



## From Our Vicar

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### The Tale of Two Women

The Book of Ruth in the Old Testament is an oasis following the lowest point in Israel's history as described in the book of Judges.

'Ruth' opens with news of famine in Bethlehem -which means 'House of Bread'. The context hints that the famine was both physical and spiritual. So Naomi with her husband and sons, went to Moab to survive. Tragically, she experienced the death of both her husband and her sons, leaving her with two daughters-in-law. You know the story, of when the famine was over Naomi resolved to return to her hometown, and Ruth vowed to stay with Naomi and join her life to Naomi's people and Naomi's God.

There follows a unique and intimate picture of life in this agrarian economy, and the loyal devotion of Ruth to her mother-in-law. This includes the curious custom by which she declares her interest in Boaz as a marriage partner, as instructed by Naomi. Boaz, in contrast to the theme of depravity in Judges, is an upright and godly man who acts honourably toward Ruth and Naomi in every way. The result is the marriage of Ruth to Boaz, and the birth in time of a son who is laid in Naomi's lap as a symbolic replacement of the sons who had died. Furthermore, this child, Obed, became the father of Jesse who was the father of David – the one through whom God brought deliverance to Israel from their enemies, thus establishing peace and prosperity in the land. David was the ancestor of Jesus - the One who would become known as the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

The determined devotion of Ruth to Naomi, and her willingness to leave behind her former kin and country to join with the people and God of Israel were in themselves remarkable and inspiring.

In a time of famine and of tragedy, God was at work preparing his salvation through the most unlikely of persons, thus showing his absolute grace and honouring the qualities of love and faithfulness that Ruth displayed.

What might God be birthing through your life and through this community of faith as we dedicate ourselves daily to love and faithfulness in this time of spiritual and relational famine in otherwise prosperous Australia?

God bless you,  
*Wayne*

