

Small Group Guide

Week of May 12, 2024

Speaker: Mark Delaney

God's Loving Kindness



Icebreaker



- Looking back at pictures, what's the worst hairstyle you've ever had?
- If you could have a never-ending canister of any snack, what would you choose?



Discussion



- Have you ever had a situation where you had to take a bold step of faith? What was it, and how did it turn out?
- What qualities of godly character do you admire in Boaz, and how can we cultivate those qualities in our own lives?
- The book of Ruth is a continual reminder of God's character: "God is always good, He always has a plan, He always has a purpose." How does this truth encourage you in your current circumstances?
- Ruth's actions were a reflection of God's loving-kindness (Hesed) towards Naomi. How can we practically show this kind of love and kindness to those around us?
- Boaz is referred to as a "guardian-redeemer" or "kinsman-redeemer" in the book of Ruth. How does Jesus fulfill this role as our ultimate Guardian-Redeemer?
- How can we cultivate patience and kindness in our own lives, even when we don't understand God's timing?
- What practical steps can we take this week to live out our belief in God's love and faithfulness?



Thought for the Group



In this pivotal chapter, we see Naomi giving Ruth some startling advice, but as we examine the text carefully, it doesn't seem anything explicitly sexual occurred, Ruth and Boaz are consistently portrayed as upright people of noble character.

Ruth was claiming her legal rights for Boaz to take her as his wife based on the cultural custom of levirate marriage, where a close relative would marry a widow to preserve the family line.

Boaz is stunned but praises Ruth's kindness and character, but there's a slight problem - there's another relative who is even closer and has the primary responsibility as the guardian-redeemer. Boaz promises that if this other man doesn't step up, he will gladly marry Ruth himself.

So at the climax, we're left waiting with Ruth and Naomi, wondering how God will provide through this unnamed relative or if His plan will come through Boaz being the kinsman-redeemer. The women's hope rests not in their own efforts, but in whether God will demonstrate his hesed - his loyal, covenant love and faithfulness.

This chapter sets the stage for the beautiful conclusion in chapter 4, where we'll see the guardian-redeemer pointed to the ultimate Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who rescued us from our spiritual plight. It's a powerful reminder that even when circumstances seem bleak, God is always working out His redemptive purposes through His loving kindness.



Next Steps



- Identify one person you can radically bless through kindness and sacrifice this week. Tangibly serve them in a way that costs you something.
- Take time to write out your personal story of how Jesus redeemed you and gave you new life. Reflect on how being redeemed has impacted your identity and purpose.