

Small Group Guide

Week of April 14, 2024

Speaker: Mark Delaney

The Dawn of Hope



Icebreaker



- If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go and why?
- What is the most adventurous thing you've ever done?



Discussion



- Elimelech and his family made the decision to leave Bethlehem and go to Moab during a time of famine. Have you ever felt prompted by God to make a difficult decision? How did you navigate that?
- Naomi experienced immense tragedy and loss in her life. When you're going through a difficult season, how do you typically respond? Do you tend to push people away or cling to them?
- Naomi honestly expressed her pain and confusion to God, asking "Why?" How comfortable are you in being honest with God about your doubts and struggles?
- Ruth's decision to cling to Naomi during her time of grief and hopelessness was a beautiful example of love and support. How can we, as a small group, better come alongside those who are hurting?
- God never wastes our pain and that He can use our trials to bring about redemption and victory. Have you seen God do this in your own life or in the life of someone you know?
- How can we cultivate a mindset of eternal perspective, even when life is difficult?



Thought for the Group



The opening verses of Ruth paint a pretty bleak picture. On top of the moral chaos, there was also a severe famine in the land. A man named Elimelech takes his family and flees to Moab. Over the next 10 years, Elimelech dies, his sons marry Moabite women (a violation of God's commands), and then the sons also pass away, leaving Naomi as a widow with no male heirs. Naomi is left utterly devastated. Her heartbreak reminds us that even the most faithful believers can go through seasons of immense pain and struggle to make sense of it all.

Yet, even in the midst of Naomi's grief, a glimmer of hope emerges. Her daughter-in-law Ruth refuses to abandon Naomi and clings to her instead. This act of loyalty and love sets the stage for God to begin weaving a beautiful story of redemption.

The key takeaway is that God is always working, even when we can't see it. His fingerprints are all over the details of our lives, guiding and providing, even in our darkest moments. The absence of miracles doesn't mean the absence of the supernatural.

Sometimes God's greatest work happens in the quiet, subtle ways. No matter what you may be facing today, take heart that our God is always good, always has a purpose, and always has a promise. He can take even the most heartbreaking circumstances and use them for His glory and our good. Hold fast to that truth, and allow Him to lead you from heartbreak to hope.



Next Steps



- Be intentional about processing your pain and struggles with God in an authentic, honest way. Ask Him to meet you in those raw, honest moments.
- Keep your eyes open for the quiet, subtle ways God is working in your life. Ask the Lord to heighten your spiritual awareness, and be proactive about recognizing His fingerprints - whether it's through unexpected relationships, provision, or a growing sense of peace.