

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan

# THE BIBLICAL WILD

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Diocese of Eastern Michigan. And this is the Biblical Wild, pioneers in the Christian wilderness.

I recall as a child going to the public library with my mom and going to story hour. An opportunity this week to hear yet another exciting story a chance for a young boy to immerse himself in the midst of the pages of a tremendous narrative. Holy Scripture is filled with exciting stories as well ones that allow our imagination to run wild and invite us to enter into the story ourselves.

Tucked between Judges and I and II Samuel is a tiny book of the Bible, the book of Ruth. It's a story that has often been understood to be a bridge between the time of the judges and the time of the monarchs. A transitional piece that is easy to overlook, but in fact the book of Ruth if we look at it just from the stand point of story and don't get caught up in context and historical narrative and it's placement in holy scripture, we find that it stands alone, and has tremendous power to speak to us. It's an invitation for us to enter into the story and see how the story intersects with our own lives. Ruth is the story of folks who have come from the land of the Israelites into the land of Moab. They are foreigners who come into a place. The husband dies and Naomi finds herself without a husband and with two daughters-in-law. Daughters-in-law loose their husband, Naomi's sons and so it puts them in a precarious situation in the society. Naomi concerns herself with Ruth and her sister-in-law Oprah, and determines that it's time for her to go back, and for them to go back to their own families so that they can be protected without having the husband. We see that once they get back to the land of Judah that the notion of finding a way to exist, find a way to be protected, and finding a husband for Ruth is heavy on Naomi's mind. Ultimately one of their kinfolk, Boaz is determined to be the right one to become the husband. So ultimately, Boaz and Ruth have a child that child is Obed who becomes the father of Jesse who is the father of David and so we have set up the lineage of the house of David ultimately the house into which Jesus is born. We have in the story an opportunity to reflect theologically. To see how our story encounters Holy Scripture and they mutually inform one another. We have themes of otherness of how someone who is the unexpected, who is outside the normal parameters of the society actually becomes one who is an important key in the unfolding story of salvation history. That ultimately for us Christians leads to Jesus as the messiah. If we look at it just as narrative it is a chance for us to be reminded that we need to go deep into our own stories. We need to have clarity about who we are what our lineage is both genetically and culturally to understand where we've come from in order that we can understand more clearly about where it is that we are going. Just enjoy a good story, sit back and relax, allow our theological imaginations to run wild, and experience new and creative ways that God's story

## WEEK XVI: Judges 13-15 / Psalm 81

From Psalm 81 lets us pray.

Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob. Raise a song, sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our festal day. For it is a statue for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. He made it a decree in Joseph, when he went out over the land of Egypt. Amen.

I'm Todd Ousley bishop of the Episcopal

is intersecting with our own story.

This week as you read the scripture available to you and particularly the book of Ruth, I invite you to reflect on a couple questions.

What story can you tell to illustrate how God works in your life?

And where is your own sacred narrative leading you in your relationship with God?

May God bless you and I will see you next week on The Biblical Wild.