

# Silver Threads of Providence

by Keith Malcomson

---

## Transcript

I want to go straight here. I want you to turn in your Bible again to the Book of Ruth and the Old Testament. This is part four of our series in this beautiful little Book of Ruth that we're opening up and we're studying very, very carefully in this series, Providence and the Book of Ruth.

I believe the Book of Ruth is specifically given over to the truth of Providence. This is an essential truth, not the only truth, and we'll look at some of those maybe next week, but it is an essential truth that God is conveying or teaching or instructing through this book. But we're coming to part four here tonight, and what I call this, I'm very glad to have a happier title tonight because now we begin to move into this and we're going somewhere.

The other was important, and you can never separate it, but I'm glad it's a bit happier, the ground that we're going on to. And so part four, I've called this Silver Threads of Providence. Why would I call it silver threads, not golden threads? Because silver in the Bible always represents redemption.

And so we're looking at the silver threads. We already looked at the dark threads that make up this full picture and all of our lives, but now we're going to add some silver threads that represent the redemption or the redemptive work of Christ in the midst of this. Aren't you glad that in the midst of your darkness and your confusion and your disaster and your sin, that Christ stepped in and redeemed you and began to make something beautiful out of your life? Otherwise it would be a mess.

And so we're going to read from Ruth chapter one, verse one to 17 very quickly. Verse one to 17, and Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a mighty man of wealth, the family of Elimelech and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him and whose side I shall find grace.

And she said unto her, go my daughter. And she went and came and gleaned in the field after the and her hop was to light on a part of the field belonging on to Boaz who was of the kindred of Elimelech and behold Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, the Lord be with you. And they answered him, the Lord bless thee.

Then said Boaz unto his servants that were his servant that was set over the reapers, whose damsel is this? And the servant that was over the reapers answered and said, it is the Moabitess damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the came and have continued even from the morning until now that she tarried a little in

the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, here is thou not my daughter, go not to glean in another field, neither go from fence, but abide here fast by my maidens.

Let thine own eyes be on the field that they do reap and go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? And when thou art a thirst, go unto the vessels and drink of which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said unto him, why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, it has fully been shewed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thy husband, and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art come unto a people which thou knewest not there for.

And the Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, let me find favor in thy sight, my Lord, for thou has comforted me and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaiden, though I be not like one of thine handmaids. And Boaz said unto her, at meal time come thou thither and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.

And she sat beside the reapers and he reached her parched corn and she did eat and was sufficed and left. And when she was risen up to Galene, Boaz commanded his young men saying, let her Galene even among the sheaths and reproach her not. And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her and leave them that she may Galene them and rebuke her not.

So she Galene in the field until even and beat out that she had Galene and it was about an ephith of barley. Let's pray and we're going to expound this and open it up and apply it here tonight. Father, we thank you for your grace and your mercy upon us.

Father, for opening up this truth of providence for giving us such a beautiful book with a beautiful story and these beautiful lives that you redeemed by your grace, Lord God in your mercy. And father, we pray will you impact each one of our lives as we look at the importance of this secret work of the Lord going ahead of us and preparing our way. Lord God direct in our steps when we least expect it.

Oh God or even conscious of it and even our friend who's joined us in the meeting tonight. Lord God even bless this direction of our faith that she should find herself in this meeting on this night in this message. Oh God I do pray that you speak by your grace and mercy make all things work together for good and we give you all the praise and all the glory and the honor as you begin to weave in these silver threads of redemption to the story of Ruth.

Thank you God you didn't leave her where she was but oh God you stretched out your hand to begin revealing an extraordinary plan and purpose in Jesus mighty name. Amen. My message silver threads of providence.

Ruth and Naomi have gone through 10 long years without there being any visible sign of providence or sign that God's hand are in things in a good way. No visible sign to their eyes. We think providence is all good.

We don't look at bad things and say this is God and get excited to say God's hand has to be in this. No we don't do that. We actually look for the good things and say surely God is in this.

Praise God and you begin to rejoice. Do you realize these two ladies have gone through 10 years without any real sign of the visible hand in the normal events of life. God had already used the famine in their lives especially Ruth's life and then he used Ruth's first marriage to bring her into salvation into the covenant of Abraham.

God used an actual marriage in her life. Then a journey to draw her and establish her in genuine faith. On that journey she had to make a decision.

She reached a crisis. She was being turned back. What a crisis.

God's hand was in that to bring her to a strong place of revealing her faith. But they had no idea that both Naomi and Ruth were part of an eternal plan and purpose that God himself had made in eternity past. They couldn't have imagined as they walked towards Bethlehem and the ordinary journey ordinary people just trying to survive in life just making their journey back to Bethlehem.

Little could they have realized that God's amazing plan and purpose is being outworked. They didn't know that. They couldn't see it.

They didn't understand that. God hadn't shared it with them. In fact their eyes are utterly blind.

Do you know tonight that your eyes naturally, unless God shows you, you don't even see what God is doing at the minute. Oh yes if he does a miracle you go here's a miracle or here's answered prayer. But there are things happening right now.

The God's hand is upon in your life and you're not even aware. You cannot see it. You don't even know it in your mind.

You don't even believe it in your heart. You're actually ignorant of it and yet in the days ahead you could be in awe as you look back right to this very time that God's hand was upon it. You are actually caught up in God's plan.

I've got four points for you here tonight. I had five. I'll leave the fifth one off and make an entire new message out of it.

But I've got four points. But I'm going to say something so important here on providence before I go to the first point and I want you to listen. Will you do me a favor? Those online here who have listened to these messages on providence.

Will you do me a favor? Please don't try to see providence ahead of time. Don't try to work it out. Do not try to predict providence and events in your life yet to come.

Don't try to do that. Don't try to guess. Don't try to see it.

Don't try to work it out. Don't try to think that you know and you know what God is going to do providentially. Do not do that.

That isn't why providence is there. And so I'm asking you please do not use what I'm teaching you as a means of guesswork to start looking ahead and trying to plan things and organize things. Providence is not for that.

It's very dangerous. What are the dangers of doing that? The danger of reading into situations. Oh I think he is for me or she is for me or I think that house is for me.

Your mind could go crazy as you look forward and now it's not God revealing his providence in an amazing way to encourage you. Now you're trying to work it out. Now you're trying to create that from the circumstance of life and God's hand may not be in that.

The danger of creating things where you deliberately say, you begin to say, I know where this is going. So you then begin to steer things in a direction. Please don't do that.

And then there's the danger of being wrong and being disappointed or what's worse still of being deceived. You actually believe God's hand's in this and you close your eyes to the danger or close your ears to warnings from other believers. And you say, no, I know this is providentially God's will.

And you go straight into deception because you don't follow scripture anymore. You're just following signposts and I know God's in this. Surely he must be in this.

And you've got some older believers saying, don't do it. Be careful. The Bible says, but you're caught up in a realm of providence.

Do you know what you're doing? You're looking forward and trying to create providence. Please do not do that. Be surprised with providence when you walk straight into it or you look back on life and you've got all the facts, all the evidence, it's all happened.

And you look back and say, surely the Lord's hand was on all of these things. That's what I'm asking you to do. And so here's my four points.

Number one, and it's all here in verse one to verse 17 that we've read. And this is my first point. Providence and divine appointments.

What do I mean by divine appointments? I could mean like a lady who's meant to be in another building happening just by chance to walk into our building when I know I'm preaching a message from God. That could be a divine appointment. I don't know.

Only God knows. But do you know what a divine appointment is? In hindsight, you look back and say, surely that was God's hand. It was utterly unusual to meet him.

It shouldn't have happened. It was very unlikely. And yet you have a divine appointment.

Two people meet in the will of God for a divine purpose. And yet neither person knew. But in that situation, you suddenly go, this is a divine appointment.

In other words, you didn't arrange it. They didn't arrange it. Nobody arranged it.

But you realize someone did arrange that divine meeting. It was a divine person. It was God.

You didn't organize it. But yet two people meet. And it was God's invisible secret hand.

He didn't tell you about it. But after you meet, you go, this is surely God. And I believe we've got it in Ruth 2. I believe we've got providence and divine appointments.

Look at verse 1. And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech. And his name was Boaz. Now the whole chapter, you're going to have these lives meeting.

But the first verse here, the author of this letter at chapter 2 states something about Boaz. He introduces a new person into the story. We haven't seen him before.

We haven't heard from him. God brings him right in. He's going to play a major part in this.

And you know what, Ruth and Boaz have to meet. They have to meet. It's a divine appointment.

This isn't man. This isn't Boaz organizing it. This isn't Ruth organizing it.

They don't even know each other. They've never seen each other. They haven't even heard about each other.

And yet you've got God working to bring these two people together. And so Ruth is going to meet this man. And Ruth is going to be impacted by his life.

In fact, it's so important in God's will for Ruth's life. She has to meet this man. This man actually is going to be used by God in her life.

And so God is working in these two lives to bring them together, not for their sake, not for Ruth's sake, not for Boaz's sake, but for the sake of God's will. God has a plan. And in order to bring providence about, there has to be a divine appointment.

Who is this man Boaz? It says here in verse 1 explaining about him that Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's. In other words, a relative, someone she actually knows. But do you know what all through chapter 1 she forgot about? Do you know Naomi forgot a lot in chapter 1? You see, she is under the dark hand of providence, dark threads, crisis, trouble, sadness, grief of heart.

And so there's a lot of scripture she forgets. And there's a lot of people she forgets. And she doesn't remember about Boaz, but she's going to next week.

She's going to suddenly remember about Boaz. But God has to bring that back in. It's another blank.

But the verse 1, it is stating that this man Boaz is a relative. He is a family member, and he's going to play a very important part. If Naomi had remembered that and been on top of her Bible reading, and stayed on top of the truth of God's word, she would have went back to Bethlehem expecting going, there's a Boaz there.

But you know what? She didn't do that. She's going and saying, how am I going to make ends meet? You know, a lot of Christians, they forget the word of God. They forget the family connections, and here they are struggling.

And you know what? God's going to have to remind you about some things. It also says that he was a mighty man of wealth. When it says that Boaz was a mighty man, it means a warrior.

It can mean warrior, or a man, a strong leader. He was a man who took initiative. He took the lead.

He knew how to make decisions. He was a man, a soldier, if not an actual soldier, he was a man in spirit who could fight. He knew what to fight for.

And he's a man of great wealth. He's got money. Ruth has nothing.

She's bankrupt. She's poverty stricken. She is the poorest in Bethlehem.

Here's Boaz is the richest in Bethlehem. And you both have to meet. Believe me, in God's plan, wealth doesn't mean anything, nothing at all.

Neither does poverty. God has a plan to weave our lives together. Whether you have, whether you don't, whether you own your house, or whether you struggle to pay your rent, it doesn't matter.

God has a plan in bringing your lives together. And so here is God's hand on Boaz, and yet he doesn't know it. He doesn't realize Ruth has been prepared for him.

Ruth is coming in his direction. He doesn't have a clue. He didn't have a dream.

He didn't have a word of knowledge. He didn't have a prophecy. He didn't have some great insight.

He doesn't have a clue about her. And yet on this particular day, he is going to have a divine appointment. Neither of them know it's going to happen.

Neither of them are aware when it's happening. But in hindsight, they're going to look back and say, that was an absolute divine appointment. God's hand was in this.

And it goes on to say that he was of the family of a limeleek, and his name was Boaz. So you see this man said before us very clearly, look at verse three, and she went, she went, that is Ruth, and she gleaned in the field after the reapers, and her hap was to lie down a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of a limeleek. Now I want you to see this right from the beginning.

There is a divine appointment in this chapter. Do you know, in verse three, remember we dealt with it the first week. She just happened to go to that field.

Here she came out on that very day, and she, of all of the fields in around Bethlehem, all the places she could glean, she just happens to go into the field of Boaz. God has prepared both people. They have to meet.

He has got an eternal plan. He's got something he's going to do. Neither of them know about it.

They couldn't dream it up. They couldn't imagine. Why don't you let God write your life story? Why don't you let God be in control of your life? You could go through 10 years of hell.

You could go through heartbreaking situations. You may not understand what God's doing. Why not give God control of your life? Why not let him be in charge of your decisions? And that's what Ruth done.

She just happened to go out to work. She's just doing what she knows to do, and somehow her feet get led to the right field at the right time in the right way in order to meet the right person. This is what I mean by a divine appointment.

Providence is working secretly, invisibly to lead two people together. Neither of them are conscious of it, not even a little bit. And so she just happened to go to the field by chance.

If you believe that, you'll believe anything. What she thought was by chance actually had the hand of God in it. What is there in your life that you think is just by chance, incidental, of no importance, and yet it's very important if you had not done that one thing, gone that one direction, been in that one place, your entire life would be different.

Isn't that true? We're talking about a real God that doesn't stop and ask your opinion. He's very gracious when he's working in your life to steer you and direct you. Then look what happens.

So here she is. She comes down to the field and just happens to be in that field. Read the next verse, verse four.

You know what the word behold means? Stop and take a breath. Stop and look. Stop and stare at what you're reading here.

So you've got her working in Boaz's field. Then it says in verse four, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem at that moment, right at that time. Not earlier and having gone back home, not later in the day, not yesterday, not tomorrow, right at that time when Ruth has gone there to glean.

What happens? Here comes Boaz from Bethlehem. He's utterly unconscious. God is guiding him.

He doesn't know God is in his steps or in the timing. He doesn't have a clue. And yet God is literally guiding him.

It's the same old journey he always makes every day in and out. He's got his appointments. He's the boss.

He's looking after the workers. He's made this 10,000 times, but it's different this time. It's absolutely different.

Don't think every journey is providence. Don't read providence into everything. There's some walks that are just natural.

Nothing ever happens. Don't begin to say God's all over this. No, you don't know that.

But here God is directing two people together. Then it says in verse five, then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, whose damsel is this? It's the first time he has seen her and he's going, who is she? He has never before seen her. And yet this entire book is all about the two of them having a divine appointment.

God was working on Booth their life. How does a Moabitess get all the way to here on this day? And she is utterly strong in God. I mean, she is concrete in God.

And here comes Boaz. Booth are prepared. Let me give you a bit of insight.

Boaz is an older man. He's an older man in Israel and he's never married. He's single.

And here's the two of them have been brought together at the exact same time. Not everyone is led of God or every meeting. Everyone you meet is not of God.

The devil could send someone. It's not providence. No, it's the devil.

The devil is in an appointment. The devil is in you meeting someone because of what they're going to say to you. You need to be so, so very careful concerning that.

You've got to obey God's word in order to have providence working. But there's divine appointments. That's my first point.

The second point, providence and daily work is good. We're getting into real practical stuff here. You see, you may think providence has nothing to do with the workplace.

Some of you right now want me to stop, I'm sure. Because when you think of your workplace, you do not see the hand of God in it. Steering, guiding, directing, doing extraordinary things.

You actually find it hard to believe that God is interested in your workplace, the people there, the routine of it, the ritual of it. You just care about your money. You go, I just want to pay packet.

I want to know what I've got. Or I want skills. If you're really blessed, you enjoy your work.

That's extraordinary. Not everyone gets that. Some people are just trying to make ends meet.

But here in chapter two, you see providence and daily work. You cannot get away from it. That in Ruth's life, providence was at work in the workplace.

As she worked in the workplace, God was working in her life. In the most mundane of situations, it was essential what was happening in that workplace, on that day, at that time. She had to be in the workplace.

She had to be in that workplace. She had to be in that field working at that time to meet a certain person. And it was essential for her entire life.

If she missed that one day at work, if she had decided to be lazy that morning or stay in bed or I don't need to go out, she would have missed one of the most providential days of her entire life, all because she wasn't where she ought to be. Look at verse two. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, let me now go to the field.

This was the whole beginning of this. And glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I have found grace. And she said unto her, go my daughter.

Notice that young Ruth in the house of Naomi, now in Bethlehem, gets up in the morning and she says, you know what? I need to go earn some food. I need to go glean. I need to do something here.

You know what it shows by now? She's only into Bethlehem. This was the beginning of her time. She doesn't know the culture.

These things did not operate in Moab. She didn't have to operate on this before. But now there's different laws, different teachings about how you provide for yourself.

And so as she gets into Bethlehem, the house of bread, the house of God, in amongst God's people, she begins to think biblically. You know what the Bible says? Go glean. If you have no food, if you have no money, don't get down and fast all day.

Well, I'm locking myself in the house, Naomi, and I won't come out. I'm going to fast all day. She didn't do that.

And I believe in fasting and praying and believe in God and trust in God and asking God in prayer. But she didn't do that. You know what she done? She says to Naomi, and look at the manners.

Let me now go to the field. You know who Ruth was? She is a worker. She wants to be in the field.

She doesn't mind getting her hands dirty or rough. She doesn't mind working long hours or working hard. You know what? That's the mark of a Christian.

Laziness ought not to be the part of a Christian. It doesn't matter what area of life. And here's Ruth taking the initiative.

She didn't let Naomi take the lead. She's telling Naomi very mannerly, very respectful. You know, Naomi is older.

And you know what she says? Let me go work in the field. Will you allow me to do that? I can go out. I've got my strength, my youth, my energy.

Let me go do it. And I'm going to begin to provide for us. Look at her.

She is planning ahead. She is providing for her mother-in-law. She is carrying the responsibility for her mother-in-law.

What a great task she has. She's living with her mother-in-law. She's carrying this responsibility.

You know what? This is the woman that brought me God. This is the woman who I so seen God and I said, your God is my God. I'm not letting go of you.

I'm laying a hold of you. You're a woman who knows this God. And if you go to Bethlehem, I'm going to Bethlehem.

It's an extraordinary thing how God brought them together. She's very mannerly and she's a hard worker. Now look at the timing of this in verse 22.

They came, sorry, at the end of chapter one that we dealt with last week, verse 22. And it says, and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. The harvest is being brought in.

That was the timing of it. Look at her. She's going out and Naomi says, yes, go my daughter.

So she goes out to work. She is very mannerly and it's right at the right time. You see when God brought her back at a time when the harvest is coming in and she's going to be able to glean and feed herself and work in the fields.

In the old Testament, and she would have heard this. It says in Leviticus 19, verse nine, talking to the landowners and the reapers and the workers, men like Boaz. When you reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of the field.

In other words, leave the corners alone in the field. When you bring in the harvest, do not bring in the harvest in the corner of the fields. Just leave it there.

Neither gather the gleanings of the harvest. So notice the corners and the gleanings that are scattered everywhere. The Bible commands when you own land, when you bring in the harvest, leave those things.

Why? God cares about the poor. God cares about those who do not have. And do you know who Naomi and Ruth were? They were on the lowest rung of the economic ladder in Bethlehem.

They were the poorest. Then look at Naomi. She's also a stranger.

She's a convert from Moab. She is a stranger. She is a visitor.

She is someone being brought in on this. No, it gets worse. She is a widow.

She's a widow. She's lost her husband. So is Naomi.

So look at the pair of them. They are deserted. They have no man.

And here's Ruth. She is mostly ignorant of the local culture. She has got no experience of the culture of Israel and Bethlehem.

What a stranger to be in the land. But she is learning the word of God. And you know what God's word says.

See the fields out there in Bethlehem. The corners should be left for the poor and for the widows and widowers and for the orphans. That ought to be left.

So she goes looking for it. Again, you find this in Leviticus 23, 22. Thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners.

Why? And leave the gleanings. Why? For the poor and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God.

Again, it says in Deuteronomy 10, 18. He does execute judgment or righteousness for the fatherless and widow and loveth. Listen to this.

He loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment. So an immigrant coming in. God loves the immigrant, the stranger, the sojourner.

God loves them. And how is this love expressed? He actually says it here very clearly with food and with raiment. So that's the heart of God for Ruth.

She has come in from Moab. She's a foreigner here in this little Bethlehem. And God says, I've made provision in my word amongst my people to care for such people.

If someone is poor, we ought to have a heart for them. Or if someone's a stranger, we ought to care about them in a very, very real way. So God's heart is towards the poor and the stranger.

I am the Lord your God. It says again in Deuteronomy 24, that when you bring the harvest in, forget the sheaf in the field. You drop a sheaf, leave it there.

Don't pick it up. You know, all these good workers, I'll clear the whole thing. I won't leave a sheaf.

I won't leave any gleanings. No, no, no, no, no, no. You don't understand.

This is God's provision. And it says, when you see a sheaf fallen and you look around and say, I'm going to go pick it up. You've got to remember God's word.

Leave it there because that could be there for someone who God wants to meet their needs. This is not being silly. This is God's provision in our world.

He cares about people in our world. Look at verse two. And it says concerning her that she's going to go out and do this.

She's going to glean in the fields. She knows the word of God. You know a good way to find providence or to be led into providence where God's hand is hidden in the events of your life.

Do you know how to find that? Obey God's word. She is going out to obey God's word to say, I've got an inheritance. I can glean those fields.

You know what? It's hard work, cleaning. She's going to do it from the morning to late at night and bring the food home. And then when she gets home, she's going to have to start working on it to make it edible.

That's an awful lot of work. That is backbreaking work. And yet she is a worker.

She's not saying, oh God, care for me. She's not there praying and saying, do a miracle for me in Bethlehem. You brought us here.

You've got to do a miracle. Oh no, she done what she knew to do. Do you know if you don't work, if you don't do what you know to do, if you don't do the ABCs and obey God's word, if a man doesn't work, he shouldn't eat.

And I know there's circumstance and the government covers certain things. And I'm so glad for that. I really am glad for the benefits and the provisions and the care.

It's terrible when it gets abused and it's abused all over the city. People are feeding drug habits by taking money from the government. You know, some of these young guys that passed here, they would buy shoes and jackets and trousers.

I couldn't afford any of that. And some of the immigrants have mobile phones like which I'd never seen in my entire life. But here they are on government state benefits.

And the first thing they have is a mobile phone that you can't even imagine. You know what? That's when the system really goes wrong. But here Ruth says, she says, when I go out, she says, I'm praying, I'm believing, I'm looking for to find grace.

Whoever's field I go to, she doesn't know there's a Boas. She doesn't know what's going to happen. But she says, wherever I end up working in whichever field, and you ought to be praying into your job for this.

Oh, make sure I'm in the right field and make sure I have favor with my boss. You see Providence works in the workplace. If you don't believe that, your job could be a very sorry place.

You'll get in a lot of trouble. If you're not there praying and believing and trusting and doing what you know to do and saying, Lord, may I find favor? It can be an extraordinary place. She's going out to work and she's looking for the divine favor of God.

Do you know she found favor? So here she is, she's going to work. She found a place to work. She's doing what the Bible says.

It's hard work. And right in the midst of that, here comes Providence. She's not aware of that.

She goes, you know what? I'm going to have to work long, hard hours. My back could be very sore tonight. My arms could be very sore tonight.

I could be very tired tonight. I may have some sunburn by tonight. I am going to be sweating throughout this day.

But do you know what? She kept herself there working throughout that day. But here comes Providence, the secret hidden hand of God. Who would have thought in the workplace, God's going to reveal his eternal divine plan and purpose that's going to affect all nations of the world.

Could you ever have imagined? When you come to the New Testament, you get clear teaching about your work in the workplace, your attitude towards your boss. If you're a boss, what your attitude towards your people should be. It's found in Ephesians chapter six, verse five to nine.

Also in Colossians chapter three, verse 22 to 25. So in the New Testament, you've got an entire teaching of how you're to operate in the workplace. You're not to pretend.

You're not to start late. You're not to knock off early. You're not to cut corners.

You don't sit down and say, and then jump up when the boss comes. Do you know what? That isn't very Christian-like. It's not very Christ-like.

Do you know what? God is watching you. You're not in trouble with your boss who didn't see you. You're not in trouble with God who did see you.

You think you're smart because you stood up and looked busy and rubbed something before your boss comes in the door. Oh no, what you don't realize is God was watching you all through that. And he went, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Okay, I'm noting that. I'm noting that. Remember, there's the God who can work in your life.

Why would you grieve the Holy Spirit of God? Verse four, and behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And said unto the reapers, look at this for a boss. I'm talking about the workplace here.

Providence in the workplace. You've just found yourself in a place where God is at work. Wouldn't you love that? Where God is at work in your boss.

God is at work in the workers. God is at work in you. And you suddenly to realize, I'm here in the will of God.

Imagine not praying into that when God can work in the normal affairs of your life. Look at Boaz as a boss. He comes and speaks to the reapers.

They're going to be working all day. They work for him every day. At least six days a week.

The Lord be with you. Any of you have bosses like that who walk in? And the very first thing they say, the Lord be with you. You're going to be working hard all day.

I pay you good wages. I look after you. And what he blessed you with in the middle of the heat of the day, the Lord be with you.

You know what he's saying? In the mundaneness of all this natural work, the heat, the tiredness, the graft, obeying commands, doing what I've told you. May the Lord be with you in your work. Day in, day out, in the workplace, in the field.

I want God to be with you. What a boss. Oh, that we had bosses like that who would come in and the first thing they'd say is, the Lord be with you, the workforce.

How did they respond? A lot of work forces curse their boss. They hate their boss. They speak against their boss when he can't hear.

Not when he hears they smile at him because he gives the pay packet. Listen to how they respond. The Lord bless thee.

Imagine having workers bless their boss. The Lord bless you. I want God to bless you.

I bless you in the name of Jesus. That's my heart's desire. Do you know what sort of atmosphere that you would create? Can I ask you sincerely, do you pray for your boss every day? Do you pray for him? On your way into the workplace, are you there praying for the people who work around you? Are you there praying for your boss? Are you saying bless this workplace? Maybe that's why you have trouble at times.

And then it goes on in verse 7. And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaths. So she came and continued even from the morn until now. This was a worker.

Boaz comes and says, who is this girl? What's she been doing? Oh, he watched her. The foreman has been watching her. What sort of girl is she? This could be very important in her life.

How's she been functioning in the workplace? You see, you don't think that's a spiritual thing. You don't think it's of importance. It was to Boaz.

And the foreman overseer on the ground, do you know what he says? She's been working from morning to night. She's only taken one break. The entire day she took one break, not like the Irish.

Eastern Europeans, they work, they don't even eat or drink during the day. I tell you, in our house, I'll get an Eastern European in to do the work. Why? Because of how they work.

Will I get an Irish person nine times out of 10? No, because their whole thinking is differently. Oh, I need an hour here. I need an hour there.

I'm not going to do that. I can't, you can't expect me. There's a certain attitude that's crept into society that's actually very destructive.

You get someone, I won't mention any particular country, but you get them from another country. You go, you're actually trying to beg them. Do you not want a glass of water? Do you not want to stop for something? No, no, no, I'll keep working the job.

I've seen too many like that to know what I'm talking about. You know what Boaz is noting this? What a girl. Verse 14, Come now Heather and eat the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.

And she sat beside the reapers and he reached her parts corn and she did eat and was sufficed. And then she left. She had a quick meal.

Then she's gone. Where's she gone? Back to the field. There's a worker.

I'm talking about God's providence. Do you realize how strong God's providence is working in this life? And yet she's just going, I need to get back to the field. I need to have food for an hour.

I need to provide for myself. She's not even thinking about spiritual things. She's not praying.

She's not dreaming of revival. She's just going, I need to meet my needs. I need to have food on the table.

I need to have food in my belly. And here is providence at work. Do you know the qualities of her work life actually allowed the providence of God to move in her life? Do you realize no wonder God is separating her out.

He knew what sort of girl he's dealing with. Point three, providence and romance. Some years ago, praise God, we're getting to this now.

Providence and romance. Remember back in Genesis chapter 24, Abraham sends Eleazar, his servant, to get a bride for his son, Isaac. And he says, don't get a bride from this country, from someone local, from one of these pagans.

Go right back to our family where we came from and make sure you get someone who's like us, thinks like us, speaks like us, who has the same culture as us. In other words, they're a believer in this God. They know the God of Abraham.

Don't take someone from this world. You do not want to get married to someone in this world. You need to go right back to the land and find the right person, a bride for Isaac.

And so he goes off on his 10 camels and he's going to look for this little lady, the right person. You know, he reaches a well down there in that land and by the well, he begins to pray. Lord, would you do this for me? Would you make this remarkable girl just walk out of the desert and just happen to come here when I just happened to be here looking for a bride for Isaac to answer Abraham's prayers.

And this is what I want, Lord. When she turns up and I ask her, I'm going to be asking the girls out here, would you give me some water? He's going to be there a long time drinking water. Will you give me some water? And then she's going to volunteer to provide water for all my camels.

And he says, that'll really help me to know this is the right one because no girl's going to naturally do that. And if you find a girl to do that, she's very unusual. So he's sort of stacked the stakes high.

Many years ago, I told you when I was living in Scotland on a Wednesday night, I didn't know about this until later. I'm walking into a Wednesday night meeting oblivious, but there's a girl in that meeting who's prayed and said, Lord, if Keith is meant for me, let him wear blue tonight. Guess what color I wore every single week to Bible study? I wore blue.

So she wasn't really stacking the odds against her. Everything was leaning towards her getting her way. So she's sitting there on that Wednesday.

It's unbelievable. She's waiting there. She's praying.

Okay, I'm waiting for the sign. God's going to send Keith in here with something blue on. Guess what? That night I had nothing blue on.

Thank God when her friend told me, I said, praise the Lord. God providentially protected me. Of all nights, I choose not to wear blue.

I'm telling you, God is in that. He protected me. Well, Eliezer done it the opposite way.

He said, a girl's got to come out here. And as he sat there, here comes this little girl. And he says, would you give me some water, please? And as she's given him the water, says, why don't I draw some water for your 10 camels as well? Hmm.

Wow. Imagine finding this. Do you know what he had prayed? Lord, just before this.

Lord, let the same be she that thou has appointed for thy servant Isaac. Appointed. I'm trying to find by your hand of providence.

And thereby I shall know that thou has shown kindness unto my master. So here comes Rebecca and she does this. And as he's watching her water his 10 camels, listen to what it says in verse 21.

And the man wondering at her, he held his peace. He's just watching her. Wouldn't you? You're looking going, I'm very impressed.

I didn't expect this. And he just kept quiet. Keep that mouth shut.

I tell you guys, don't open your mouth. To wit, whether the Lord had made his journey prosperous or not. So this is a remarkable sign, but he doesn't know yet.

He's just saying, keep quiet. Don't get excited. Just keep walking through this because I don't know yet.

It seems to be showing, but I've got to be, I need more confirmation. I want to know her family. I want to know how she's been born.

Hear what I'm saying? It's got to be born right in order to be apart. So I'm still trying to put this together. She's remarkable.

She's unusual. God's got my attention, but there's some other things have to be in place. And so in the old Testament, it's remarkable.

After it happens, this is what Eliezer says. I being in the way, the Lord led me. I'm just looking.

I don't know what I'm doing really. I'm just saying, Lord, I need you to guide me because I don't know who it is. I don't know what I'm looking for.

And this is what we see in the book of Ruth. Look at verse five. It says, Notice he doesn't say, who is she? He doesn't say that.

He's not asking, who is this girl? He's actually asking, whose damsel is she? Is she connected to anyone? Is she married? Who is she? Who is she associated with? He wanted to know something more than just

her marital state. He wanted to know her condition. I'm talking about providence and romance.

Do you know God is involved in romance? I'm not talking about immorality. I'm not talking about impurity. I'm not talking about carnal desire.

I'm not talking about that. I am talking about real romance is where God is involved in matching a man and woman together in our day and generation. The name Ruth means to be a friend or it can mean to be an associate or I like this from Strong's Concordance.

It means an additional one. Ruth means someone who is an addition to someone else. You know what? She is going to be an addition to someone else but she isn't even thinking about that person.

Here at this time, she's caring about food and work and Naomi and the cares of life. She's not even thinking of a guy and yet God is thinking of this and God is working and God is beginning to prepare a guy. Girls, you don't want to go get a guy.

You want God to bring a guy and prepare a guy. If you get a guy who God has not sent, even if they are spiritual and saved, you don't want them. It has to be God in this and the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, this girl, she's the Moabitess Tamsul that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.

Do you see? Boaz has taken the initiative. His eye falls on her. He likes what he sees and you know what? That's okay.

One of the first things we ask a couple coming together, do you love him? I'd want to know, are you attracted to him? Are you attracted to her? Oh no, I'm too spiritual for that. Really? Oh, so you're spiritual. Do you know these are God-given things? Do you know what I'd advise you? If you don't love them, you're not attracted to them, don't marry them.

That's very strong to say, but I believe God has weaved it in. You may think nothing of yourself and someone may fall deeply in love with you and surprise you one of these days because that's how this operates. And she said in verse seven, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaths.

So she came and she's continued all day. I'm impressed with this girl. Then Boaz said unto Ruth, this is their first ever conversation.

We're not going to get into their relationship here or their marriage. That's for the weeks ahead. All I'm doing is showing you how God brings two people together.

Remember in the first one, divine appointments. The second one, providence in the workplace. Here you have no providence at work and romance.

So God put her in the right place at the right time for him to start noticing her. And so God is working on this. He's not aware that here's the influence of God coming on.

He's not aware. He's just gone. She's a nice girl.

I like how hard she works. I mean, there's my field, my workers. I'm very impressed with how she works in this field.

I'm really beginning to get my attention stirred here. Don't you realize that was God in that? That wasn't just feelings or human desires or human thoughts. Now God is working in that to take Boaz in a certain direction.

You know why? God has a plan for Ruth. She's been destitute. She's been left a widow.

She's gone a hard journey. Here she is looking after her mother-in-law. Here she is only concerned about her mother-in-law.

That's her focus. And yet God is preparing a man, the right man to come into her life. And he is noticing her when she doesn't notice him.

Her eyes are on the task. Her eyes are in this crisis. She is still in crisis mode.

Whereas Boaz is being prepared by the hand of God. Many years ago, sorry, I can't help but talk about Candace. Many years ago, and this followed a whole cycle of events.

I'm in search. She's in search. People started to try and matchmake us.

First time I ever heard about Candace was on spiritual people saying, we've got a girl we'd like you to meet. Her pastor, he actually said, do you know what? I wouldn't think of releasing her to anyone else. She plays the piano in our church.

She's a hardworking guy. So immediately I have doubts because of him. And he says, you know what? We wouldn't release her or let her go from our church for anyone else apart from you.

You're the only man in Ireland we'd consider for Candace. I'd never met her. I'd never seen her.

I knew nothing about her. I'm just hearing. And the more people start to matchmake, the more it drove us apart.

I mean, it really did. As I went, I don't want this influence around me. And then I was to go to preach in their church on a Sunday morning.

And after the service, they had arranged that we all go out for a meal. And Candace was invited. And we had two seats.

We're going to be sitting side by side there. And so I turned up for the meal. And believe me, the pastor's brother sat beside me.

And I still have not forgiven Candace for leaving me with that brother to talk to all dinnertime. You know what she said when she knew they were trying to do that? You know what she'd done? She left church and went swimming on a Sunday afternoon, which says, I'm not going to that meal. And I'm not going to be placed with Keith Malcolmson at a dinner table.

So she went off gladly swimming, praising the Lord and leaves me there. It wasn't a good meal, I want to assure you. Do you see how God is working on these two lives to bring them together? You know, it's remarkable how Candace brought us together.

And it went through various events. One thing was not enough. It wasn't enough.

I needed to be sure that this was God. I needed to know God's hand was upon it. And so I'd look and go, hmm, as the time passed, I went, she loves the word of God.

And she wants to be in the house of God. And she's very... I was fascinated. I started to watch her.

I became fascinated with certain things. She always done the opposite of what you'd think she ought to do or someone does do. She wasn't going this direction.

She was going that direction. We'd be in School of Christ and I'd meet her in the corridor and say, hello, a simple hello to the director of the Bible school. You know what she done? She was looking at the wall, walking down the corridor, looking.

She totally ignores me, doesn't even answer me. I go, she's a strange girl. That just drew my fascination all the more.

Who is this girl? You know, one of the last things I'd done was, I believe it was May time. I drove over to Scotland to a place I always prayed. And on a Monday, I'd go up Ruber's Lough in the borders of Scotland, beautiful high mountain.

And you could see over the whole region and area. And as I'd be up there, I'd pray there on a Monday when I was in ministry in Scotland. And I thought, I want to go back to Ruber's Lough.

Hadn't been there. I'd only been there once to pray since all those years in Scotland. And so I drove back there, parked my car, walked up Ruber's Lough.

It's a beautiful blue sky and day. And as I'm talking, you can see anyone coming from 30 minutes in any direction. No one can approach you undiscovered.

So I was up there praying, seeking God's hand. I'm spending the day up here seeking God. This is so important.

I've got to know. And I'm not suggesting any of you do this, believe me. You'll get yourself in a lot of trouble.

But I had already a lot of confirmations. I knew God was working in this. I hadn't shown one little bit of interest in Candace.

But I was lying on my back in Ruber's Lough. I'd been praying there for hours. And I was lying on my back, looking up at the sky.

My phone was just out of reach. Just sitting there. And as I'm lying there, going, Lord, I don't need this.

I'm not playing games. Just one little token would just really help me at the minute. You know how you get anxious over these things? I get terribly anxious about small things, worried.

And so I say, Lord, just please help me a little bit, a bit like Eleazar. Will you just give me a little tiny sign? And it doesn't depend on that, but it just helped me. All of a sudden, a text comes through to my phone.

Instantly, I know with all my heart, without any shadow of a doubt, that's Candace has just sent me a text. I know it. Do you know she's never sent me a text? Never phoned me.

None of that. I don't even know she's got my phone number. She's never done this.

You know, as I'm lying there, just before I prayed that, she is driving home from Cork School of Music in Cork on a hot afternoon. She's driving home in traffic. And this thought comes into her mind.

Why don't, you know, when you're away from home, you like a message from someone. Why don't you just send a text to Keith? So she pulled over in the midst of all this traffic and got the number out. And she sent a text, a very simple one-liner to send, hope you're okay, and sent it and then drove on.

See, all incidental. And I sat there, this is true, I sat there for five minutes looking at my phone because I knew it was her. It was impossible to know that.

At that very second, it comes through. And I sit there, I won't even touch it. Five minutes I'm looking at, because I know that's her.

And as soon as I open that phone and it is her, I've got a real problem here because I couldn't have made that up. And I don't know what's happened in Cork with her in the midst of traffic just thinking this. So five minutes, I went, this is it.

And then I lifted it and it's a text from her. And I made my first phone call to her and it was the most embarrassing disaster. And after that call, I went, God, this is a mistake.

Why in all the world did I, I've just blown this. That was a, I couldn't even speak to the girl. It was all, neither of us knew what to say.

Maybe it was a disaster. And yet, you know, I'm not building a lot on that. Do you know later when I married her, and within the six first months of when we married, I took her to Scotland, not far from Rupert's loft.

In fact, I've got a picture there with me looking scared in the phone. She took it and said, this is what we were doing a year ago. But do you know, I took her to Scotland and I took her to two of my best friends, an older couple.

And I took, they're a white haired couple who I love to go and sit with them, talk about the things of God. And as we sat there talking, a story comes out. I've run off, I've known them for seven years.

They're really people of God who work with me. And as we're talking there, Ivor starts telling that I wanted them to meet Candice, my new wife. We're only married months.

And so I'm introducing them. And you know what? He begins to tell a story. He says, I want to tell you a very unusual story.

And it was the house they worked in, the family they worked with had a connection to Candice's family. They were utterly tied in. The house they are right next to in their little cottage, there was an utter connection.

I couldn't believe this. And went, so you know the family? Yes, we know. And they start talking and I'm sitting there, my two best friends in Scotland with Candice, my new wife.

And they know this entire family circle. I go, this is very strange. Oh, it gets stranger.

Ivor says, let me tell you a story. And he says, I've only done this once. I never done it before.

There was one day out in the shed and I opened the cupboard drawer and there was an old diary in there. And I lifted the diary out and I turned the bucket around and I opened up the diary and I'd never do anything like this. I don't know why I'd done it.

And he said, I started to read this strange event about a funeral where this unusual prophet turned out. And there was a whole story. Candice says, I do not believe this.

Says, from a little girl I grew up in South Africa, hearing that story in our family, thinking it was a myth. I'm sitting here going, I can't even believe how God weaves these things together. Do you know what? They're nothing in themselves, but you go, hold on.

God is in this. Here's my two friends, older brother and sister, who I so wanted Candice to meet. And here when they get talking, Ivor has read the story and confirmed everything on a family story Candice heard from a young child in South Africa.

Do you know what this is? This is providence. This is providence. And I don't want you to be silly with these things, but you know what? God does things just say, I'm here.

I'm in this. I care about you. I love you.

Let me finish. Do you have a couple of minutes just while I finish here? My fourth and last point, providence in the local church. You see, I believe, let me close with this.

In Ruth chapter two, I believe it can be applied to the church and there's very interesting things here. In the New Testament, it says in Romans chapter 15, verse four, for whatsoever things were written aforetime, in other words, in the past, written in the Old Testament, written in the book of Ruth. So Paul in the book of Romans is saying, books like Ruth were written way, way back.

Why were they written? They were written for our learning. Do you realize Ruth was written for the church? Do you realize that? It wasn't just written for Israel or the Jew. Paul writing in Romans said, all those things written aforetime, way back there, like Ruth, were written for our learning.

So you and I can learn. We should be studying Ruth and learning from it and being taught by it, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Do you know what? God wants to use Ruth to give you hope and encouragement and to help you and to stir you.

Paul also writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, 11. Now all these things happened unto them, Israel in the Old Testament, for in samples or examples. And they are written for our admonition to have warnings.

So Ruth is written so you can be warned, you can be taught, you can be protected. And it says upon whom the ends of the world are come. So it's for the church, for you and I. All the things like the book of Ruth are written for you and I to help us.

So this fourth and final point, providence in the local church. I say so many things in this chapter about the church. That's absolutely beautiful.

Think about Ruth, okay? She's a Moabitess. She was an idolater. She was a pagan.

She's of the people of Moab. She's outside the covenant of grace. She's outside the Abrahamic covenant.

She's outside the promises. No promise of the Bibles for her. She was in darkness.

She was a stranger. Brought her right in. Right into Israel.

Right into Bethlehem. Right into the family. Brought her right into the Abrahamic covenant.

This is an amazing thing. And you know what? If you look at this situation with Boaz and his servants on the field, I believe it represents the church. I believe Boaz could be a picture or a type of the pastor or the preacher or the leadership.

I believe there's a beautiful picture here where you have Ruth who's saved, born again, regenerate. God's changed her heart. God has forgiven all of her sin.

She's had an experience with God where she knows she's forgiven. She's a changed person. She knows what she wants.

And here she is. She knows nothing else. But here she comes into Bethlehem.

She hasn't had a church. She hasn't had godly eldership. There's no men in the family.

Her husband died. Her father-in-law died. They were in a foreign land, but they did know God and did believe God.

Now here they come into Bethlehem. For the first time, they've got a house of bread. For the first time, they've got people who know God.

For the first time, they can gather with others. And what does she do? She goes out in verse two, out into the field to begin gleaning. What brought them back to Bethlehem? Bread.

Remember what I said? Search for bread. Go back to the house of bread when God visits. You know, when God comes back to his church again, you're going to get preaching, teaching, ministry.

You're going to get the word of God. You're going to get good Bible teaching. You're going to get direction from God's word.

And so here is Ruth coming back in. Then she goes out into the field. She's looking to glean.

She's looking to provide for herself. Do you know what the gleaning represents? Studying God's word. It means I want something to eat.

I'm going to feed myself. Oh, she's not yet in the church. Here she is gleaning.

Says, I'm just trying to feed myself. Do you know how to feed yourself? Do you know in crisis hour, do you know how to feed yourself from the word of God? Do you actually go look and say, we're going to die. We're going to starve.

If I don't begin to get into the word of God, Lord, speak to me. First thing in the morning, go to prayer. Get into the word.

Do you know if you wait until nine o'clock at night, you've missed a whole day. You haven't been in the presence of God. You haven't made time for God.

No wonder you have problems throughout the day. You go straight out into the workplace, straight out into doing things. You haven't even spent time with God.

You haven't been in the Bible. You haven't even got one scripture rolling in your mind. God hasn't corrected your heart.

God hasn't straightened you. And you're going out there. Not Ruth.

You know what? Her desire on that first day, I've got to glean. I've got to find something. This isn't someone preaching to you.

This is you gleaning. Can I encourage you tomorrow morning? Go glean first thing. Get out of the house first thing.

Get up out of your bed first thing. Shouldn't be in bed after six o'clock. Most people... Was it Brother Clendenin died? His father said to Brother Clendenin, said, do you know most people die in bed? That's why it's not good.

Get up. Get up. Get out of that bed.

Too many die there. Or they look like they've died. That's one sure thing.

Some of them smell like they've died. But here you have her going out, gleaning in the field. You know that you're in a good field when a good leader turns up.

Do you hear me? When Boaz comes walking out, who's she? Is this an order? Are you working? When you go to that field and there's order among the ladies, order amongst the men, there is a man guiding and leading, directing, saying, what's going on here? Who are you? Are you trouble? Are you coming to help us? Who is she? What's her testimony? Brother Souf, how did you say she got saved? Oh, she said this. Oh, praise God. That's literally what you're seeing here.

Here's Ruth working. She's come into this church and the overseer is now reporting to Boaz. Do you know what she said? She's been here all day working.

Praise God. She likes the prayer meeting. Praise God.

She likes the Bible study. This gets better. This is the sort of people that we need in this church.

Ones like Ruth. In verse 8, what he says to her, hey girl, don't go to another field. You stay in this church.

That's what he actually says to Ruth. He says, I want you to remain here. I want you to abide here.

Fast by my ladies. You know why? My ladies know what this is about. I've been preaching, teaching, feeding.

We're bringing in the harvest. There's good food to eat here. And he says, don't go to another field.

Don't go looking somewhere else. You'd be running all over the place to a different field. Why not just stay here and I'll look after you.

I'll make sure that you have enough. You know what this represents in Ruth's life? Fellowship, assembly. There's unity with others.

Look at all of this order. There's an entire environment. It's amazing.

In verse 9, he says on there, keep your eyes on the field. Keep your eyes on the work. Have a vision of working in this field.

Catch a vision. Keep your eye on what you're doing. Just keep working away there.

He also tells her, see the young men. I've warned them, don't touch you. I think there was a personal little thing there.

I can imagine with those young guys, don't you dare even look sideways at her. Oh, yes, sir. Not realizing all the time something else is stirring from God and all of this.

Then she falls down on her face. How have I found such grace in your eyes? Why are you taking knowledge of me? Do you know what? In a real church, that's what happens. We want to watch for you.

There is grace to be found in the house of God. We do care about you. We want to know about you.

It's a very real thing when God begins to work in life in a very real way. In verse 11 to verse 12, you begin to hear the story in a remarkable way of what happened to her. She says, why are you doing this? He says, what? You walked in the door and you want to know why we care about you, why we love you, why we're concerned about you.

You want to know that, how you can find such grace. Do you know in the church when you lose that sense of God's grace, can I ask you something for a minute? And this has awed me since we begun this church. Do you think nothing of yourself? Then why are you here? I don't mean why did you put yourself here or why did you stay here? Why did God so love you that he put you in a church like this where you're going to get fed and guarded and watched over and instructed? Because I'm telling you, there's thousands upon thousands upon thousands scattered everywhere without a church, without a shepherd to watch for them and to warn them.

And you know what? From the beginning of this church, I've been very aware and I used to talk to Candice very many times about this. I said, God has put the people here. I'm there like I was with her.

I was in awe of my wife because God put her there. So it didn't treat her as mine. She was loaned to me for a time.

Do you know, this isn't my church. I'm going to be held accountable. I watch for you.

I watch for your soul. I'm very aware you belong to God. And one day I'm going to be responsible for that trust to me.

And so here you have, when she says, why are you doing this? He says, what? It was showed me in verse 11, all that thou hast done for thy mother-in-law. Don't you realize I see something in your heart for God

and a desire for truth and for righteousness. I've heard what you've done for your mother-in-law.

I've been watching your life and about your dead husband and that you have left your father and mother. That shows her father and mother was alive when she left Moab. You left your father and your mother to come to Bethlehem.

Don't you know that I know that? Also, you've left the land of your birth. I've heard all of these things. I'm hearing all about your testimony, but the most important thing is in verse 12.

Or is it 13? Then he said, let me find favor in thy sight, my Lord, for thou has comforted me and for thou has spoken friendly unto thy handmaid, though I be not like one of thy handmaids. Do you know he goes on to say, you have found refuge under the wings of the most high God. You've come to trust in the living God.

Do you know why I'm concerned about you and interested in you? Because you've come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you want to know why we show you love and care and feeding and provision and garden. It's because you have come to trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you trust in this Christ, what else do you expect us to do? And then let me finish. I've got so much, I could preach an entire message on providence in the local church. It's all here.

Romance is here. Isn't that wonderful? The church is here. Divine appointments are here.

All of this is here. And these few verses, I see it all and it's oozing out. I can't even contain it all.

We need to preach 10 messages just on this chapter, but we're not going to do that. But let me finish with this verse 14. Mealtime.

Boaz the laborer over the harvest, who's got them all working. Notice what Ruth gets brought in on, the harvest. Oh, I'm only just saved.

Good. You know what? There's a task. We're all laboring for souls here.

You've got a place here. There's a mission here. There's a call.

There's a great work we're involved with. You know what it is? The harvest. Bring in the harvesting.

And now you're a part of that. Just stay in the field. Stay with the ladies.

Just follow after them. You'll soon find out how to do this. Just ask them, what do I do now? Just keep walking straight.

Don't go over there. Stay away from him. Believe me, you don't want to go there.

All of this is functioning. But in verse 14, you have the mealtimes. Come sit, eat with us at the mealtimes.

You know, it's a tragedy when God's people don't come to be fed and don't sit at the mealtimes. You know, like tonight, just to sit here with the word of God. This is what the church is.

There's provision. There's protection. There's direction.

There's care. There's concern. And all of these meals that are being provided, come sit here for a while, Ruth, and just eat.

I know it's what you've needed. I'm so glad that you're gleaning for yourself, feeding yourself. I'm glad you're studying at home.

But these public mealtimes, when we come together, it's a wonderful thing. And then after finishing the meal, she stands up and she goes straight back out to the field again. And as soon as she's gone, he turns to all of his men, says, guys, listen to me.

Boaz commanded his young men saying, let her glean even among the sheaths and reproach her not. And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her. She's not telling her.

He's not telling her. So you say that she doesn't know this is going to happen. He's providing for her, looking after her.

Do you know God does that for you and I? With providence, he's saying maybe to one of the angels, just drop a bunch over there and drop something over there to encourage her. And she goes, oh, look what I find. Oh, look at this person I met.

Look at this wonderful Christian who wants to bless me. Don't you know who's behind all of that steering, guiding, directing? There's the right person there at the right time to say the right thing or to help you. And do you know what this is? There's a wonderful display of God's glory.

Verse 17 as we finish. So I'm allowed three finishes. So she gleaned in the field until even and she beat out that she had gleaned and it was about an ephah of barley.

That's about 22 liters that she's got to carry back to the house after one day's work. She thought she'd only have a liter or something or a couple of liters. But here she goes back.

Can you imagine walking in late, tired, not thirsty because she's been looked after. And she walks back into Naomi's house and Naomi goes, where did you get all of this? 22 liters of all of these gleanings. I've been to church.

That's where I've been tonight. Here it is and you dump it on the floor saying we've got plenty to look after us. We're not going to starve.

We're not going to perish. We're not going to die because God's providential hand is in this helping us, blessing. You know, all these dark times and suddenly there's an hour where God opens the door and says, no, I'm going to start moving in a wonderful way.

And you know what? This is only the beginning. This day one, day one of a whole new future. Will you pray with me tonight? Father, we love you.

We bless you. We thank you, God, for your hand of providence. These aren't mere imaginations that we're looking at, but we're, Lord God, considering real life.

So God of what you've done in real events of how you love them and how you love Ruth, oh God, how you cared for her, how your hand was upon her, how you're a guide in her when she didn't even know it, how you directed Boaz's life. My God, thank you that you're working out a plan in our lives right now that's

going to have consequences that we can't even imagine at the moment. My God, we pray for a moving of the Holy Spirit.

Lord God, stir up our hearts tonight. Lord God, to believe you and to trust you and to seek after you. Lord God, let us see the hand of providence in our workplace.

Let us see it, Lord God, in divine appointments. Let us see it in romances, oh God, and let us see it in the work of the church. And Father, I pray, hide these things in our heart that we're not casually taking all these environments, but oh God, we're going, even when I don't see your hand, even when I don't hear your voice, even when I don't feel anything in church or at home or in the workplace, Lord God, I know that all things work together for good to those who are the called of God and who love you.

Lord God, I pray, hide these things in our heart that we might glorify you. In Jesus' name, amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/KIBDs4vAhGw.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/keith-malcomson/silver-threads-of-providence/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**