

Have You Heard? There Is Bread in Bethlehem

by Carter Conlon

The sermon calls listeners to return to God's historic faithfulness and to experience the promise and fulfillment of God's love and salvation, rather than being seduced by the false promises of Moab.

Duration: 45:55

Scripture: Proverbs 2:16-19, Proverbs 7:9, Colossians 2:14-15

Topics: "Provision"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a story from the Bible about a woman who had access to her possessions taken away by another man. The Kingsman Redeemer steps in and confronts the man, ultimately gaining the right of redemption for the woman. The speaker then shifts to talk about a comfortable and self-centered mindset in the church, where there is no burden for missions or sacrifice. They emphasize the importance of valuing each individual soul and returning to the house of God. The sermon concludes by highlighting the need for self-reflection and a return to God's provision and purpose.

Transcript

My message title this morning, have you heard? There's bread in Bethlehem. Praise God. Ruth chapter one, please.

If you'll go there in the Old Testament, Ruth is the eighth book from the beginning of the Bible. Or if you find Joshua, then go to Judges, then you'll find Ruth. The book of Ruth.

Father, I thank you, Lord, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I thank you, God, for strength and power. I thank you for the knowledge today that your kingdom doesn't advance with human zeal.

Your kingdom advances by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I thank you, God, for quickening my physical body and mind. Thank you, Lord, for unlocking the truth of your word and sending it deep into the ears and the hearts of the hearers.

Lord, let your kingdom advance with great power today. And even before we speak, even before we respond, we give you all the glory because you're the one who's sending your word into this generation to bring healing. It's not us, God, it's not any amount of study.

It comes by your grace, Lord, comes by your goodness. And we believe, Lord, that you are good and your mercy endures forever. I believe it with all my heart.

God, it's the song of my heart. It will always be, Lord, till I die and after I die, it will always be the song of my heart. You are good and your mercy endures forever.

Thank you, Father, in Jesus' mighty name. Ruth chapter 1, beginning at verse 19. So they too went until they came to Bethlehem.

And it came to pass that when they were come to Bethlehem that all the city was moved about them. And they said, is this Naomi? And she said to them, call me not Naomi, call me Mara, which means bitter. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why then call you me Naomi, seeing the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has afflicted me? So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Now, this is a story of a people who left the place of God's historic faithfulness. And they went into another place where they believed that satisfaction and promise would be found in a time of famine. It was a time of great personal want, need.

I don't know fully what the time of that day was. The scripture just says it was a time of famine. It was a time of soul thirst.

It's a time of hunger for something. And suddenly one day, this man Elimelech, he came into his heart to leave the land of Bethlehem, Judah, and to take his wife and his two sons into a land called Moab. Now, historically speaking, you and I would sit here and say, what would ever possess a man to take his family out of the place of the proven faithfulness of God and take them into a place with, at best, has got an inglorious history? Now, Moab was the result of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his eldest daughter.

When Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God, Lot ran up with his family, his daughters, actually, his wife died, and he ran up into a little town called Zoar. And on that journey, Lot's daughters, who were raised in compromise, took it upon themselves to say they felt the world was over. They felt they were the last people on the earth, most likely.

And they decided to get their father intoxicated. And really, to get him intoxicated, there had to be some willingness on his part to drink. That's the kind of a family this was.

And this was Abraham's nephew. And both daughters had a sexual relationship with their father. And Moab was the child of the eldest daughter.

Now, it's a place that traditionally resisted the journey of God and his people to all that he had promised them. Remember when the children of Israel came out of Egypt and they're heading into the place of God's promise, it was Balak, the king of Moab, that hired a false prophet called Balaam to come into the land and to curse the people of God. And folks, this is the type of what Moab is.

This is Moab's legacy. Now, Balaam came in, and of course, you know the story that from every viewpoint that Balak took him to, he saw nothing but the blessing of God on these people. He saw nothing but victory.

He saw, I mean, God intervened in the situation, opened his eyes, and showed him who he was trying to curse couldn't be cursed. I'll tell you today, no matter what the devil tries to speak against you, you cannot be. If you are a child of God, you cannot be stopped on this journey.

That's why in the Psalms, the scripture says, every tongue that rises against you in judgment, you have the right to condemn that tongue. You've been given that by God. The righteousness that you and I have is not of ourselves.

We have failed. We do fail. We struggle.

We all struggle. But yet, in the midst of it all, there's a covering of righteousness that is given to us freely by God through Jesus Christ. And therefore, we can stand against every lie of hell itself and say, no, if you want to get to me, you've got to go through Christ to get to me, because he has covered me, and you've got to get through that covering in order to condemn me.

And that's where you get the right to stand. If you're an honest believer today, if you're an honest Christian, if you have a sincere heart to follow God, you have the assurance that you're walking in and going to walk in victory. Now, I said earlier, this was a place that traditionally resisted the journey of God's people.

Now, you remember that Balaam told Balak they can't be stopped. He said, but there is a way. You can't stop them.

He said, as they're going around your borders. Now, Moab put up a resistance, but Moab were not a fighting people. They were rather passive people.

They were essential people. And Balaam told Balak, he said, listen, this is the way to do it. As Israel is passing by your borders, he said, just have the women of your society, have them go out and entice the men to come in and to join them in pleasure and idolatrous worship.

And that's exactly what they did. And they drew as it is from the camp of Israel and weakened the men of Israel on that journey to the place of promise. Moab is a type of central religion.

Its voice is always in society, always trying to draw those that are on this journey to the fullness of what God has for his people. And the Moabites are always there. That voice is always there saying, come, have you considered this? Fulfillment can be found here.

The road you're on is very narrow. And on that road, there's going to be hardship. There's going to be difficulty.

Have you considered this way? Here's another way. We are the people of God too as well. You see, Moab could claim some kind of a spiritual history.

After all, Moses was buried in the land of Moab. And they knew roughly the vicinity. They didn't know the exact spot of the grave.

But according to scripture, they knew roughly where his body was buried. So they could say, well, hey, there's evidence that God has been in this place. God is with us too as well.

After all, Moses is here. His grave is here. But folks, I want to remind you of something, that Moses was buried there because of a personal failure involving an improper representation of God.

It was never God's will to bury Moses in Moab. You know that Moses misrepresented God before the people in a flash of anger, in a flash of temper. And it cost him going into the promises of God, the place he saw from Moab, but couldn't get into it.

Couldn't go there. And a lot of people who live in Moab can actually see the promises of God, but they can't enter into them. They're living in a place.

They're buried, for lack of a better word, in a place where there is really no true life of God. It could be said that both the living and the dead who had fallen short of the full testimony God had intended for their lives were in Moab. Now the gods of Moab were Baal and Chemosh.

In Moab, prosperity was worshipped. It was a sensual kind of a worship that quite often involved immorality. And Chemosh was an altar upon which the children of Moab were taken and put on that altar and offered up to their deity.

It's a place where people would sacrifice their children literally for their own gain, for their own needs. Folks, there are today churches in many places, there's no more children in those churches. There are no more young people in the churches.

And that speaks to me of something. Folks, if we're walking with God, it should be an exciting thing for our sons and daughters, all children, to be in the house of the Lord. There should be something in the heart of our children that says, oh, wherever they're going, I'm going.

And whoever their God is, that's my God. I'm going that way with God. But yet if God's people or those who profess to be God's people are at this altar of self-indulgence and hypocrisy, the children see it and they want no part of it.

And folks, there are so many people today, as long as their bellies are full, as long as they're prospering, as long as their cupboards are full, as long as they can go in the house and engage in some form of sensual worship, they couldn't care less if there's no young people in the house of God. And folks, that's just the way it is. And I know what I'm talking about.

I've traveled before coming to New York City through much of what called itself Pentecost in another country. And house after house after house after house after house that claims to be full, filled with the Holy Spirit, there were no young people in those churches anymore. They were empty.

Why then, you would say, would anybody knowing this want to go there? Why would anybody go to Moab? I don't care how hard it gets. Why would you go there knowing that there's no history of anything good coming from there? There are people in our society today that go into churches, go into, I call it seductive theologies, that are all about self. And they know historically there's never been anything come from there.

There's never been any revival. There's never been any great missions movement. There are no people throughout history that you can buy a book about that ever accomplished anything for God.

Nobody's ever walked through the fire there. Nobody's ever suffered there. Nobody, nobody.

There's no glorious history there, but yet they will still go there. And you wonder why do they do this? I think the scripture says in the book of Proverbs chapter two, I guess we should go there, but go to Proverbs chapter two in verse 16, says, to deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger, which flatters with her words, which forsakes the guide of her youth and the covenant of her God, for her house inclines to death and her paths unto the dead. And none that go unto her return again, and neither take they hold of the paths of life.

Now go to Proverbs chapter seven, please, if you will, with me. Verse nine. Now I want you to think about these verses in the context of what Balaam told Balak to do.

As Israel is passing by us, as there are people moving into their full inheritance in God, have the women come out and have them seduce the men as it is that are passing by into another form of sensual and idolatrous worship. Proverbs chapter seven, verse nine, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night, and behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot and subtle of heart. She's loud and stubborn and her feet abide not in her house.

Now she is without, now in the streets and lies wait at every corner. So she caught him and kissed him. And with an impudent face said to him, I have peace offerings with me.

This day I've paid my vows. In other words, there's religion here too, as well. You can find fulfillment with me.

Therefore, I came forth to meet thee diligently, to seek thy face and I've found thee. I've decked my bed with coverings of tapestry and carved works and fine linen of Egypt. You see, there's prosperity here.

You'll find what your heart is longing for. It's all here with me. I perfume my bed with myrrh and aloes and cinnamon.

In other words, you'll find rest here. There'll be worship here. There'll be prosperity here.

Come, let us take our fill of love till the morning. Let us solace ourselves with love. Now you can just enter this love feast as it is.

There's no burden here. There's no desire for missions here. There's no giving of yourself here.

There's no sacrifice here. It's all about you. It's a comfortable place.

For the good man is not at home. He's gone on a long journey. Verse 19, he's taken a bag of money with him and will come home at the day appointed.

And with her much fair speech, she caused him to yield. With the flattering of her lips, she forced him. You ever notice that seductive religion always flatters those that it's speaking to? If you don't believe it, turn on your television.

If you have one, turn it on and listen to a lot of what's going on in this country today and tell me that's not a flattering spirit speaking to the people, telling the people how wonderful they are, how great everybody is, how incredibly good-looking and awesome and everything else that people are. He goes after her straightway. Verse 22, as an ox goes to the slaughter or as a fool to the correction of the stocks, till a dart strikes through his liver, as a bird hastes to the snare and knows not that it is for his life.

Hearken to me now, therefore, you children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways. Go not astray in her paths.

She has cast down many wounded. Yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

When Naomi came home in the book of Ruth, her testimony was in verse 21. She said, I went out full. I went out full.

Oh, we went out with such promise. You see, this word came to us that in Moab was everything that we would ever long for. Everything we would ever want would be found there.

I believe that most likely she was a partaker of her husband's dream. That in spite of the inglorious history of Moab, that Moab was a place where the deepest longings of the heart and the future of the family would be satisfied. I'm sure they were told in Moab you will prosper.

In Moab you will be safe. In Moab you'll find the deepest needs of your heart. In Moab you'll gain influence and power and authority.

This incredible destiny that God has put on your life will all be fulfilled in Moab. And so here goes the family, full, but not full of God. Full, but not full of promise.

Full of deception. Full of themselves. Full of a false hope.

Naomi said, I went out full and the Lord has brought me home again empty. In this place of Moab, her husband and her sons died there. And folks, there's, her husband represented, there are no social networks in those days.

So her husband would have represented in that time, her present help. And her sons would have represented her future security. Her present help and her future security died in Moab.

And folks, the most gracious act of God that he could do in our generation to bring home those who are living in the wrong place, even in his name, is to take away the present help and the future security. And just as the prodigal son, to cause us in this generation to begin to consider our ways again. To begin to stop and say, what am I doing here? I've got my face down in a hog trough.

I'm not satisfied here. And nobody around me is able to give me what I need. In my father's house, even the least of the servants are well provided for.

And I'm perishing with hunger. What am I doing here? This prodigal son who'd made such a mess of the testimony of his father got up and started to head for home. The scripture says that Naomi was bitter in spirit, but she began to consider her options.

And I can see it happening now in Ruth chapter one, verses six and seven said, then she rose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab. For she heard in the country of Moab, how that the Lord had visited his people and giving them bread. Wherefore, she went forth out of the place where she was and her two daughters-in-law with her.

And they went on the way to return to the land of Judah, a report of bread. Suddenly, suddenly this report comes. Have you heard there's bread in Bethlehem church of Jesus Christ in this generation? Have you

heard there's bread in Bethlehem? Have you heard, have you heard the place where God became a man, the place where God was given for the sins of all humanity, the place where God humbly came in, in the form of a babe and became a man and walked among us, the place where God was given for your need and for mine.

There's always been bread there. Have you heard there's bread in Bethlehem? Have you heard in the ways of God is everything that you'll ever long for is found there. Every need of your heart will be satisfied.

Everything that you ever thought could be found in anything of this world that has left you empty and dry. You're going to forsake it because there's bread in Bethlehem. And so help me God in this generation, this word is going to come alive again to many of God's people.

There's bread in Bethlehem. Thank God there's bread in Bethlehem. There's life in Bethlehem.

There's strength in Bethlehem. It may not be what the world promises, but I'm telling you it's so far beyond anything that this world can offer any child of God. There's something in the life of Christ that so satisfies.

There's something in the life of Christ that even Paul the apostle could say in spite of the fact that he was stolen and shipwrecked and betrayed and was given into trial after trial after trial. He could say to that generation in him we live and move and have our being. Hallelujah.

Paul said, I would forsake everything. I can't in this world, but done that I might be found in him that I might know him in the power of his resurrection. Praise be to God.

Praise be to God. Praise be to God. I went out full and I came home empty, bitter in spirit heading for home.

All she's left is a type of an inner desire that's expressed in this through her daughter-in-law Ruth. It's an inner desire that God plants in the heart of every one of his children. It's an inner desire that's put there by the Holy Spirit.

If you belong to God, that no matter how long you've lived in Moab, it can't be taken away from you. It will follow you back into a place where you don't even know why you're going back. You've just heard a report that there's bread there.

You're going home. You're bitter in spirit. You feel like God has dealt wrongly with you and betrayed you.

I'm telling you folks, thousands, thousands who are living in Moab in our generation are getting up and coming home very, very shortly. They're coming home. Many will have felt that somehow I believe God, but he let me down.

But folks, he didn't let anybody down. He's just bringing home a lot of people who've been living in the wrong place for the wrong reason. It's a type of an inner desire which refuses to go away.

And that desire is to go into the harvest field and collect that which those who are considered more privileged have left behind or have not considered worthy to stoop down and gather. This is a story that's a type of the true church in our generation. If you are a genuine Christian, you may have spent a lot of time in the wrong place, but I'm telling you today, God's Holy Spirit upon you has put a desire in you.

It never goes away. And even though you're coming back perhaps to a word that you don't fully yet understand, that desire of God is in you because it's God's desire that's planted within you to go down as he did come into this world in Bethlehem and gather up that which nobody else considers worthwhile. It's the touching of the leopard.

It's the hearing of the cry of the blind. It's the reaching out to the starving child. It's going to the nobodies and the nothings of this world and where everyone else was on this journey to fill their own bellies has passed them by.

But those who belong to God finally realize this is the treasure of God. This is what Christ came for. He didn't come to call the righteous.

He came to call sinners unto repentance. He came to gather a bride to himself. That's why Paul could say, consider your calling brethren, not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise, not many strong in the flesh, not many with pedigree, not many with political influence, not many are called, but God has chosen the fullest things of the world.

Things that are nothing to bring to not those things that are things that have no pedigree. They have, they have no claim to fame, but God's Holy Spirit comes upon them. It's in this field that Ruth, this type of the, this desire that's in the church of every generation.

And even in ours comes to the attention of the one who has the power of her redemption in his hand. It's in this field that the kinsman redeemer notices her and says, this is a virtuous woman. He sees her as virtuous, loyal and industrious, even though she may not have seen herself that way.

She probably saw herself as a failure and her daughter-in-law as a failure. Here we are poverty stricken. Here we are going into the field.

Here we are. You know, we have these great plans. We were just full of plans, but our plans are all gone now.

And now we're just out in the field and Ruth is just picking up these little pieces of barley harvest that are nobody else wants. Nobody else considers them worthwhile even to pick up and all the harvesters and all the bleeders are going through this field and there's Ruth, but the eyes of the kinsman redeemer come upon her. And he says, you are a virtuous woman.

You are loyal. Hallelujah to the lamb of God. What a surprise it's going to be when we get to the throne of God one day, hallelujah.

And we find out it's not about the crowds. It's not about the hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands and millions. It's not about all of this.

It's the one person who just reached out and touched his soul. It's the person who found the heart of God for lost humanity. What a surprise when we get there and he says, virtuous bride, well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter thou into the joy of your Lord. In Ruth chapter three, Ruth meets him at the threshing floor. She says in verse nine, I'm Ruth, your handmaid spread therefore your skirt over your handmaid for you're a near kinsman.

And he says, blessed be thou the Lord, my daughter, for you more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning in as much as you followed not young men, whether poor or rich. And now my daughter fear not for I'll do to thee all that thou requires for all the city of my people does know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it's true that I'm your near kinsman.

How be it there's a kinsman nearer than I. And she meets him at the threshing floor and says to him, will you cover me? Will you take me to be yours? Only to find that it's always been the delight of his heart to do so. This is what God has longed for. He said, you're showing me a greater kindness in the end than at the beginning.

You had this choice to follow all these young men. You had the choice to follow the rich or the poor, whatever they were that were trying to lead you. But instead you've come to my feet, the ancient of days as it is.

You've come back to me. Oh my God, help us in this generation, Lord. Oh Jesus, I pray help your church now.

The Lord says you've come back to me. And he said, I'm going to do everything in my power to bring you into the fullness of redemption. But firstly, I have to deal face to face with someone who because of where you've been and what happened there has access to you and all that is yours.

You see, they'd been living in the wrong place. And by living in the wrong place, access their circumstances had come. And because of those circumstances, there was access given to another man.

Another man had, in a sense, the right to all that she was and all that she had. And so the kinsman redeemer went to the gate of the city. In chapter four, he said in verse one, near the end of the verse, he said, Oh, such a one, turn aside, sit down here.

And he turned aside and sat down. And he entered into a confrontation with this man. And at the end of the discussion, the other man agreed that the right of redemption is yours.

And it's not mine. And boys, it was the tradition in Israel in those days, that if one man released his, his grip, and gave the rights to that woman to another man, that he would take off his shoe in the presence of all of the elders, and he would hand him his shoe, you'll find it in Deuteronomy. And the taking off of the shoe represents that I have no more power.

I have no more pathway. I have no more plans. I have no more strength.

I have no more right to this bride. This bride belongs to you. And actually, when you go to Deuteronomy, it says the woman whom this man would would not build up his house or her house would come and spit in this man's face.

And he would be known as the man whose shoe is loosed in Israel. And I love the fact that when Jesus Christ died on the cross, Colossians 2, 14 and 15 said he blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly triumphing over them.

Christ went to the devil himself. When you come back to God, you will find out that you have a full redemption, you'll find out you have a redeemer, you'll find out there's somebody that's going to go to the

gate and fight for you. And every place in your life where you gave the enemy rights, every place where you're tormented in your mind, every place where your path has been brought into destruction, Christ challenges the devil himself.

And he says, give me your shoe. Your plans are over. Your strength is over.

Your power is over. Your right to my bride is over. I deny you access any longer.

This bride is mine. Hallelujah. The present day church that's getting up and coming home belongs to Christ.

And she's going to find a strength in her redeemer. Oh, glory to God. What a song of praise we're going to sing in our generation.

What glory is going to come to God through his people. What an incredible shout of glory and praise will be in the house of God. When you and I finally fully realize the strength of our redemption, the power of our redemption, the glory of that redemption, the love that's the very basis of that redemption.

Praise be to God. I believe we're going to sing, we'll dance, we'll shout, not just in the house of God all day, every day, there will be glory given to God in these last moments of time that we're living in. Ruth chapter four, verse 13 tells us that Ruth is grafted in to the lineage of God.

Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife. And he went in unto her and the Lord gave her conception. She bare a son.

And the woman said it to Naomi, blessed be the Lord, which has not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name might be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life and a nourisher of thine old age for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee is better to thee than seven sons has born him. Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom and became nurse to it.

And the women, her neighbors gave it a name saying there's a son born to Naomi and they called his name Obed. He's the father of Jesse, the father of David. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Ruth is grafted in and she becomes the great grandmother of King David.

And she's given a place of honor in scriptural history. This woman who went into the field and just picked up what everybody else had discarded and not considered worthy to gather. And Naomi, the greatest longing of her heart and soul are now satisfied.

She is full. She said, I went out with all these plans and the Lord dealt bitterly with me and brought me home empty, but that wasn't the case. The Lord loved her.

The Lord brought her home and said, listen, there's bread here that you don't know about yet. There's something I'm going to give you that you don't fully understand. I want you to see with me Naomi at the end of her life.

All she's got is this baby in her arms. You know what she's found? The value of a soul. You know what she's found? That it's better to have your children in the land where God is than to go into a place where there's false promise and lose your sons and daughters.

She found the value of a soul. Praise God. She found the value of a child.

I understand now why Malachi said in the last days, the Lord is going to come and turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the hearts of the children back to their fathers again. The Lord is going to come and destroy this self-seeking seductive spirit that has found a foothold in the professing church of Jesus Christ. The Lord is going to sovereignly destroy it by taking away its foundation, taking away the gullibility of the people, taking away the prosperity that allows it to exist.

It's all going to be taken away. You remember Naomi lost her present help and her future hope. And many, many people in our generation are about to rise up and come back into the house of God again.

They're going to find in the house of God what is really of value is one child in the sight of God. That's what's really of value folks. One child, one soul.

They're going to go out of the house of God and see men now in the streets, not as trees walking, not some kind of a half vision of the power of God's redemption, but they're going to see men the way God sees men. They're going to realize that one soul, if my life's purpose is for one soul, then blessed be God for this. Blessed be God that he would use me for this.

If my life's purpose is to win one person to God and hold that person close to my heart, open the word of God and lead them and direct them in the kingdom of God. That's good enough for me. That's good enough for me.

Praise God. That's victory in the kingdom of God. That's glory in the kingdom of God.

That's success in the kingdom of God. She is grafted into the lineage of Jesus Christ who came to Bethlehem. And if it was only you that would have come to God, he still would have come.

That's how valuable you are to God. And she is a type of the church that is grafted into this understanding, finally delivered from all of the seductive and false pursuits of this world and all of its religions and brought into the life of God through Jesus Christ, whose eye is on the sparrow who looks at the small things, who considers the insignificant and the nothings and reaches down and says, Oh, that you would come to me. All you who labor in a heavy laden and I'll give you rest.

Come take my yoke upon you. Learn of me. I'm meek and lowly and hard and you shall find rest for your soul.

Praise God. Praise God. Praise God.

Praise God. You can be full and completely satisfied as a Christian just by leading one person to Christ and making sure that person is nurtured in God and makes it into the kingdom of heaven. One baby in her arms.

Did she know what she's holding? Did she have an understanding? Every person you lead to Christ, do you know that factorially, if that person walks with God, you're not just holding one child, you're holding hundreds and maybe thousands who are going to enter into the kingdom of God. Folks, we've got to get the mind of God in this generation. We too long lived with the boardroom leading the church of Jesus Christ, live with committees with coming up with theories out of men's mind and have lost the power of God, lost the understanding of God.

She's holding one baby in her arms, just one baby. And she could rightfully, perhaps in the natural say, well, this is all I've got to show for life. It's all I've got to show for the fullness of everything that I felt God promised me.

But if she could see with the eyes of the spirit from that baby is going to come a king and from that king, could she see David dancing before the Ark and bringing the glory of God into Jerusalem? Could she understand what she's holding in her hands? When you hold a soul in your hands, do you know you're holding the lives of thousands more in your hands? If you do right by that person that God gives you to disciple and bring to him, you're holding many, many, many, many more long after you're dead and gone. People will be walking with God because you took seriously one child that God placed before you. Praise be to God.

She's holding David and through David, of course, she's holding Christ. Amazing. She's holding Christ in her arms.

And then beyond Christ, she's holding the church. Oh my God, help us to understand. Can you see these things? Can you get a vision bigger than that which the flesh gives and understand if you were just faithful? If you just say, God, lead me.

I don't see the big picture. You do, God. Just lead me to my part.

And the Lord suddenly says, you know that grocer or you know that little kid that delivers your pizza? You know that that boy down the hall that doesn't have a father. That's my plan. Go hold that child.

Lead him to me. Put years into this life. Not just don't have two Bible studies and walk away saying, well, my work is done.

No, put your life into it. Put your life into it. Because you're holding not only that child, but every person.

Every person that will walk with God through the testimony of that life, you're holding them in your arms as well. That's why people are going to be shocked when they get to the throne and say, me? Lord, you're calling me? I mean, I just want two people to God my whole Christian life. But I was faithful.

I did pray with them. I did encourage them. I did call them.

I did study with them. And the Lord says, no, you want a whole lot more than two people to God. Let me show you.

And suddenly the chart appears and you just stand back and say, oh, God almighty. God almighty. God almighty.

God almighty. God almighty. God almighty.

Oh, God, I pray, Lord. My God, would you open our eyes again? Lord, we feel like the blind men on the side of the road as you pass by crying out, oh, son of David, have mercy on us, God. Give us our sight back again.

Help us to see with spiritual eyes. Help us, God, to enter into a kingdom that's hidden from those who walk according to their own thinking and their own strength, oh God. Help us, God, to understand this kingdom.

Draw us into this kingdom, oh God. Destroy, Lord, all of the tentacles of Moab that have so intertwined themselves, God, in the church of this generation. Now, I pray, God, give us eyes to see, Lord.

Give us eyes to see, oh Jesus, the glory of your kingdom, oh God. The beauty of obedience, God. How you treasure those who reach down and pick up, God, what everyone else is passing by.

Oh, Lord, I thank you. God, I praise you with all my heart. I bless you, Lord.

Would you open your word to us, God? Would you give us bread in Bethlehem? Would you enable us, the pastors of this church, God, to open this book and dig so deep into this treasure of God and to bring out things new and old to your people? Lord, I cry out to you today, God, we don't want just the normative things of this age any longer, Lord. We want to go into the heart of God. We want to find ourselves in the eye of the kinsman redeemer.

Lord God, we want to understand what is important and walk with you again as your people in the earth. Oh God, I thank you for this with all my heart. I praise you.

I bless you in the mighty and holy name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Thank you, God. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

Have you heard? Have you heard? There's bread in Bethlehem. Have you heard? Have you heard? There's bread in Bethlehem. There's bread in Bethlehem.

Have you heard? Do you know? Do you understand? There's bread in Bethlehem. Praise be to God. There's enough to satisfy the deepest longings of your heart in Christ if you and I will agree to be abandoned to God and let the Holy Spirit lead us and not our natural mind, not be led by the lust of our heart, but be led by the compassion of God inside of us.

There's bread in Bethlehem. There's strength in Bethlehem. There's glory in Bethlehem.

There's protection in Bethlehem. There's everything you ever wanted is in Bethlehem. Oh, have you heard? Have you heard? Have you heard? Hallelujah.

I've heard it. I'm hearing it. Oh, glory to God.

I'm hearing it with everything that's in my soul. I'm hearing it. Hallelujah.

Bless be to God. Bless be to God. Bless be to God.

Hallelujah. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you, Lord. Oh, God, thank you. Praise you, Lord.

Praise your holy name. I want to give an altar call today. Every disillusioned person, you are disillusioned with your walk with God.

And you've come in here today, and throughout the week, there's been a thought in your mind, surely there's got to be more to Christianity than this. There's got to be more than what I have. And today you're hearing what's of value.

Naomi got up and went home, and she didn't really find what it was all about until she got there and was there for a little while. And you may not fully understand it today, but something in your heart is drawing you. And the Lord is saying to you today, get up and come home.

Everything of this world you thought was going to satisfy you won't. Where you thought your security was will soon be gone. But there's bread in Bethlehem.

You get up and come home. And just like the prodigal son, you'd be surprised. God will run to you.

He will meet you. He will kiss you. He will cover you.

He will empower you. He will destroy your enemy. Just get up, come home.

Every backslider. Now by backslider, we mean you knew God, you loved him, but you've grown cold. You're drifting.

You don't know why you're drifting. Most likely you're on the wrong path, and that's why you're drifting. Get up and come home, and you'll find that he'll meet you here.

If you're a sinner, and you don't know him as Savior, you get up and come home. He will cleanse you of your sin if you trust him, and he will empower you to turn from sin and to become another person. And he'll make your life worthwhile.

That's who God is. His eye will fall upon you. You'll suddenly walk out of this church, and strangely there'll be a love in your heart for complete strangers that you've never met before.

It's not yours, it's God's that he gives you. He puts that deposit of his love in your heart. You'll suddenly care about people in a way that you never did before.

He'll give you the power to walk with him. We're going to worship for a few minutes, perhaps maybe 10 minutes. If the Lord's speaking to your heart today in the sanctuary, the balcony, the annex, in the sanctuary you could come forward to the front of this altar, in the annex if you would stand between the screens.

As we all stand together, please just come if the Holy Spirit is drawing you. We'll pray together. We're going to believe God.

The kinsman redeemer looked down upon this girl by the name of Ruth, and he said, it's been shown me that you're a virtuous woman because of all that you've done for your mother-in-law and how you've left the gods of Moab and you've come to serve the God of Israel. It's been shown to me. Now she would have felt that she was anything but virtuous.

I mean she was a beggar really, and everyone else seemed to have the power and she seemed to have so little. But I want to remind you that the eyes of the kinsman redeemer didn't seem to fall on anybody else. They fell on this humbled woman who said, I'm going with God.

Let everyone else do what they're going to do. I'm going to pick up what God gives to me and I'm going to be faithful to those that the Lord has given to me. And the kinsman redeemer said, you're a virtuous woman.

I'm going to the gate. I'm going to fight for you. I'm going to win the fight for you.

I'm going to put something in your hands so precious that only you will understand the depth of what I've given you. Many people around will look and say, well, that's just a baby. And that's what they would have said.

All of the combine harvesters would have looked and said, well, you know, you got one baby in your arms, big deal. But God says, no, I'm going to put something in your arms and you and I will know the value of what I've given you. Now, Father, I pray God for this righteous and virtuous bride.

I pray God, Lord, that you put something into the hands of those who have in their heart to walk with you in this generation, unseen by men, but seen by God. Lord, I thank you that you will put something in our hands so precious. You'll put something in our arms, God, that only you and those who have it know what it is, God.

It's the value of one soul in the sight of God. You will put this in our hands. Give us the grace to be faithful to every person you lead across our path, everyone that you may use our lives to be a testimony to.

Give us the grace to be faithful to what you put into our hands. Give us the eyes to see. It's much greater than just a person.

There's much more involved in this. I thank you for it, God. I ask you to bless this group of people at the altar today here in the annex.

Bless this congregation, bless this sanctuary. I want to thank you personally today, Lord, that you've given us 5,500 children to feed every day. God, I praise you with all my heart.

I see each one of these as a potential glory of God being released into very different nations throughout the world. Lord, they are precious in your sight. My God, help us.

Help us, Lord, to be faithful to the calling you put upon us as a people, individually and now collectively as a body. Help us, Lord, to be a church in Times Square that always has a heart for the poor, where the widow is always welcome, where the stranger, the homeless, the fatherless can find refuge. God, deliver us, Lord, from the pride that can so get into the house of God in our time.

Father, if you choose to use us, Lord, we recognize that it's all mercy. It's all grace. It's all goodness.

It's just your eyes coming down on a people who are trying to do what we believe is right. Father, we thank you for this with all our hearts in Jesus' mighty name. Hallelujah.

Give God thanks.

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