

- 1) How familiar with the Book of Ruth were you before our time today?
- 2) Pastor Brittany mentioned several themes of the Book of Ruth in her background/introduction to the story. These themes included courage, love, loyalty, protection, provision, and redemption. Are there other themes you picked up on in her overview of the story of Ruth? Do you think any one theme is more important than another? Why or why not?
- 3) Given the overview presented, where do you see love in the story of Ruth?
- 4) Where do you see courage in the story of Ruth?
- 5) With which of the characters do you most identify? Why?
- 6) Many people often want to be like Ruth, courageous, loving, and loyal. What would you have to leave behind in order to follow Naomi? Would you be willing to leave what is known to follow someone into the unknown of a foreign land? Why or why not?
- 7) What is the connection between the redemption seen in the character of Naomi and that of humanity?

In thinking about the response to this question, consider Naomi's path. She begins full and happy, moves toward emptiness and bitterness as she loses everything, and is brought into a restored state of happiness and fullness in the end. This restored state looks different from the happiness and fullness with which she began.

In our Wesleyan theology, we believe that humankind was created in the image of God and was deemed good.¹ Humankind lived as one with God and one with creation.² When Adam and Eve fell to temptation, humanity entered a

¹ Genesis 1:26-27, 31 (All Scripture references are NRSV unless otherwise noted).

² John Wesley, "The Image of God," in *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, ed. Albert C. Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 16.

broken and disconnected state with God.³ Humanity is offered redemption through the grace and love of God in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁴ As we grow in our faith we seek to move toward Christian Perfection, the perfect love of God and perfect love of neighbor.⁵ Christian perfection may also be seen as the restored image of God in us.⁶

³ Genesis 3:1-24.

⁴ "Wesleyan Core Term: Redemption" in *The Wesley Study Bible*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 331.

⁵ Albert Outler, *John Wesley*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2964), 31.

⁶ Albert Outler, "An Introductory Comment to Sermon 40: Christian Perfection," in *The Works of John Wesley II*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 97.