**Message Notes**

**All in the Family Week 4**

**Redemptive Relationships**

**Ruth 1:1-18**

**What is Family?**

**What happens when our family dreams don’t become reality?**

**Background of the Book of Ruth:**

“Back in the days when the judges ruled” (chaos, political instability) 1200-1020 BCE

“Famine in the Land”

Elimelek leaves Bethlehem “Literally House of Bread” for Moab as a resident alien.

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.

—Ruth 1:1 (NIV)

**Sometimes we KNOW INTELLECTUALLY that God is KING, but practically it is hard to see**

The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

—Ruth 1:2 (NIV)

**Important Terms:**

Bethlehem: “House of Bread”

Elimelek: God is King

Naomi: Lovely

**“The Father’s House”**

“ In Israel the possessions of a particular lineage were carefully passed down through the generations, family by family, according to gender and birth order, in order to provide for the family members to come and to preserve “the name” of those gone before.”

— Sandra Richter, The Epic of Eden

Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. —Ruth 1:3

They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, —Ruth 1:4

both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.—Ruth 1:5

**Naomi is like Job.**

**She has no protection, no status, no future, no hope.**

When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. —Ruth 1:6-7

Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.” —Ruth 1:8-9

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud and said to her, “We will go back with you to your people.” —Ruth 1:9b-10

**“Naomi says “Go Back” but they say “We will Go Back with you”**

But Naomi said, “Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord’s hand has turned against me!” —Ruth 1:11-13

**God is open to our Lament. What does this say about God?**

At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.  “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.” —Ruth 1:14-15

But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.—Ruth 1:16-18

**What is Ruth giving up?**

**Her Security**

**Her Identity**

**Her Future**

**What can we learn from the tragedy of Naomi and the faith of Ruth?**

**1. Our dreams of family are not guaranteed to become a reality.**

**2. What do we do when we find our dreams in ruins?**

* 1. **Biblical lament (40% of psalms are lament)**
  2. **Ancient Israelites made space to grieve and live in their raw emotions**

**3. God works redemptively in the midst of our broken dreams**

* + 1. **It’s not always easy to see God working**
    2. **Just like Elimelek, we tend to take matters into our own hands**
    3. **Your past does not define your future**

**4. We pursue independence, God desires interdependence**

**A. Who is God leading you to journey with?**

**B. How can you demonstrate commitment to the relationships God is leading you towards?**