

From Emptiness to Fullness

Many of us can empathize with the bitter, empty Naomi we meet as the book of Ruth opens. Everything in life seems to have gone wrong. We wonder, "is God there?" "Does God care?" Sticking with the story until its conclusion rewards us by revealing just what God's been up to all along and how he will restore us. It exemplifies how staying faithful and trusting God's providence can bring us back to fullness, even when it seems impossible.

AWARENESS Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- If you could imagine the ideal happy ending for your life, what would it be?
- Is there a situation in your life that seems empty or hopeless and that you'd like to see God bring fullness to?



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE: [From Emptiness to Fullness](#)

READ [Ruth 4](#)

REFLECTION After listening, consider the following questions:

- In segments 1 and 2, hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee acknowledge that some of the exchanges in Ruth seem to treat women like property, which is unusual and even offensive to our modern sensibilities. However, they also remind us that these were accepted cultural practices in Ruth's time. How does understanding Ruth's cultural context help us better grasp the full meaning of the book's events? How does knowing that God can work through already established, even flawed, systems give us hope?
- Read [Deuteronomy 24:17-22](#). How is Boaz faithful to this command from God? How are Boaz's actions an example to you? Are there ways that you could honor the heart of this law in today's culture and circumstances?
- Does your faith reflect the boldness, steadfastness, resoluteness, trust, or righteousness you see modeled in the story of Ruth? Which character (Naomi, Ruth, or Boaz) embodies the kind of faith that you'd like to have in your own life? Why?
- The people in this book repeatedly bless each other (Boaz to Ruth [2:12](#) and [3:10](#); elders to Boaz [3:11-12](#); women to Naomi [4:14-15](#)). Where do you still see evidence of believers blessing each other today? Or do you think we've lost this practice and why? How might you bless someone today, tomorrow, this week? How do you think it would be received?

RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Leviticus 19:33-34](#), [Deuteronomy 24:17-22](#), [Matthew 1](#), [Nehemiah 8:8-10](#)

CONCLUSION

Scott concludes the episode with this thought:

“it is not just a happy ending, it is finally God’s happy ending, which means it is deeper than happiness, it is joy. The joy of the Lord is our strength, and that is the message of Ruth.”

How is joy different than happiness? Spend some time reflecting. Can you give a testimony about a time when God brought you from emptiness to fullness? How can you help remind yourself that the joy of the Lord is your strength?

<https://groundworkonline.com/episodes/from-emptiness-to-fullness>

Printed on November 4, 2024