



Finding Hope
Finding Home

Part of Bible Month 2020

Ruth 3: Uncovering Identity

by Rev Dan Balsdon, Sunday 21st June 2020 | read online at www.revdanbalsdon.com

How do you define who you are?
Perhaps by your Relationships?
Me – I'm a Father, Husband, friend, minister

Maybe your Roles and Responsibilities.
As a Minister I may be seen as a Leader, Pastor, Preacher...
I'm a Treasurer for my daughter's school PTA

Or perhaps by labels?
I'm White, I'm British, I'm heterosexual and male

Or perhaps by how we look?
I'm average height, bald – and really not bothered that can't go to the barbers right now.

All this and more contributes towards our identity – our sense of who we are.
But our identity can also be impacted by how others see us.
Some see me as a Christian leader – others as a Jesus freak...

In my teens I was very bothered by this question of how others see me, to the point that, at times, it negatively impacted on my well-being, and rather than being who I am, I succumbed to peer pressure, suppressed some of my own identity and put on a mask in an attempt not to stand out, to avoid bullying and make life easier.

Last we saw that Ruth is an outsider in a foreign land and how Ruth wasn't prepared to just submit to the identity society would place on her, but determined to take action, to resist the cultural 'norms' and cross boundaries for find hope and home.

In chapter 3 Ruth takes another step (with a bit of a push from Naomi) and heads to the threshing floor, the town's marketplace, a place of gathering and distribution, transaction and thanksgiving.

Here, in the dark of night this time, she meets Boaz once more. Naomi it seems, and perhaps Ruth too, is hoping Boaz will take his kinsman responsibility and provide for them permanently.

There, in the dark of night, Boaz asks Ruth – who are you?

Maybe he couldn't see, maybe he wanted to know more about this woman beyond that which he already knew.

There's much more that could be explored here about the relationship, the actions, the physicality of the encounter – some suggest that this is the moment Obed is conceived.

But I want us to focus on that question Ruth is asked in this encounter 'who are you'?

In that moment, in an intimate encounter by the shadow of the moon, Ruth is perhaps given space to answer that question for herself. Given space to define herself on her terms.

And later in the chapter, she goes back to Naomi and we find the same question – Naomi asks 'who are you?' – surely she knew who Ruth was. Unless, something had changed...

This question comes twice, like bookends to this encounter – and marking, I think, a moment of transition, a sign that something has changed for Ruth in her appearance, perhaps not physically, but in terms of how she is seen by others. Her identity as an individual, is beginning to be uncovered.

As Ruth's encounter helps her uncover who she is – through our encountering God, we discover more of who we are, how God sees us, and who God made us to be.

God doesn't want you to try to be someone you are not.

Doesn't want you trying to fit the mould others create for you, like I did in my teen years.

God wants you to be who you are.

A person of beauty, wonderfully made, filled with great potential for love, goodness and compassion.

yes – all those things and more are God's words over you.

and God has placed them within you.

I truly believe God wants you to know that he loves you.

he sees who you are, and wants to help you uncover your identity more,

to inhabit in your whole being a sense of who God has made you to be.

I encourage you this week, if you can, right now, to pause...

to pray, to think about who you are.

how do you define who you are for yourself...

and how does that compare to how God sees you.

If you see this video and want to talk about who you are and how God sees you – please get in touch through our website, through social media – we'd love to hear from you.