

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY!

Thank you for joining us today. This is a short note to let you know that we know what you are thinking: It is warm and cramped in this room. We want to acknowledge with you that yes, the front room is full, the kid's rooms are full, and it can get warm. We are working on alleviating this right now and will be moving to a permanent home on Clark and Bethany Drive this Fall. Although we might very well be cramped in the new property, it will at least have Air Conditioning!

There is a lot that goes into the process of Element having a permanent home, but we hope that today you are first drawn to Jesus before you are overwhelmed by anything else. If it gets too hot, we may hand out popsicles to help you cool off and give you a sugar rush. If you would like a service that has open seats (and is cooler), you are invited to our 8:15 am service. Please understand that all of these "challenges" are because of our love for Jesus, people, and growth that has come quickly. These are good things. We hope you will stay as we work to make more room for you to be part of the good thing Jesus is doing here. If you would like more information about our moving or how you can participate, you can visit: www.elementroots.org.

- The Element Team

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Planting Roots Update

3-Year Journey Ends This November!

94% way through 3-year Journey

74% of commitments fulfilled

80% with non-commitments

Clark/Bethany Work Day TODAY.

Head over after your service. Lunch will be at 1pm.

Mark your calendars:

November 19th: *Agape & Planting Roots Culmination & Celebration! Join us as we end our Journey and look ahead to what's next!*

CPR & First Aid Class

September 16, 8am-4pm at Element

Cost is \$40 due at registration by Sept. 13th

Sign up at Welcome Center

Story Within The Story Week Two: Dialog of Identity – Ruth 1:1-5



Today's Verses:

Genesis 32:28

Ruth 1:1-5

Genesis 48:20

Genesis 32:24-28

Story Within The Story Week Two: Dialog of Identity – Ruth 1:1-5

Ruth is a little book in the Old Testament about the big story of God's providence and redemption. In one sense the entire Bible is about God's providence and redemption. These themes are strongly pronounced in Ruth, which is the reason for our series title, "The Story Within the Story." A few thousand years later we see that God's larger story includes us and allows each individual to find meaning and hope.

We learned last week that Ruth's story is meant to remind us that our past doesn't have to decide our future. There used to be a phrase that was spoken a lot: "it's all in the name." This week we see that that is overwhelmingly true! God is faithful and the heart of the Gospel is that everything that comes to you is either from the hand of God or has passed through the hand of God.

Oftentimes we want to identify ourselves based upon our circumstances or what we do. The Scriptures teach that our identity should first come from who God says that we are. Everyone in the story of Ruth, at the beginning, lets circumstance dictate who they are. Elimelech should have pointed to God being King, but instead lives like the rest of Israel at the time (as if there was no king); Naomi lets her circumstances determine her life so much that she wants to change her name to "bitter;" and all the children let life dictate there who they are as well. In today's society we suffer the same fate, we allow everything around us to determine who we are.

As we talked about on Sunday, Jacob's life was an example of how God used every circumstance to conform Jacob to a person of dignity and purpose (which will also be what Ruth teaches us). The heart of the Gospel is that everything that God does is for His glory and our good; many times the answer to our problems is not running from them, or trying to find a way out of our hardship, but looking at how we can know God better through it. God wants to redefine our identity as being His child, He wants us to understand that our identity is first to be found in what He says about us, not what others say or even what we say about ourselves.

Discussion

How do you define or identify yourself (ask others who are honest where they see you get your identity)? It is important to allow people to speak into this because we may *think* one thing, but how we live is seen by others and many times that is a bigger truth than what we tell ourselves.

Explanation

Do you know the story or meaning behind your name?

Is there family, personal, or community pressure or expectation for you to live up to your (family) name?

If you could change your name to anything, what would it be and why?

Application - Read Genesis 32:24-28

Have you ever been in a situation or season of life where you were wrestling with God (or felt He was wrestling with you)?

How did the experience affect your view of God?

Mission – Read Genesis 32:28

Who does God say that you are?

How can you live in the freedom of God's name for you?

How can you help others to see their identity in Jesus and encourage them to live it out?

Homework: Read Ruth 1:6-18

Think of an area of your life, either past or present, where you lost something significant. Where did you see God in that situation or experience?

