

## EMBRACING THE STRANGER

Part 2: Strangers by Displacement

Ruth 1:19 – 2:20

September 30/October 1, 2017

Pastor Mark Riggins

*So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?" "Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me." So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning. – Ruth 1:19-22*

*Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!" "The Lord bless you!" they answered. – Ruth 2:4*

### **1. Compassion for strangers begins with proximity to strangers.**

*Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?" – Ruth 2: 5*

### **2. If we want to embrace Jesus, make room for a stranger.**

*"So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me." – Ruth 2:8*

### **3. All of our blessings are on loan from God.**

*"If you had been born in a yurt in Outer Mongolia, instead of where you were, it wouldn't have mattered how hard you worked or used your talents — you would have ended up poor and powerless." — Timothy Keller*

*... "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?" – Ruth 2: 10b*

### **4. Embracing Jesus means embracing people who are new to God's blessings.**

*"The Lord bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." ... —*

### **5. Extreme compassion lifts people's gaze up to the Source of hope.**

Questions to consider:

- When you drive by the fields and see the workers would you pray for their families? (Know how much He loves them.)
- Would you ask God to show you ways to leverage your blessings for others?

Discussion Questions

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1. What stood out to you from this weekend's message?
2. We looked at Ruth's story and remembered that it is a love story that is the prequel to the big story of God redeeming humanity. Boaz prefigures Jesus, Ruth prefigures us (the foreigner to the Kingdom) and redemption's story began in the same city Bethlehem. What stands out to you in the story of Ruth?
3. Do you think of yourself as having been a foreigner to the Kingdom who needed the redemption of someone else?
4. What do you typically think when you drive by the migrant workers working in the fields around Ventura County?
5. How did Rigo's story impact you?
6. In Ruth 2: 5, Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?" The first step to "embracing a stranger" is simply noticing them. Who are some of the strangers in your life?
7. It was customary for the Israelites to sacrificially leave a portion of their crops in their fields so the foreigners and poor among them could come behind them and "glean". What are some ways we can give a portion of what we have to the foreigners and poor among us?
8. How can our group pray for you this week?