



The Greatest 'Rags to Riches' Story Ever Told

Matthew 1:1-6, 16-17; Ruth 1-4

Advent is a season of expectancy, preparation and joy. The theme of the third Sunday of Advent is Joy. Also known as the Shepherd's Candle, it signifies a shift from a season of repentance towards a time of celebration. It recalls those who joyfully shared the good news of the birth of Christ with others.

ADVENT REFLECTION

Shepherds were nobodies. But to God they were somebodies. When Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world was born, angels were sent to notify shepherds tending sheep in the fields so that they could be part of the celebration. They did what any person who truly encounters Jesus would do: they spend time with Jesus, then they go make Him known, and glorify and praise God for all that He has done for them. We are invited to respond precisely the same way this Advent season. Jesus has come and is coming again. This is incredible news! News to make known to others. God-glorifying news.

1. What are the things that bring joy to your life?
2. What's something that you could do to bring joy to someone else?
3. Emmanuel is a name for Jesus that means, God with us. How does that beautiful name and simple truth produce joy in us rather than fear?

SERMON SUMMARY

The story of Ruth (one of the five women named by Matthew in the genealogy of Jesus) is one of the most beautiful "rags to riches" story ever told. It is a story of the redemption and rescue of an unlikely person, in the midst of dooming circumstances, and at great cost to the redeemer. And it all points to Jesus, our Great Redeemer, who



is able to rescue us, under any circumstance, in any culture, and at great cost to Himself.

What big takeaway - Truth from the Word - stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

I: THE STORY OF RUTH IS ABOUT REDEMPTION ...

1. Finding redemption's context in the social, legal, and religious customs of the ancient world, the metaphor of redemption includes the ideas of loosing from a bond, setting free from captivity or slavery, (defending), buying back something lost or sold, exchanging something in one's possession for something possessed by another, and ransoming. Share a modern-day "rags to riches" story/example that has made an impact in our culture or your life.

II: ... UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

1. Read Ruth 1:8-14, 19-21 - Is there a situation that you face (or that someone you know is facing) that has led (or is leading) to hopelessness, despair or bitterness?
2. How would you come alongside someone with a biblical worldview to encourage them of the hope that can be found as a follower of Jesus? What go-to scriptures do you have that carry you through tough circumstances?

III: ... IN ANY CULTURE.

1. Read Ruth 1:16-17 - Have you ever felt like an "outsider" when it comes to religion, God or the church? Do you know of someone who feels this way?
2. There are many stories (past and present) that demonstrate the cultural divide that can take place between people, church and state, ethnicity, families of origin; ethics and morals ... that can effect our choices in life. In your past, what has influenced your biases or prejudices that affect how you pick and choose to relate to others?

IV: ... AT ANY COST.

1. What can you (or your group) do to welcome the "outsider"? Think through all aspects of your daily life as you answer. Do you remember what it was like to "be on the outside looking in"? What can we take from Ruth's redemption story that can be implemented in our daily lives as we represent Christ to our sphere of influence?



CONCLUSION

The story of Ruth is about a person who was noticed. We see in the book of Ruth that had it not been for Boaz; Naomi's kinsman redeemer, she and Ruth, both widows, with no men in their lives (husbands or sons) to provide for their daily needs, were faced with the inevitable forced sale of Elimelech's portion of the family land, eliminating and ending not only the possibility of passing down that land as an inheritance to the next generation, but, eliminating their only source and hope of potential income, subjecting these women to a miserable, destitute life. But Boaz noticed Ruth, defended her and delivered her and Naomi, through a merciful act of redemption, resulting in one of the greatest "rags to riches" stories ever told.

SHARE & PRAY

- Pray in response to the things you discussed in this study.
- Pray for people to receive the gift of God this Christmas! Who can you invite to church, Life Group or our Christmas Eve service so that they can hear about the Good News of Jesus and His free gift to them?
- Spend time thanking God for the joy we can have through His righteous sovereignty that He holds on our lives.
- Conclude by spending some time praying for one another, the growth in grace you want to experience, and the needs among you.

