

Chapter 6

RUTH the BEAUTIFUL WIDOW

The story of Ruth is beautiful. Her name means “beauty”. Her character, servant’s heart, hard-working attitude all stand out to me, but my favorite thing is that Ruth made beautiful, selfless decisions.

When Ruth’s husband of 10 years died, she made the decision to stay and care for her mother-in-law Naomi instead of turning back to her people and searching for another husband. More importantly she decides to embrace Naomi’s faith in God. *Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.” Ruth 1:16-17*

After this commitment is made, these two widows travel to Bethlehem, Naomi’s hometown, and arrive at the beginning of the barley harvest. Ruth decides to glean in the fields of Naomi’s relative Boaz. I don’t know if this was her first choice as a career option, but it was a way for her to take care of Naomi, find favor with Boaz, and she worked with a diligent heart. Then Naomi tells Ruth to propose marriage to Boaz by laying at his feet in the middle of the night (Ruth 3 - definitely read it for yourself!). Seems like a crazy request from her mom-in-law, but the way things were in those times, if Boaz, who was kin to Naomi, were to marry Ruth, he

would be ransoming the family inheritance and giving the family name a legacy if they were to have children. Again, Ruth made the decision to do as her mother-in-law asked. Ruth's gentle and quiet spirit attracted Boaz and turned his heart towards her. The Lord blessed her godly decisions with a redeeming marriage, an inheritance restored, and a son named Obed was born who would become the great-grandfather of King David! And Jesus comes through the line of David generations later!

It's easy to make decisions in light of what is best for me, but every decision Ruth made was about what was best for others. She literally laid down her future for Naomi and physically laid down at Boaz's feet to request that he give her a legacy.

When we decided to marry our husbands, even if we didn't know that our future with him would hold a coaching career, we made a commitment for richer or poorer, sickness or health - or in the words of Ruth "where you go I will go, where you lodge I will lodge...where you die I will die..." And even years after the vows have been spoken, we have the daily opportunity to put our husband first and to make continual decisions as Ruth did: To lay down what's best for me - to serve and give, and not worry about myself. And look at all God did in and through her life!

AND PLEASE REMEMBER THIS: When we make selfish decisions and don't want to serve, which will happen, we have a perfect, forgiving Savior who can change our hearts. We need Him and He is our strength and example: *"But the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:28)

WRAP IT UP:

1. **FIGHTING FEAR:** Ruth made a very difficult choice. It would have been much easier to return home to her family after the death of her husband, but she committed to go and serve Naomi with no guarantee for her own future security. There are many things to be afraid of when facing the unknown, but she seems to focus on WHO she knows, not circumstances. She knew and loved Naomi. She knew and loved Naomi's God. Is there an example from your life as a coach's wife when God called you and your husband into the unknown? Do you struggle to focus on WHO you know - the Lord- and trust that He is in control?

Ask the Lord to help you believe that He knows what He is doing.

“For I know that plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”- Jeremiah 29:11

2. **FINDING FAITH:** Ruth followed Naomi by faith, and then continued to step out of her comfort zone once they arrived in Bethlehem, even proposing marriage to Boaz! So we see that walking by faith is a life-long journey, and the faith required for this has to come from the One who created us, gives us the faith to believe and gives us the power to choose rightly. And when we do choose FEAR, HE is always FAITHFUL.

Ask the Lord to help you keep your eyes on Jesus through this faith journey.

“Now stay focused on Jesus, who designed and perfected our faith. He endured the cross and ignored the shame of that death because he focused on the joy that was set before Him; and now He is seated beside God on the throne, a place of honor.”- Hebrews 12:2

PRAYER:

Lord, please help us to make beautiful, selfless decisions that honor you and bless those in our lives! Make us fearless in light of Your faithfulness, even when that means following our husbands into the unknown. Thank you for being our Redeemer, and setting the example of complete selflessness through Your death on the cross. We love you.

Amen!

As we close out our study, I wanted to share the reason why the application section of each lesson is titled “Wrap it up.” It’s because I love the book cover! I love the image of the woman’s hands, wrapped up and prepared to fight her fears and find faith in the battle. But the image of the wrapped hands also reminded me of some very powerful truths about the power of fear and the power of God’s love.

A life wrapped up in fear is paralyzing. When we get wrapped up in the lies, insecurities and anxieties, it’s almost impossible to move and difficult to breathe! We often want to fight through it so we wrap up our hands and try to handle it ourselves. But the Lord wants to set us free, and wrap us up in His love instead. And as an added word of encouragement, if you are experiencing overwhelming fear, please reach out to someone and walk the faith journey together. Be honest with the Lord too, He already knows your struggles and your deepest fears, and He Himself was “wrapped up” on your behalf!

You see, it’s not about us wrapping up our hands to fight fear - we are powerless to do so without the power of faith, given to us by the Author of our faith. It’s not about us wrapping up our own hurts and bandaging our own wounds so we can become stronger...

It’s about JESUS, who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger- so that we could live by faith and not fear.

It’s all about JESUS, who was wrapped in a linen cloth for burial after His death on the cross- so that we could live by faith and not fear.

I do hope you have learned from these power wives of the Bible. I do hope that you've had insight into your own personal struggles and are walking away with practical applications for your life as a coach's wife. But above all else, I hope that you have grown in your faith as you've come to know the Lord who is the Giver of faith. The One who fights for us, and in His faithfulness sets us free from the fears that bind us.

Praying for us all as we continue on this journey,

Candace