

A Son is Born – Discussion Notes¹

(Updated 1/2020; Dr. Baines, Jr.)

Read: Ruth 4:13-17; Matthew 1:1-6

Summary Highlights: Boaz takes Ruth as his wife. They have a son. Naomi, the grandmother, is encouraged by the women in the area. They name the son Obed, who is an ancestor of Jesus. A portion of the genealogy of Jesus is given. It is interesting to note that Jesus' ancestors were not faultless.

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is Jesus came from a diverse background. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to let God have His way in our lives, no matter what our family background may be.

Key Points:

1. Marriage. Notice in vs. 13 that Boaz took Ruth to be his wife, not simply a "live in girl friend." There are too many people wasting their lives and making God angry with what we used to call "shaking." The modern term seems to be co-habiting or simply living together. If two people love each other, they should get married. If they don't love each other that much then they should not be living together and having sex outside of marriage. *Let's promote marriage over shaking.* Even though the social security system can penalize marriage, we are called to live by God's word, instead of compromise for the sake of money and creature comforts.

2. Not giving up on God. Notice in vs. 13 that Ruth and Naomi did not give up. Their husbands had died. Naomi's sons had died. They were women in a man's world. But they kept on going, and God made a way for them. We should learn to keep going forward and trusting God for the results, even when we cannot see our way. We should keep loving those who are difficult to love, keep serving, keep praying, and keep giving with the confidence that God will take care of His own. *Let's not give up on God.*

3. Benevolence. Notice in vs. 15 that family support was expected and the supposed norm of the day. There are those whom the Lord has blessed, but instead of them trying to be a blessing to even the less fortunate in their families, they simply build themselves bigger barns. *Let's work on wise benevolence towards especially our family members in need.* There is a such thing as enabling irresponsibility – people waste their money and beg you for rent money. However, there is also a such thing as being too stingy. Let's seek God's wisdom in this area.

¹ Prepare to discuss the following: What is the point, what scripture supports the point, what is the application sentence, and what is an example of living by the material? After the material is covered, be prepared to answer the following: Which point do you want to spend extra time on, why do you think this point is so important, and what tips do you have for living by this material, in spite of the challenges? **What is one thing you will take from this session and work on, in regard to your discipleship goals?**

4. Being a supportive community. Notice in vs. 14 the community's support of Naomi. The church ought to be a community where we support and encourage one another. This calls for everyone doing his or her part in getting to know others. This "community support" calls for everyone being willing to put more into the community than they take out. *Let's work on being a supportive church community.* Beyond hugs and kisses, we need to work on relationships and responding to each other's needs. This is the vision of the Men, Women, Singles, and other similar ministries.

5. Knowing our history. Notice in Matthew 1:1-6 the importance of knowing history. One would not assume that Jesus had both Jewish and Gentile ancestors. One would not assume that Jesus had poor and rich people in His ancestry. However, with the knowledge of history, we tend to gain a new perspective about our current situations. *Let's work on knowing history, especially our own.* The church's history, our personal histories, and the histories of our communities are great places to start.

6. God's use of us despite our backgrounds. Notice in Matthew 1:1-6 that God can do great things in us, despite our ancestors. Abraham is noted for his lie about his wife being simply his sister. David is known for having sex with a married woman and having her husband killed. And then there are people like Phares and Esrom, who we know so little about. But God raised up Jesus, amid such an ancestry. No matter how bad our people made have been and no matter how unknown they may have been, God can do great things in each of our lives. *Let's not restrict what God can do in us, based on our families' backgrounds.* The sons and daughters of drunks, prostitutes, and criminals can be doctors, lawyers, and honest politicians. And we should be careful to do our best, because we never know what God is going to do with the generation that is coming along behind us. We are in a relay race, where we ought to do our best to keep from dropping the baton.