

Sermon Discussion Questions & Follow-up Notes

February 8, 2026 // Pastor Andrew Keuer (andrew@firstprotestant.com)

Sermon Text: Ruth chapter 1

Annual Missions / GIC Sunday

Sermon Title: "A Heart for the Harvest"

Link to sermon: <https://youtu.be/46z3nEymmhE?t=1542>

Key Points & Observations of the Text

It is suggested to read the passage (Ruth chapter 1) aloud as a group.

The big idea: As the main character of the Book of Ruth, God's unique, unfailing "hesed" (love) redeems & restores Naomi, in part through Ruth showing the "family likeness" of love.

I. The Main Character

- This book is about God – not about what we do, are or become! Dr. Hepburn said the following: "I remember the moment that I realized I had everything back to front. I thought of myself striding down the paths of holiness – but in reality God carried me on his shoulders. I imagined that I held on to the promises of God – but those promises held on to me. It is easy to think it all comes down to me, but instead everything has been done for me and to me. That is the same for you. We do not keep the commandments so that God would love us. He already does."
- On the human plane, the Book of Ruth is more about Naomi than Ruth. The sermon said, "There is a temptation to read this book as some sort of divine Disney story – as if one day a prince charming will come and rescue the day so there's a happy ending. That's not what this book is about. Instead, we hear about the rescue of an older woman who had been broken by life, a woman society had viewed as worthless – but who was valued by God."
- **Discuss:** After hearing the book is ultimately about God's "hesed" love for Naomi, how would you now summarize Ruth to someone unfamiliar with the story?

II. The Harvest of One

- In that ancient culture as in ours, society accorded value based on what one achieved & did. In this world of value, Naomi suffers tremendous loss (v1-5), being reduced to nothing v20-21.
- **Discuss:** Before her tragedy, on what sources of value or identity might Naomi have relied (e.g., wife/mother role, international mobility, family land, etc.)? What metrics do people today use to feel valuable? How does Naomi's story challenge that?
- **Share:** Share a time when loss stripped away something that gave you a sense of identity and value. Is there someone around you going through that process right now?

III. The Challenge to Show the Family Likeness

- The Book of Ruth does not display God's "hesed" love through a burning bush or an earthquake or a whirlwind – it comes unexpectedly & unwanted through Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi.
- **Discuss:** What does the word "hesed" mean, and how does it differ from ordinary kindness?