



Leading People into a Growing
Relationship with Jesus Christ!

Antioch CELEBRATION Message: Loving Our Neighbors

Sermon Series: Neighbors

Dates: March 4-5, 2017

Suggested Conversation Starter

Would you describe yourself as a pessimist or an optimist about people in general? Why?

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Pastor John reminded us through the story of Ruth that something very bad things happen to God's people. Naomi changed her name to "Bitter" as a result of losing her husband and two sons in a foreign land after escaping the famine and poverty of her homeland. During these "bitter" times, God brought Ruth, a "foreigner" in to Naomi's life. Ruth's choice to be faithful to her mother-in-law meant risking her status as a citizen and her possible future of having a family again.

God's power is made visible through weakness, and Ruth's choice to put her own future at risk was just the vulnerability God needed to bring her into the very family tree of Jesus himself! Consider this amazing portion of Jesus' human genealogy:

Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of Uriah). **Matthew 1:5-6 (NLT)**

Jesus' ancestor, on his human side, was King David. King David's great-grandparents were Boaz and Ruth, and Boaz's mother was Rahab, the former Jericho prostitute who chose to have great faith in God and hid the spies at the risk of her and her family's life. In addition, to these "surprising" entries in Jesus' genealogy, consider that even after the pain and sorrow that David's sin with Bathsheba brought upon him and his family, God still used it for great good—Solomon was born to them after their original son died. The Bible is full of real stories of human brokenness and God's grace. Human weakness and God's display of love, power, and opportunity.

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How have you learned to respond to difficult circumstances?

Naomi told Ruth, "Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me'....But Ruth replied, 'Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!'" Ruth 1:13, 16-17 (NLT)

What challenging step of faith is God inviting you to take at this time in your life?

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When God's people are at their best, people in the margins get blessed.

Pastor John Seitz

God taught his people not to make a final pass during harvest, intentionally leaving some food for the poor. How can we, as Christians, live out that principle in our lives?

We have never looked in the eyes of a person for whom Jesus Christ did not die.

Pastor John Seitz

What perspective does this bring to your day-to-day interactions?

- ...when you look in the mirror?
- ...when you sit at your family table?
- ...when you wait in line?
- ...when you are waited on in a restaurant?
- ...when you see your neighbor?

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What do you think Boaz learned as a child growing up in a very nationalistic people with Rahab from Jericho as his mother? How might this have impacted his deep care for Ruth, another “foreigner” who had come to live with the Jews?

Ruth and Boaz were drawn to each other’s character. Inner strength and beauty is *priceless*. Why is it important to focus on a person’s character as opposed to their outward appearance?

Pray!

Every one of us has been an “outsider” invited to follow Jesus and become a part of His family. There’s room for everyone! Take a moment to share what you appreciate about Jesus.

Sermon Videos: www.lifeisforliving.org/messages