

FBS “Heroes: Man’s Rebellion & Repentance, God’s Provision & Peace— 12-4-16
Joel Breidenbaugh Boaz & Ruth & the Hope of the True Hero” (Ruth)

Intro. When our kids or grandkids are toddlers, they think their parents or grandparents can do anything, almost like a superhero. While they may watch us pick up heavy objects or tower over them, there are also a lot of mundane, everyday things we do. Even the superheroes at this church often find themselves doing normal stuff, especially in staff meetings (show Staff as Superheroes video). Sometimes superheroes don’t get called on & sometimes they aren’t around when they are needed, much like the lack of a Judge as a Hero in the last few chapters of Judges. Today, we conclude our series on “Heroes: Man’s Rebellion & Repentance, God’s Provision & Peace” by looking at the book of Ruth on “Boaz & Ruth & the Hope of the True Hero.”

Theme: Hope

Background: The placement of Ruth in our Bibles just after Judges follows the LXX (Greek translation of the OT) & was recognized by the Jewish scholar Josephus, who actually believed Ruth was the ending of Judges (like Ezra-Nehemiah); after all, Ruth begins “in the days when the judges ruled.” This makes a great deal of sense, for as all the prophets contain messages of judgment & oppression in light of apostasy, they all end on a note of hope. Without Ruth, Judges ends on a downtrodden note with no hope & total futility. With Ruth, however, Judges ends on a triumphant note with tremendous hope in someone far greater than a judge, for it references King David, the greatest King ancient Israel would ever know! It even looks beyond to a far greater King.

- You don’t have to be a Southern Baptist very long to know December is a time when we emphasize the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to support our international missionaries. In many ways, Naomi & her family were like missionaries in Moab, for they took their faith in Yahweh with them & at least Ruth, a Moabitess, learned the faith & was incorporated into the family of God
- **Thank a local hero—thank a missionary #Heroes #FirstBaptistSweetwater** (you may not be able to mention them by name, because of an unsecure area, but you can use initials)—consider sending them a card or letter & include a gift
- **4 key elements to apply in the story of “Boaz & Ruth & the Hope of the True Hero”:**
 1. **Incorporate covenant faithfulness to the Lord and your family (1:8-18)**
 - After Ruth had been part of Naomi’s family for some 10 years or so, Naomi was determined to return to Bethlehem (house of bread, where there was food again) & urged her daughters-in-law to go find new husbands & a new future. While Orpah kissed her good-bye, Ruth “clung” to her (same word in Genesis 2:24 for man clinging to his wife) & made a covenant commitment—one of the highest pledges of loyalty & faith found anywhere in the OT (made by a non-Jew!)

Illus: Have any of you ever heard the saying, “when you marry someone, you don’t just marry him/her, but you marry their family”? There’s a lot of truth in that, because you will spend a good deal of time around them because you are married to your spouse. Ruth understood not only covenant faithfulness to Yahweh but also to her family—she was going to do whatever it took to see that Naomi was provided for—she became a hero to Naomi

- While there’s nothing in the Bible that says your mother-in-law has to be your favorite person in the world (amen or oh, my!), you should be committed to her to take care of her when she needs it

2. Demonstrate gifts of grace to those in need (1:6; 2:1-23; 3:15-18)

- One of the key themes of Ruth is “kindness”—sometimes shown by God to His people, by Ruth to Naomi, or by Boaz to Ruth & Naomi—it is a word that envelopes God’s grace, mercy, love, faithfulness & more in a single word—some OT translations call it “lovingkindness,” combining multiple facets of this word together

Illus: One way we can exhibit gifts of grace is to support our missionaries & their work of sharing the gospel around the world, even in places we dare not name for their own safety—the \$\$ received through LMCO goes straight to the field to help cover their salaries—gifts of grace to missionaries can be multiplied several times over for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel of the kingdom of our Lord

3. Prize redemption more than all other gifts (3:9-13; 4:1-12)

- The words for “redeemer” & “redemption” occur 23x in this short story, making it one of the central features of the account—redemption is the act of purchasing, usually at great price, someone to take them from a life of poverty or slavery to a life of hope & future
- Two OT laws are blended in this story—property redemption & the levirate marriage, which commanded the nearest of kin to marry a widow to redeem the land within a tribe, so that another tribe may not acquire more than their fair share (the land grant was foundational to Yahweh’s covenant with Abraham). A childless widow would marry her husband’s brother or uncle or cousin to provide an heir for the deceased (cf. Deuteronomy 25:5-6)—this act provided both an heir for Elimelech’s line & kept his land within the tribe of Judah

Illus: The NT picks up the importance of redemption & the purchase of human lives who are lost in sin—Peter tells us we were not ransomed or redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot (1 Peter 1:18-19)

4. Find hope in Christ, the Son of David, the King & True Hero of Judges (4:13-22)

- The message of Judges is one in search of a hero—as if people were singing, “I Need a Hero”—everyone who God raised up to deliver Israel were marked by more & more sin, reflective of the people they represented
- That’s why the message in Ruth is so vital to understand the era of the Judges—the Lord gave Boaz & Ruth a son who would be the grandfather of David, King of Israel. But even David had his own shortcomings, as great as he was. But David became the ancestor of Jesus the Christ, the Son of David, the King & True Hero of Judges, in Whom is no guile or deceit

Conc. Thus, we can sing the words of Keith Green’s song with great hope: “There is a Redeemer, Jesus God’s own Son, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One. Jesus my Redeemer, Name above all names, Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Oh, for sinners slain. Thank you oh my Father for giving us Your Son and leaving Your Spirit till the work on the earth is done. When I stand in glory, I will see His face, And there I’ll serve my King forever in that holy place. Have you found hope in Jesus? Have you turned from your sin & trusted in the One who gave His life for yours? Will you trust Him as your King & Hero?”