, God is hard at work providing for their more long-term relational needs—a kinsmen redeemer. Both Naomi and Ruth needed a close relative who would be willing to carry on the family name (Ruth 2:19-20).

Naomi begins to see that God is at work. She explains to Ruth what it would mean to be “redeemed” and what Ruth should do to show Boaz that she would be willing to marry him—that is, if he should choose to redeem her (Ruth 3:1-9). Boaz is an astute man and has obviously thought about the situation himself. Ruth has impressed him and now, as a godly man, Boaz chooses to do the right thing—to do what is required to redeem the family name of Elimelech through this young Moabite woman (Ruth 3:10-13, 4:1-13).

3. **Read Ruth 4:13-17.** Because God brought beauty out of bitterness for Naomi, the women of the town gave “Praise to the LORD!” What did they say to Naomi according to vv14-17?

Who is Obed the father of (and the grandfather of) according to v17b?

Picture for a moment Naomi holding her grandson, baby Obed, and cuddling him in her arms. Think about what Naomi has come through to arrive at this moment. Think about the genuine love Boaz has for Ruth—and how this wealthy, older man of integrity has chosen to redeem this family.

4. Do you see how God provided for every need, every step of the way? How does this beautiful love story encourage you to keep *Living the Dream*?

Christ loves you with the purest of loves and cares about every detail of your life—more than you know! Close with a time of worship and in the space below write down some of the ways the Lord has revealed His deep love (His romance) to you. And then, as in every love relationship, how will you return His love?