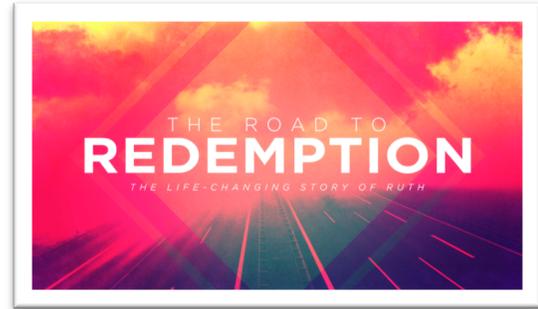


ROUGH ROAD AHEAD

RUTH 1:19-2:23 // PASTOR TODD DUGARD
MARCH 22, 2020



Once I've set out on the road to redemption, I will expect a reaction from others (1:19-22), rest in God's sovereignty (2:1-7), accept help when needed (2:8-23), and prepare for setbacks along the way (2:9, 15-16, 22)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is a notable difficulty on the roughest road or toughest trail you've travelled on? How does that difficulty relate metaphorically to real life challenges you're presently facing?

How is the general advice to, "slow down, watch where you're going, plan a way through" to be applied wisely in your life right now?

What were the economic and health prospects when Naomi left the promised land of Israel in search of a better life compared to the time when she was returning? (Compare the commentary of Ruth 1:1, with Ruth 1:6, 22). **Big Bible Question:** How do famines and harvests fit into God's plans for Israel while living in the promised land?

Do you think it is significant to the story line that Elimelech (Naomi's husband) left Israel where he was called to worship God exclusively and went to find support among those who worship idols? Why does the view of a rough road ahead lead some to turn away from God? What do you think desperate times will reveal about your faith in God?

When the people reacted to Naomi's return poorly, she showed how closely she identified herself with bitterness. When people respond poorly to our positive steps, we have a choice to identify with our pain or with God's promises. What choice do you make today? Are there any of God's promises that you need to personally identify with today? Write it out along with what it means for you.

On a rough road, you may have new opportunities to be light and salt as Jesus encouraged his disciples to be in Matthew 5:13-16. How can the small group care chart referred to in this message be adapted to help you, your family, or your small group bless others practically?

If you can't take time to rest, offer help generously to those in need, or to receive generous help yourself, what may that indicate about your faith in the Lord's sovereignty? How can doing all these things help a person better appreciate that the Lord is always in control?

While we see that Ruth comes under Boaz' protection from the young men, we know that she had already experienced severe setbacks in life due to being widowed at a such a young age. Could she have prepared for that tragedy? Probably not. So, what does it mean to wisely and faithfully prepare for setbacks when you're already walking on a rough road? (If you have time, look at each verse below to see how they prepare us.)

- Job 2:10
- Matthew 6:31-34
- Romans 8:38
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- Philippians 1:21
- 1 Peter 4:1