

Message Discussion Guide

STORY OF LOVE

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

April 4, 2010

Ruth 1-4

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Ask members of your small group to share their definitions of love. Then identify what characteristics of love group members most often mentioned. How does this match or conflict with definitions of love found in American culture? How is love defined and portrayed in the Bible?

Today we will learn about God's radical love for us from the stories of Ruth and Jesus.

Option 2

Relationship is important in every culture. Think about examples in American culture. What special privileges and rights do spouses have with each other? Parents and children? (Think economic, legal, medical, insurance, etc).

Today we will learn about the biblical concept of *redemption* from the story of Ruth. Boaz had to have the legal right (the right relationship) to redeem Ruth. Similarly, Jesus, as both God and man, is the only One who has the right to redeem us from sin and death.

Review the Message . . .

THE STORY OF RUTH...

"He said, 'Who are you?' And she answered, 'I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.'"
Ruth 3:9

- She realized the _____ need _____ for her redemption.
 - Her past was not _____ clean _____.
 - Her future was not _____ certain _____.
- She trusted the _____ love _____ of her redeemer.
 - He must have the _____ right _____ to redeem her.
 - He must have the _____ resources _____ to redeem her.
 - He must have the _____ resolve _____ to redeem her.

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Discussion

- From a worldly standpoint, Ruth was a desperate widow in a foreign land, protected only by an older widow and reliant entirely on the kindness of strangers. When do you think Ruth's need for redemption became clear to her? How might you have felt in a similar situation?
- How did Ruth come to trust Boaz? What actions did he take to show his love for her? How did Boaz's kindness to Ruth show his godliness, or obedience to God's law?
- Why do you think the nearer kinsman-redeemer refused to redeem Naomi and Ruth? What do you think were his biggest fears or concerns?
- What do you think it cost Boaz to redeem Naomi and Ruth? How does this demonstrate love?

Application

- How can a desperate situation drive us to see our needs (our need for change, for help, for a Savior, etc)? Do you believe God can use tragedy to bring about good? How may God be speaking to you through your current circumstances?
- What do you think is the main attribute of love as portrayed through the Book of Ruth?
- How does the story of Ruth point readers to hope in God? How does Obed, Boaz and Ruth's son, fit into that hope?

THE STORY OF JESUS...

*"In Jesus we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us."
Ephesians 1:7-8*

- Jesus alone has the right to redeem us.
 - He is divine over us.
 - He is human like us.
- Jesus alone has the resources to redeem us.
 - He has power over sin.
 - He has authority over death.
- Jesus alone has the resolve to redeem us.
 - He seeks us as His own.
 - He saves us by His mercy.
 - He serves us at His table.

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Discussion

- What makes Jesus unique? How is He intimately familiar with both man and God? Why is this critical to our redemption?
- What power and authority does Jesus have that other religious leaders do not? How did He demonstrate that power?
- Why was it necessary for Jesus to take the initiative to seek us as His own?
- Why did He choose to save us? How does He save us from sin and the wrath of God?
- What did it cost Jesus to redeem us?
- How does He now serve us?

Application

- How should Jesus' divinity and humanity make Him completely trustworthy to us?
- Do people have the resources in themselves to redeem themselves? Are good works enough?
- If another religion teaches good moral principles and its leaders even set a good example, what is still lacking? Is anyone sinless, except Jesus?

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES...

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith."

Romans 3:23-25

- Do you _____ realize _____ the need for your redemption?
- Will you _____ trust _____ the love of your redeemer?

Discussion

- In what way do all people have an unclean past? In what way do all people have an uncertain future? In what way do all people have a certain future (one of two destinies)?
- What is the cause of our separation from God?
- Why is Jesus trustworthy to redeem us? Why do other options fail?
- How is God greatly glorified by our redemption?

Application

- What reasons do people give not to trust in Jesus? How can we present Him as trustworthy?
- How is Jesus the answer to all our longings and desires (joy, happiness, peace, security, delight)?