

Ruth - Part 3

by John McGregor

God's purposes may be fulfilled in unexpected ways, and He works in the lives of anyone who is faithful to Him, providing supernatural supply and protection through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 38:17

Scripture: Exodus 2:1-10, Leviticus 19:9-10, Ruth 1:16-17, Matthew 6:33, Acts 9:1-9, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 3:20-21

Topics: "Ruth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes three main points. Firstly, God's purposes can be fulfilled in unexpected ways. He uses the example of Ruth, who was not initially part of God's chosen people, but through her faithfulness, God worked in her life. Secondly, the preacher highlights that God's love and goodness are for everyone, regardless of their background or status. He emphasizes that God's grace is available to all. Thirdly, the preacher discusses the theme of protection, using the story of Boaz providing safety and security for Ruth. He emphasizes that God is our ultimate protector. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to trust in God's provision, seek His blessings, and rely on His protection.

Transcript

Going to look at that passage in Ruth and consider it together for a few moments and take some time just to be blessed in the Word of God. And let's take a moment and just pray before we do that. You know, we've seen God answer prayer in a couple of ways this week already.

And when I talked to Glenn Douglas last night, Hope is home from the hospital and she was taken in on Tuesday night, Wednesday morning. And she's home, so that's good. But keep praying for her and for her family.

And this dear lady here kind of keeps on surprising us. She had knee surgery a little over a week ago, a week and a couple of days ago. And here she is walking into church this morning.

So, I guess He still answers prayer, and we are so grateful. And Tina, I think the next thing must be dancing with the stars after that. Let's just talk to Jesus and ask Him to touch us this morning.

Lord, it's been a privilege to sing and to lift our hearts to You. We thank You for Your Word this morning. Lord, we invite You just to come and to touch us through Your Word, to encourage our lives, to strengthen us for the days in which we live and walk, to teach us, Lord, more about Yourself, and so that we might

know more of You just day by day.

Lord, as we seek Your face this morning, we do give You thanks for answered prayer. We thank You, Father, that You tell us just to continue to call to You, and You will answer it. And Lord, as we open the Word of God, may You just bring answers to our hearts and strength to our lives through it, in the power of Your Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, as we do our series on the book of Ruth, when we left off last week, Ruth and Naomi had gone back to Bethlehem, and you remember Naomi was saying, don't call me Naomi, call me Myra, bitter, because life's been hard on me. And we looked on the fact, too, that God wasn't finished yet.

And as you think about these two ladies, they have come back to Bethlehem, but they're empty, and they're unsupported, and they're alone. And you know, one of the things that's hardest for us is to be alone. I think that's why when we get into the vehicle, the first thing we do is crank on the radio.

We don't like to be alone so much, do we? And the ladies have one another, that's true, but there's a sense in which, in that kind of culture and so on, there's nobody to support them. They don't have that sense of someone to care, someone to come alongside, and we like that, don't we? We love when somebody is there for us. That's such an important thing to us as human beings, as individuals.

And as you look at the beginning here of the second chapter, we start to pick the story up again. So what happens to these ladies in this situation? And it might be, you know, that there are times in our lives, I think it's true for everybody, where you wonder, well, what are we going to do now? There doesn't seem to be any way through this situation. But as we begin chapter two, it starts by pointing us to a person in verse 1, and let's just think about him for a moment or two.

The person's name is Boaz, and his name means strength. He's a strong one, and he's a very well-established man, could you say? He is a businessman who is doing well and going on from strength to strength. He is the strong one.

And in this thing, here's what I like as I think about how this chapter begins with a look at a person. You ever noticed that at the darkest times the Lord doesn't send you a program? He doesn't send a philosophy. He sends a person.

It's somebody into whose heart the Spirit of God has been moving and working, and they just kind of walk in at that appropriate moment, and there is that person sent by God, and they have such a word for you that lifts up your heart. And I could take all the preaching time just to think about times and incidents when that has happened in my life, and I'm sure in yours too, when you look at things and circumstances and say, oh, this is bad, and this is bleak, and this is tough. Lord, this is a bitter kind of situation.

That's what Naomi was thinking, wasn't it? And yet, as you see, the chapter here begins with this man Boaz, and he's a kinsman to Naomi. Not just any person, but somebody who's related to her. He's part of the family of Elimelech, her husband.

And, you know, they had a wonderful system of families caring for families before we had the social system and structures that we have in place today. Families used to care for families. Not a bad idea, is it? I mean, it could be revolutionary and catch on, don't you think? Anyway, as you look here and you see Boaz, he is a kinsman, and he is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Ruth.

Just like Joseph is a type of the Lord in the book of Genesis and so on, so it is here with Boaz in these few chapters of the book of Ruth. And as you think about the one that God has sent for you and me, the kinsman Jesus, He's of the same tribe and tongue and nation as you and me. He is not selective.

He belongs to each one of us who have received Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord. He is the one who is our kinsman redeemer. And I love to just draw the comparison between Boaz.

Here are the ladies probably thinking, what do we do now? And the next statement is, there was a man whose name is Boaz. And when you think about, what do I do now? There is a man whose name is Jesus. Oh, isn't it marvelous just to think of him this morning in church for a moment or two, that regardless of the circumstances and the pressures and the disappointments and all those kind of things, there is a man, and his name is Jesus.

And when there has been disappointment, Naomi and Ruth must have both had grief and extreme disappointment in life. I mean, when you have a family, you have some dreams that all will be well with them. And not only has Naomi lost her husband, but she's lost her family.

So bitterly disappointing. But that's not the end of the story. There is a man, a kinsman, and it is the same for you and me in the things of life with Jesus.

He is the one who is there, the strong one. And I like this so much because when we were singing this morning about in our weaknesses, you know, I think about he is strong. And when something's not going just the way that I think it should, it's so good to have a strong one to go to.

And he's quite capable of changing my heart in it so that I can carry the burden. He's quite capable of lifting the burden off my shoulders altogether. He is the strong one.

And this morning, as you think about Jesus and you think about all the disappointments that life can hand to us, there is nothing that is beyond Him. Nothing. I remember speaking with a man one day who was being transferred to Tuktoyaktuk, and that's a little ways away from Edmonton.

You know, we get so accustomed to doing things and just doing things, but when you think about the providence of God, it's an amazing thing where He puts us and when and why. You see it in Scripture so often. Moses in Exodus chapter 2 is a little baby in a basket, and it just happened that the basket was found by who? You know the story.

Who found it? Pharaoh's daughter. It just happened. No, it's the providence of God.

Paul is going to Damascus to destroy the church, and it just happened along the way that he met the Lord. No, there is that providence of God guiding and governing all the way along. Let me read to you a quote from Florence Nightingale.

She is a lady who became a nurse in military campaigns and a great Christian lady, and here's what she said. If I could give you information about my life, it would be to show how a woman of very ordinary ability has been led by God into strange and unaccustomed paths to do in His service what He has done in her. And if I could tell you everything, you would see how God has done all and I nothing.

I have worked hard, very hard, that is all, and I've never refused God anything. What a statement. I've never refused God anything.

So we see a person in this text. We see the providence of God in this text, and how wonderful it is just to think He is here for you and I this morning. Thirdly, in verses 4 through 9, we see protection in this text.

You look here at verse 4 and following when Boaz arrives from Bethlehem, and he says to the reapers, the Lord be with you. And they respond to him, the Lord bless you. You get the idea that this was a man who was indeed walking with God and who was speaking to his workers even that the Lord would be with them, and they responding back to him.

And then he begins to create security and safety for Ruth when he asks who she is and finds out. And I love this. I'll tell you why.

Here's this foreigner who must have felt uncomfortable, probably not worth a lot, not understanding the culture, not really able to do a lot, and yet out of all the people in the field who's in the eye of the Redeemer? She is. Now the devil loves to tell us lies, and one of the biggest lies he tells us is God doesn't care about you. Look at how hurt things are for you.

God doesn't care about you. You're just a number. But listen, who is it that he singles out? This very one.

The one with the greatest need is the one that his eye falls on. And when he begins to discover who she is, don't you think it would be somewhat threatening for a young woman to be there in that harvest field and to listen to all the guys and all the talk and all the rest and not feel a sense of belonging or somebody who would be there to protect? But Boaz comes into this situation and he says, I've told the young man not to touch you. You stay here.

Stay in my fields. I don't have to run around to a bunch of other places. I can get exactly what I need from the kinsman Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is the one who protects as well.

He creates security for her. And so it is that Jesus understands your greatest need today for protection or for a safe place or a haven to go. And so often there have been times in different situations when it has felt so good just to run into the strong tower that is the Lord Jesus.

When we were in Niger at the end of February and the coup took place and missionaries are saying, what do we do now? It was so good just to run to Him. He is the one who protects us. He is the one who keeps us.

He is the one who is strong enough to do it all. He creates in essence a place of refuge for us. Now the experts when they teach you to preach tell you never to pick on somebody in the congregation, but I'm just going to mention something because it's so appropriate.

My brother, for Moyin Sharif, is a refugee from Liberia. That's not a safe place for you, is it brother? You're not anxious to go back to Liberia and it's not safe for your family either, is it? No, that's why they're in Sierra Leone and we're praying that one day they'll be here with you. So this nation that we call Canada, when he came and they begin to investigate, what does your paper say that they gave you from the government? It says refugee.

There you go. Refugee protection agreement. Brother, how did it feel when you got that piece of paper and you knew that you didn't have to go back to Liberia? Very happy.

It was one of those whoo-hoo moments. Yeah, I'm with you. I remember the day I got my little package that said this envelope contains your permanent papers for residency in Canada.

It's a refuge. It's a place where I no longer have to be under threat. It's a place where there's some safety.

It's a place where I can start to live. It's a place where I can start to experience the goodness of God and the people of God. And this is what Boaz is doing in the life of Ruth as he is ministering to her that day in the sense of protection that he alone can bring and give.

Friends, there's one last thing that I want us to look at before we go back into that lovely sunshine in this beautiful day. In verses 4 through 10, we also see there is provision. He not only protects her, but he provides everything that she needs.

Take and keep your finger there in Ruth and go back to the book of Leviticus for a moment and chapter 19. And I'm just going to read verses 9 and 10. Leviticus 19, 9 and 10.

When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You must not strip your vineyard bare or gather fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the foreign resident.

I am the Lord your God. You see, here's the heart of God to provide for those who have nothing. Greed is not in the heart of God, but greed is one of those issues that we wrestle with oftentimes, isn't it? We had this economic crash because of greed, but God is in the business of providing.

Here it is material food for those who have nothing and no one to support them. And that's why we find Ruth the Moabitess out there gleaning in the field, because it was part of the provision that God made for those who had no other way to live. And as we think about this concept of His provision, you see the grace of God here in His heart for people.

And it doesn't stop just at physical food, does it? There's grace upon grace. For the tough issues of life, there's His provision. There's His supply.

And you know there was enough provided, not only for Ruth, but she took back enough to feed Naomi as well, as we'll see as we go on into the book. Boaz is His instrument to cause it to happen, just as Jesus is His instrument for you and for me. I wonder, am I speaking to somebody today, and you need that supernatural supply, His provision.

There's a little story about a lady called Ann Elliot, and her life was just full of things like this. God's supernatural provision. When Ann was older, she had always the job of carrying two buckets of water every morning into the house where she lived.

And as you get older, you don't feel like carrying buckets of water. I can freely say that this morning. There's a dry well across the road from the house where she lived and worked, and one morning somebody saw her going across the street with the two empty buckets to the empty well, and they laughed at Ann Elliot and said, don't go there.

There hasn't been water in there in 15 or 20 years. But you see, Ann had spent the night talking to the Lord about the fact that she didn't have the strength to carry two buckets of water every morning anymore. And she said, Lord, Your Word says come and let us reason together.

And Lord, I'm just saying there's an empty well across the road. Is there any reason, Lord, why you couldn't fill it? So when she got there, there was 26 feet of cold, clear spring water. That's His provision.

And this morning, just as we wrap things up, what is it, preacher, that you're trying to tell me this morning? Just three things, and we're done. The first is that God's purposes may be fulfilled in unexpected ways. Say it again.

God's purposes may be fulfilled in unexpected ways. The second is God works in the lives of anyone who is faithful to Him. And the third is that God's love and goodness is for everyone.

The Israelite people could have said, Ruth, you're not one of us, but His love and His grace are for all. Now, I wonder this morning as we just come to wrap things up, what are some of the problems and some of the issues that you are facing? What are some of the blessings that you need to seek the Lord for? What are some of the issues? Last night as I talked to my youngest son, he was telling me how much it would cost for education for him. It's an issue, but there's a supernatural supply.

In the deep needs of our hearts, there's a supernatural supply. As you've often heard me say, I say it again, the only thing an evangelist can do is to say, look, here is Jesus. You go to Him, and He will meet your every need.

Let's pray together. And just in the beautiful quietness that the Spirit of God gives us, go to Jesus this morning. He's your kinsman and Redeemer.

He has more love for you than you and I could ever think or imagine or dream of, and His source and supply is endless. Father, this morning as we come to you, we just acknowledge our great need of Jesus day by day and moment by moment. We thank you as the people of God.

We can come to you, and there are gleanings in the corners of your fields, and there are things that you have left on purpose for us along the way. And it is not an accident that we are here this morning, but as you speak to our hearts, you have something more for us. You will give us the grace that we need to go through the days of this week, and you'll give us the strength that we need to face the issues in it, and you'll give us the love to know the tenderness of God in it all.

Father, in the quietness of our hearts as we reach out to you, I pray that in your love and mercy you would reach in to us in Jesus' strong name. In God's people's sin, amen. Let's change position and stand together as we come to our benediction, and thank you for being here today.

I need any elders who are here. Brenda here is facing difficult surgery in a short time, and she's asked if we would pray for her, and so elders, if you could just join me for that, that would be good. Next week you'll have Brad and Judy back, but not Melissa, so we'll be three quarters.

You're down to one quarter this week. That's pretty poor attendance from the staff. I think you should write them a note and just let them know about it.

Father, your Word says that you're able to keep us from falling, and you're able to present us before your throne faultless. Lord, this morning we pray the blessing of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit upon each one who is here. We ask, Lord, that you would go before us into this week and that we might walk by your grace.

Lord, may it just happen that we will also be in the right place at the right time through the days of this week to point someone to you, and may it just happen that you would send across our path those who can encourage us and build us up in the faith. So, Lord, dismiss us with your blessing and send us forth from this place, but not from your presence. In Jesus' strong name we ask, amen and amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you and give you a great week.

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