



The Methodist Church

Bury St Edmunds Circuit.

WORSHIP SHEET FOR 5TH JULY 2020

BIBLE MONTH THE BOOK OF RUTH

WEEK 1 - ORPAH

Welcome to worship

Today we begin Bible month. Each week we will focus on a different character within the Book of Ruth. This week we think about Orpah, the daughter-in-law of Naomi.

Be still, you may like to light a candle, as you remember the companions on your journey.

Call to Worship

Come, let us give thanks to God!

We gather together to praise the One who strengthens the weak, and hears the prayers of the forgotten.

Come, let us give thanks to Christ!

We gather to sing of the One who calls us to serve those who are hungry and alone.

Come, let us give thanks to the Spirit!

We gather to exalt the One who provokes us to love not only our family and friends, but the guest among us.

Hymn

StF 6 Father we love you

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QltVKW6wXdo>

1 Father, we love you,
we worship and adore you:
glorify your name in all the earth,
glorify your name, glorify your name
glorify your name in all the earth.

2 Jesus we love you,

3 Spirit, we love you,

Prayer of Praise

Living God:
when there is a famine in our souls,
you feed us with your grace;
when there are pockets of poverty
in our love for others,
you bless us with generosity;
when we are empty and alone,
you move into our hearts.

Jesus, bearer of the good things
which have come to us;
you bend down to lift us from despair;

you embrace those who haven't a friend in the world.

Eternal Spirit;

you walk with us wherever we go;
you take the fragments of our lives and reshape us into holy people;
you are with us,
and not even death can separate us.

God in Community, Holy in One,
hear us as we pray. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Loving God

We are hesitant to confess how hard it is to love as you wish.

We confess that when difficulty comes, we are often tempted to look elsewhere for relief.

We look to the world around us, and seeing the wicked prosper, we are tempted to join in with they do.

We are like Elimelech in the book of Ruth, who when there was a famine in the land, when there was no bread in house of bread, in Bethlehem, showed a lack of belief in You and Your ability to provide, by taking his wife Naomi and two sons to Moab.

Like him, we think we can come up with solutions for dealing with our hardships and difficulties apart from You, rather than leaning upon You by being patient and learning obedience.

Forgive us we pray.

Open our eyes to see the foolishness of behaving this way and of taking a path that may lead to reward in this life, but not in the life to come.

SILENCE – for private prayers of confession

In God's Kingdom, all are loved for who they are, not what they do;

In God's Kingdom, all are welcomed and fed by God's grace and hope.

**Forgiven, loved, sent forth –
we are not far from God's Kingdom!
Thanks be to God. Amen**

Reflection

Take time to reflect on the picture by Stella Davis and her words about the picture.

Hymn StF 416 There's a wideness

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJwFT3SY_PU

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in Heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such kindly judgment given.

2 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind ;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own ;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he will not own.

3 There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that has been shed ;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.
There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this ;
there is room for fresh creations
in that upper home of bliss.

If our love were but more simple
we should take him at his word ;
and our lives would be illumined
in the joy of our Lord.

Frederick William Faber (1814–1863)

Old Testament Reading *Ruth chapter1 NIV*

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.

² The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

³ Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem

⁶ When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have

shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹ May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband.'

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud ¹⁰ and said to her, 'We will go back with you to your people.'

¹¹ But Naomi said, 'Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me – even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons – ¹³ would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has turned against me!'

¹⁴ At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ 'Look,' said Naomi, 'your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.'

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, '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 will be my people and your God my God.

¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.' ¹⁸ When Naomi realised that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

¹⁹ So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, 'Can this be Naomi?'

²⁰ 'Don't call me Naomi, she told them. 'Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.'

²² So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Reflection

Chapter 1 – a chapter that begins with famine and ends in harvest. A chapter that introduces the characters and today we focus on Orpah who is often seen as the poor relation, the one

who deserted Naomi – or did she? Orpah is the one we very often give little thought to. The book of Ruth's central theme is a movement from emptiness to fulfilment in both agriculture and personal, but what does that mean to Orpah?

Orpah and Ruth both Moabites married foreigners – people from Bethlehem but why? Moabite women were believed to lead men astray and yet if we look at the root of the word in verse 4 married/took/lifted up, elsewhere it refers to abduction suggesting that Mahlon and Chilion first raped the women and then took them as their wives. So were they exploited or married for love. If the former, is it this an act of violence for which the brothers are judged. We need to listen to people's stories and not draw assumptions. I wonder how did our story begin and have you shared that with anyone? What are some of the plots and twists and how do we respond to them?

Naomi, Orpah and Ruth begin to return to Bethlehem where there is now food and Naomi attributes this to God, she is guided by the divine hand. But on the journey she tells her daughter-in-law's to return to their mother's house(not their father's), three times she urges them to return which number corresponds to the number of times that potential converts in Judaism should be strongly discouraged. How would Orpah feel returning to her family, she had deserted them for a foreigner, will they take her back, why shouldn't she go to Bethlehem after all now things were much better there, why should she be pushed away? Orpah leaves the story in verse 14 staying far longer than most would remember her for. She is loving and obedient, yet is overlooked. Are there people in life that we overlook because they don't push themselves to the fore? those people who don't speak out – what is going on in their lives.

Orpah returns to her family, she refuses to give up her identity and traditions and her hesed (loyalty and commitment that go beyond the bounds of law and duty) to her people and that should be praised.

Companions on a journey – maybe we need to pay heed to the people we meet on our journey because God meets us when we least expect. I wonder what reaction Orpah received when she arrived home and whether she ever kept in contact with Ruth and Naomi.

Ruth's devotion and loyalty to Naomi, as seen in her plea, is one of the best known lines in the book. together they travel back to Bethlehem. Who has been part of your journey, who have you supported and who has supported you? We are all companions on a journey.

Prayers

Lord, you know the secrets of our hearts and the honesty of our devotion.
Keep your Church open and accepting of all who call upon your name
Bless and guide your pilgrim people.

Gracious Lord
Let your people rejoice in you

Lord, you are the hope of all the earth.
Direct all nations in the ways of peace with justice
In the dawn and at dusk we will sing for joy.

Gracious Lord
Let your people rejoice in you

Lord, you are in the midst of us and call us by your name.
Give us cause to rejoice in your common wealth
Bring us to live in harmony with one another.

Gracious Lord
Let your people rejoice in you

Lord, you know our needs before we ask.
be merciful with all who travel through the desolate valley
In the dry places of our living may we find fresh springs of living water.

Gracious Lord
Let your people rejoice in you

Lord, your love embraces everything you have made.
We commit to you all who have died
May we come to dwell with them in your eternal temple.

Gracious Lord
Let your people rejoice in you

We bring our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Blessing of our Gifts

Generous God,
We give with joy into your Kingdom today
May you bless our offering of our lives and our money.
Come O Lord and work through these gifts
Extend your love through us we pray. Amen

Hymn StF 707 Make me a channel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EikRxx5-8NE>

1 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:
*O Master, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.*

2 Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring
hope;
where there is darkness, only light;
and where there's sadness, ever joy:
Refrain

3 Make me a channel of your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving unto all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sebastian Temple (1928–1997) from the *Prayer of St Francis*

The Love Feast

We come to share in this Love Feast as we
recall the many meals Jesus shared with his
disciples during his ministry.

The Love Feast Grace

Be present at our table, Lord;
be here and everywhere adored;
thy creatures bless,
and grant that we may feast in paradise with
thee.

*Please take the cake/ bread
or biscuit as we eat together*



We remember the fellowship enjoyed within the
body of Christ

We drink the water



Silence as we recall God's grace and goodness

Let us pray.

**God of our salvation,
we thank you that we share again with the
risen Christ
and with all who love him in earth and
heaven.**

**We pray that, strengthened by his grace,
we may serve you faithfully all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Hymn StF 465 Guide me O

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkVT8O5E1rM>

1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore;
feed me now and evermore.

2 Open thou the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream shall flow;
let the fiery, cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong Deliverer, strong Deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.

William Williams (1717–1791) translated by Peter Williams (1727–1796)

A prayer of dismissal

As you leave this time together, go with God.

We will go wherever God goes.

As you depart to serve, go with Christ.

We will not turn back from following Jesus.

As you live the coming days, go with the Spirit.

**God's people will be our people,
and we will share our lives with them.**

Grace We say together
**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all forever more. Amen**

Some prayers from "where the broken gather" by Thom
M Shuman