

enough to say; “I’ll do whatever you say”?
Hopefully I trust Jesus enough to respond to him this way.

Boaz also acts by being true to who he is in the LORD. His relationship with the LORD defines who he is and what he does. So Boaz also says; ‘I will do whatever you say LORD.’ And so he accepts Naomi’s marriage proposal to Ruth.

This is contrasted by the other relative; whose name we don’t even know, who first said ‘Yes’. There was land to be gained. But then quickly said ‘No’ because he feared what he might lose. Where does the fear of lose affect my decision making? Is my decision making solely based on financial gain or lose?

Interestingly neither Ruth nor Boaz ask; ‘What’s in it for me’. They act out of trust. Ruth trusts Naomi. Boaz trusts the LORD.

Finally Ruth is faced with the decision of whether to give Naomi her first child. Ruth again trusts and lets go. And out of these relationships of trust we find Jesus’ family line. Jesus whose life was a total act of trust in his Father, seeking only to do what he saw his Father doing. Seeking only to make his decisions based on that wonderful intimate relationship of love they shared.

How do you make your decisions?

Let us pray.
Jesus fill us daily with the Holy Spirit so that we can do what we see you doing. Draw us closer and closer to the Father that we willingly say; ‘I’ll do whatever you say.’ Grow us closer and closer in the Father’s love that all fear is gone and all our decisions are based on this love. Open our eyes to see the people you place in our lives that we might love them as we are loved by you. Grow us to be so secure in you we are able to remain true to who we are in you in the big and small decisions we daily make, to your glory, honour and praise.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus’ disciples multiplying disciples

11 November 2012 HOW DO YOU DECIDE? Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17



Last week when we looked at Ruth the story started to unfold as we examined the meaning of the various names; Bethlehem – House of Bread. Which Elimelech – My God is King, left to go to Moab – the Land of Incest. Why did Elimelech – My God is King, make such a decision?

This week as I read through Ruth I was struck with how often there was a choice between two options. Elimelech – My God is King had two options, to stay in Bethlehem – God’s house of bread or go to Moab – the Land of Incest. How do you think he made his decision?

Which lead me to ask myself, how do I make my decisions?

In one sense it made logical sense to go to

Moab; there was food. But in Jesus temptations he reminds us; “It is written: ‘People do not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matt. 4:4) Simply meeting my felt needs isn’t how Jesus went about making his decisions. That is leaving out the most important part. That’s leaving out God and simply doing what I want, because I feel it is right.

Do you notice that when I reason like this I’m actually making myself God, breaks which of the Ten Commandments? The very first one; having other God’s. That’s idolatry, trusting my life in anything other than the God who has revealed himself to me through his promises.

In the book of Ruth there is a significant change of

language in verse six of chapter one. There we read; “When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD has come to the aid of his people.” (Ruth 1:6) Notice that Naomi doesn’t simply return to Bethlehem because there is food, but because she recognises the hand of the LORD at work.

The LORD is the one who promised himself to Abraham and his descendents. The LORD is the one who brought the Children of Israel out of slavery and gave them the Promised Land. Naomi makes her decision based on this important relationship, this important relationship of trust. Naomi sees the hand of the LORD coming to the aid of his people, of who she is a part.

So Naomi doesn’t make her decision to return based on her felt need

but there is a leading from the LORD, from the God in who she trusts and finds her identity in. That's contrasted with her husband, Elimelech who simply responded to a felt need and died.

Then we have Orpah and Ruth. We are confronted with another decision; to stay or to go. Naomi is urging them to go home because she has nothing to offer them. If they go home they have the security of family and the hope of a new marriage and their own family. It would only seem logical to go back to their families. What can Naomi, a childless widow, offer these two young women? It is only logical to go back home.

Orpah means; 'Back of the neck', which is what you'd see when a person turns around and leaves. Orpah does the logical thing. How did Ruth make her decision?

Ruth's decision is based on her commitment to

Naomi. You could say it is a relational decision. Her love for her mother-in-law is what guides her decision. She won't leave her mother-in-law stranded, no matter the cost. So we hear those wonderful words; "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people

Ruth trusted Naomi.

will be my people and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) Ruth willingly gives up everything, walking into an unknown future simply because she won't abandon her mother-in-law. What a beautiful image of committed love we are given.

Orpah did the logical thing. Ruth based her choice on her relationship with her mother-in-law and risks everything to remain committed to Naomi,

showing love to her. How do I make my decisions; what is logically best for me, or based on remaining committed out of love, no matter the cost. For Ruth the cost was total, she left everything to be there for Naomi.

Then we encounter Boaz. I found two meanings for Boaz;

'Swiftness' and 'A Mighty man of Valour or Standing'. That suggests to me someone who knows what is right and then does it. Boaz is

faced with several big decisions.

The first is when he encounters Ruth gleaning in his field. Would Boaz acknowledge Ruth knowing she is related to him through Naomi or ignore her? Boaz quickly steps in to look out for Ruth. He doesn't leave her stranded but acts to protect her, ensuring she and Naomi would have enough to eat.

Why did Boaz act this way? First we notice he

is a man of faith. He greets his workers with; "The LORD be with you!" Notice the word 'LORD'. Boaz is a man who is in relationship with the God of promise. It shapes the very way he talks with those who work for him, even to the point that it has shaped them. They respond; "The LORD bless you!"

Is this the norm at your place of work; asking the LORD to bless each other?

These aren't empty words, for the LORD is alive and active. Jesus is alive and active. What do my words reveal about my relationship to Jesus?

Boaz is a man of faith, it's seen in the choices he's made in life; "The LORD be with you!" So Boaz acts true to his identity in the LORD and seeks to bless Ruth, and Naomi.

He could have ignored her, after all what's in it for him. No financial gain. No prestige, Ruth is a foreigner. Boaz

makes his decision based on the position the LORD has given him; he has the wealth, and he has the responsibility to care for his relative. Boaz has focused on the people the LORD has brought into his life and has sought to do his best for them, according to their needs that they might benefit.

Boaz trusted the LORD

Which reminds me of what Paul wrote to the community of faith in Ephesus; "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." (Eph. 4:29)

Do I make my decisions based on the people Jesus brings into my life, so that I do what is helpful for building them up according to their needs, that they benefit?

Or do I act according to my need that I benefit?

Soon Boaz is faced with an even bigger decision. Naomi arranges a wedding proposal. She does it in such a way that Boaz could say no without losing any face. Who to marry is no small decision.

Should he accept or decline? Ruth also had a decision to make; to follow Naomi's guidance or not. This is no small matter; how did they decide?

Did they make a list of positives and negatives to see what to do? Did they work out what would give them the most gain, the most joy in their lives? How did they make this huge decision?

Ruth acted on her trust in Naomi. Her response was; "I will do whatever you say." (Ruth 3:5) Ruth trusted Naomi with her life, and so she willingly goes. Who do you trust with your life? Who do you trust