

“Real Love”

Ruth 1:8, 2:20, 3:10

Sermon Series: “Ruth: A Story Of Romance And Redemption”

Introduction: All of us are looking for love. However, we are often confused about the true nature of love. Today, we are going to learn from God’s Word; based on the examples of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz; what love really is. Their actions are examples of God’s love in action. The Hebrew word, *hesed*, is used three times in the book of Ruth. It refers to God’s loyal, covenant love. It is a kind, merciful love. God graciously chose to love Israel and individual people despite their unloveliness. I am not denying that there is an emotional or passionate component to love. There is a Hebrew word, *ahav*, that expresses that component of God’s love. However, the root of love is *hesed*, which is the love that is steadfast and unchanging. I believe we crave the receiving of that kind of love and need to give that kind of love. The word is used in Ruth 1:8, 2:20, and 3:10. It is God’s love working through people in human relationships. He desires for His love to work through our relationships as well.

Main Idea: Real love is a decision instead of an emotion.

Here are some characteristics of the decision to love that we see in this story:

1. Real love is a decision that expresses itself in words and actions. We see this in how Naomi treated her daughters-in-law, how Ruth treated her, and in how Boaz and Ruth treated each other.

2. Real love looks past outward barriers to meet people where they are. We see ethnic, socioeconomic, gender, religious, and cultural barriers broken in the way that Ruth was treated by Naomi and Boaz.

3. Real love does the right thing. In other words, there is a moral component to it. We see this in Ruth not abandoning Naomi, Boaz providing for the needs of Ruth, Ruth approaching Boaz in the proper way, and Boaz handling the redemption in the right way.

4. Real love puts others ahead of ourselves. We see this in Ruth laying down her life to serve Naomi and also in how Boaz took care of Ruth.

5. Real love is sacrificial and costly. It cost Ruth some things to stay with Naomi, and it cost Boaz financially to marry Ruth. I’m sure that both of them would say that it was worth it, but that does not diminish the reality that love is sacrificial and costly.

6. Real love is loyal and lasting. We see this in Ruth’s actions and her words in 1:16-17.

Applications:

1. Let God fill us with His love and then share that love with other people (1 John 4:7-13, 17-21). The idea is not to just try to be more loving but to do what Ruth did and turn from our sin and place our faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who loved us so much that He died for our sins. As we experience His love and live in His power, the Holy Spirit produces love for others in us and empowers us to choose to express that love to others (Galatians 5:23).

2. Show love to the people in our lives that we have relationships with.

3. Show love to those whom Jesus referred to as the “least of these.” In the words of Andy Stanley, “Do for one what you wish you could do for all.”