Small Group Discussion Notes
Ruth: Faithful Love

Week 2
The Cost of Following, The Cost of Welcoming
February 2, 2025

Warm Up
Re-read chapter 1 of Ruth. In a sentence or two, name something that stands out to you from Ruth 1:15-22 and Sunday's sermon.

Digging Deeper
NAOMI'S COSTLY HOMECOMING
In the sermon, we heard that when studying the Bible, "We need to understand what it meant *to them* in order to understand what it means *to us*." How does learning about communal cultural dynamics in Bible times deepen your understanding of Ruth and Naomi's lives? Can you think of other Bible passages where communal dynamics may play a role?

As a group, review the chart below contrasting individualist cultures (most of the West) and communal (Biblical cultures, and most of the non-Western world today):

INDIVIDUALIST CULTURES	COMMUNAL CULTURES
NUCLEAR FAMILY	EXTENDED FAMILY
CHOOSE YOUR BELIEFS	RELIGION & CULTURE OVERLAP
"BE YOU!"	"FIT IN!"

Do you relate to any communal culture dynamics (above; another is honor and shame) from your own background?

Think of people in your life from other religions and cultures: neighbors, coworkers, and so on. Have you experienced any of these dynamics in your interactions with them?

RUTH'S COSTLY FAITHFULNESS
We are all called to costly discipleship, and every believer will experience challenges in life because of following Jesus.

Read Mark 8:34-35 and John 15:18-21

Yet for some people, like Ruth, following the Lord brings exceptional challenges. This is often the case for people from other religious backgrounds, or anyone who is the first in their family to become a Christian. Did you face a high cost in turning to following Christ? Is there someone in your life who did? Share some of that story with your group. How does their costly faithfulness inspire you?

Next Steps
THE COMMUNITY'S COSTLY WELCOME
God called Israel to welcome foreigners, but they struggled to live out to His call (Mark 11:15-18). The church is called to welcome all kinds of people: socially, economically, ethnically… (Galatians 3:26-29) and we, too, struggle to live out His call. Reaching out to those who are different is costly to our comfort and our schedule.

Final Thoughts
How ready are you to build relationships with Ruths: people who are different than you?
How ready is our church to welcome outsiders? What would you like to see God do in this area in the next few years?