
THE DIFFERENCE ONE CAN MAKE

Introduction to the book of Ruth

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INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes difficult circumstances force a change in your life plans that we would rather not undergo. It may be a financial crunch that requires us to change jobs or move out of our house; or a family need that calls us to move to another city; perhaps not getting a class that we need for our major leaves us with no choice but to change our entire course schedule. The end result of such changes is that we come into proximity with people whom we would not otherwise have met.

That is the backdrop for Ruth, a marvelous tale of God's sovereignty, of a few people's fidelity and compassion in the midst of a self-centered culture, and of redemption. If tuff times gad not taken Naomi and Elimelech into Moab, Ruth would never have encountered the Living God. But through Naomi's example and testimony, Ruth became attracted to God's people and eventually to God Himself.

The remarkable series of events that brings Ruth to Bethlehem and puts her in tough with her future husband, Boaz, shows how God uses His sovereignty to bring redemption to us. From being a poor foreigner to an ancestress of King David and the Messiah, Ruth's life is lived out in loyalty and compassion and humility. She is a good example to us all of the huge difference we can make by our own choices about how to live.

During the time of the Judges in Israel, there was tremendous strife, bloodshed, violence, selfishness, as well as religious apostasy. The national scene was a mess. Yet in the midst of cultural anarchy, Boaz and Ruth choose to live according to God's plan. The world has long since forgotten the time of the Judges, but the world is still being changed by a Moabitess whose life was impacted by a widow and redeemed by a businessman.