



Welcome

SERIES: THE MATRIARCHS OF CHRISTMAS

Message: Whithersoever

Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: O Lord, as we continue in this season of Advent, we thank you for the remarkable faith and resilience of the women you chose to include in the lineage of your Son, Jesus Christ. We honor the tenacity of Tamar, the courage of Rahab, the loyalty of Ruth, the wisdom of Bathsheba, and the “yes” of Mary, all who navigated complex circumstances to play their part in your divine plan. May we draw strength from their stories of courage and perseverance as we await the arrival of the promised King. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

ICEBREAKER: Name one person in your life who is loyal to you no matter what.

INTRODUCTION: The story of Ruth begins with her husband dying, leaving her, her sister-in-law Orpah, and her mother-in-law Naomi as widows in Moab. When Naomi decides to return to her homeland of Judah, she urges both daughters-in-law to stay in Moab, but Ruth refuses to leave her side, declaring, “Whithersoever you go I will go, and where you stay, I will stay; your people will be my people and your God my God.” This statement is the ultimate expression of her unwavering loyalty to Naomi, which leads her to a foreign land where she attracts the attention of Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi’s late husband, who shows her kindness and protection. Because of her deep, selfless commitment to Naomi, Ruth eventually marries Boaz, securing both her and Naomi’s future and ultimately becoming a part of the lineage of Jesus.

BIBLE STUDY: Read **Matthew 1:5b**: Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth.

Read Ruth 1:16: And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for *whithersoever* thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What’s one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **Defining Unconditional Loyalty:** Ruth’s commitment, “*for whithersoever thou goest, I will go*,” is often cited as the ultimate expression of unconditional loyalty. What makes this statement so powerful, and how does this level of commitment differ from the loyalty we typically see in relationships (e.g., family, friends, professional) today?
3. **The Weight of the “Whithersoever” Choice:** By choosing to follow Naomi “*whithersoever*” she went, Ruth chose a life of uncertainty, poverty, and foreignness (leaving Moab for Judah).



What specific dangers or sacrifices did Ruth knowingly accept with this single decision, and what does this tell us about her character and her priorities?

4. **Impact on Naomi and Future Generations:** How might Naomi's life have been different if Ruth had chosen to not make the "whithersoever" commitment and had stayed in Moab like Orpah? Trace the path of blessings that stem directly from Ruth's decision (e.g., meeting Boaz, becoming an ancestress of David) and discuss the long-term impact of one person's loyalty.
5. **Applying "Whithersoever" to Faith:** The parallel phrase in Ruth's declaration is, "*thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*" If we translate the concept of "whithersoever" into a metaphor for commitment to faith or a calling, what does it mean to follow a belief or purpose "*to whatever place*" it leads, even when the destination is unknown or difficult?

CHALLENGE: In what area of your life do you need to reinforce your loyalty now?

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also "find, follow and like" our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

THE SAINT PAUL'S BAPTIST CHURCH
GROW | PRAY | SERVE



WWW.MYSPBC.ORG • 804.643.4000



We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)