**Sept 2nd 2018.** Naomi, Learning through hardship

**Discussion notes**

Start off with feedback from Sunday's message. What did those that were there - or those that have caught up online - take away from it? What encouraged them, what informed them and what challenged them? Spend some time discussing the response to the message and the issues that it raised.

This Sunday we started a new series called "Learning from Learners". Would you regard yourself as a Lifelong learner? We should all continue to learn whenever we have the opportunity. This series will help us to learn from people in the Bible who themselves learn great life lessons.

Can anyone in the group give a quick resumé of the story of Ruth?

**Read** Ruth 1v1-7, 19-22, 4v13-17

Being a child of God doesn't exclude us from hardship and suffering. In fact being a follower of Jesus might actually lead to persecution, discomfort and hardship. How we handle suffering and hardship well as a Christian is a good life lesson to learn.

Naomi experienced suffering through the death of her close family. Suffering can either make us *bitter* people or *better* people. Naomi tells people to call her "Mara" which means "bitter".

How do you react when you experience suffering or hardship in your life?

Do you ever complain and ask God "why me? when things go wrong?"

Naomi blamed God for her loss (1v20-21).

Can you think of a time in your life when you have blamed God for something and have become *bitter*?

Have there been times of difficulty, hardship or suffering that have made you a *better* person?

At the end of the story Naomi is described as having renewed life and being sustained in old age (4v14-15). What from the story brought about this change?

Boaz is described as a "kinsman redeemer" to Naomi and Ruth. In what way does this story show us a picture of Jesus our Redeemer?

How can the love of friends and the work of our "Redeemer" help us through hard times and suffering?

Take the opportunity to pray in twos and threes for freedom from bitterness and/or perseverance to face hardship or suffering with the love of friends and the power of Jesus, our Redeemer.