

CHRISTMAS HOPE: RUTH

Matthew 1:3-6

Ruth 1-4

Luke 16:10

Micah 6:8

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- In what ways do you think the story of Ruth might offer hope at Christmas?
- Have you heard the term “faithful foreigner” before? What do you think it means?

Christmas is a season of hope. Christians and non-Christians alike long for miracles at Christmastime: broken families hope for reunion; those struggling financially hope for relief; and those who are unemployed hope for jobs. During life’s difficult seasons, it’s easy to wonder if God really cares and if our faith in him is still worth the effort. But when we come across Ruth’s name in Jesus’ family tree, we see yet another *outsider* being drawn into God’s plan of salvation; this time a young woman who keeps the faith despite her vulnerability. And as we study Ruth’s story, we learn how God uses our simple faithfulness to provide and care for the vulnerable and to bring the good news of his kingdom to all people.

Listen: [*Christmas Hope: Ruth*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In your experience, is the message that “Jesus the Messiah has come for more than just Israel” still clear today, or do we struggle with an insider/outsider mindset? What leads you to that conclusion?
- At the end of segment 1, host Scott Hozzee introduces the Hebrew concept of the *anawim*, the three most vulnerable members of society at that time: the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner. Who do you think would be the *anawim*, the most vulnerable classes of people in your community today?
- What are the similarities and differences between God’s hidden hand of providence in Ruth and his providence in the Christmas story?
- In segment 3, Scott says, “That happy ending came about because someone like Boaz tended to the finer points of the law.” Boaz faithfully obeyed God. How have you seen God work through simple acts of faithfulness in your own life? How about in your community?

Related Passages

- **Leviticus 19:9-10, 33-34**

- **Matthew 25:31-46**
- **Matthew 5:17-20**
- **Acts 2:42-47**

Conclusion

Ruth stood in a very vulnerable place in her society, and yet God provided hope and deliverance for Ruth through her determined faithfulness to Naomi and Boaz's simple trust in God's law. God brings their obedience together in the story of the Messiah, whose birth we anticipate during Advent. Like Ruth and Boaz, God provides for the *anawim* of our society through our simple acts of faithfulness. As Scott said in segment 3, "It is just simple faithfulness over the long haul. It is love and mercy and humility; and at Christmas, we celebrate what such basic things can bring about...It brings about nothing less than joy to the world."

Identify some specific ways God asks you to faithfully obey him. Then consider, if you faithfully obey God's law, how might you experience joy and the hope of God's kingdom this Christmas?

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/christmas-hope-ruth>

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