

Gospel Conversations — Week 1: Ruth, Naaman

Rev'd Benjamin Giffone, PhD — Redeemer Presbyterian Church — Spring 2025

- What are the elements of coming to faith?
 - Sense a need, God-shaped hole
 - Crisis
 - Longing
 - The message of the truth
 - Person who cares enough to tell them (a loving witness)
 - Transformation of the Holy Spirit; regeneration/rebirth
 - Time
- Both/and
 - Propositions *and* narratives
 - Truth *and* love
 - Meeting physical *and* spiritual needs
 - Conversion *and* ongoing discipleship
- Story of Ruth (Book of Ruth)
 - What are the needs/crises/longings present in the non-believer characters?
 - Who are “already-God’s-people” in the story? How well do they do at “bearing witness” to God’s truth to outsiders?
 - Elimelech
 - Naomi
 - Boaz
 - Israelite society
 - What are the elements and signs of Ruth’s conversion? How does it happen, and how do we know?
- Story of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:1–27)
 - Overview — successful Aramean general has *lepra*, sent to Israel (1–7) — Elisha’s messenger: wash seven times in the Jordan and be healed (8–14) — Naaman acknowledges YHWH, takes earth back to Aram (15–19a) — Gehazi’s greed (19b–27)
 - What are the needs/crises/longings present in the non-believer characters?
 - Who are “already-God’s-people” in the story? How well do they do at “bearing witness” to God’s truth to outsiders?
 - Northern Israelite captive girl
 - King of Israel
 - Elisha
 - Elisha’s servant, Gehazi
 - What are the elements and signs of Naaman’s conversion? How does it happen, and how do we know?
- What do these stories teach us about how to have gospel conversations? Can you think of some examples?
 - We have to care enough to see their plight
 - We have to be courageous to disrupt their lives and ours
 - We overestimate how much they have it together
 - We underestimate the power of our message
 - We often need to love, over the long haul
 - Be ready when the moment of crisis arrives