

Strength for the Journey

"Trouble with Life"

Ruth 1:1-6



Notes:

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2. Are you going through "deep waters" right now?

3. How do you feel about Joe’s statement that, for some of us, the deep waters of tragedy are just a phone call away?

4. How prepared do you feel to be called alongside others who are going through deep waters to see if there is any way you can bring comfort, strength, hope, and help to them? How have you experienced that opportunity in the past?

5. How can you relate to Joe’s statement that probably the biggest challenge is that when life throws you in the ditch it puts your relationship with God in tension?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you’ve listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

- 1. What is ironic about the fact that Bethlehem means "house of bread"?
- 2. What does Joe mean when he says that Naomi is the "female Job of the Old Testament"?
- 3. What was the social significance of the fact that Naomi was left without a husband or son?

Strength through Sharing:

- 1. Read the "Call to Action" below. How difficult is it for you to accept that trouble is a regular part of life?
- 2. How difficult is it for you, when your life is in a ditch, to be confident that God has not abandoned you but rather has already begun to work your trouble into triumph?



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Notes:

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Ask God to help you respond appropriately to the fact that trials are an expected part of life.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

“Heavenly Father, I realize that nobody is exempt from suffering. Thank You for Your grace that allows me, in this fallen world, to experience anything good in this life. Thank You that even when my life is in a ditch, You have not abandoned me—but rather You have already begun to work my trouble into triumph. I claim that confidence for my own life. And I commit myself to walk alongside others who go through those deep waters, in order to bring them comfort and hope.”

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

First, we need to be real about life.

What do you expect from life? We need to know that we live in a fallen place among a fallen race, and trouble happens. If we understood how fallen this place is and how fallen people are, including ourselves, we would be shocked that anything good happens at all. It is a stroke of God’s grace that we ever experience anything that is good.

Let’s be real about life; trouble will come.

Second, we need to be confident that God is at work even when we don’t see His work.

Already in the first six verses of the book of Ruth, God is working behind the scenes to bring about something unbelievably wonderful, though we won’t see it until we get to the end of the book. You must have this confidence: When your life is in a ditch, God has not abandoned you; He has already begun to work your trouble into triumph.

We’ve heard that the “devil is in the details.” That’s not true. God is in the details of your life, and you can count on that.

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