

Prestonwood Connection

#6 Doing Life...Together

Heartache / Hardship / Hope

Ruth

October 19, 2005 • Dr. David McKinley

[Dr. McKinley, message, Heartache/Hardship/Hope]

I just so love and appreciate Lino Lopaz and the gift that God has given to him and the way that he uses it through the life and ministry of Prestonwood to be a..., such a wonderful source of blessing and encouragement and I know that you share that, that's so evident in the response that you've just given a..., but we are very, very blessed a..., to have such outstanding musicians in every field, vocal, instrumental a..., but there is just a very special touch that God has given a..., through the music of Lino and I'm so very thankful for that. I'm also very thankful to see you tonight, I'm glad you're here, glad you're a part of this service this evening and it's been great to hear you and see you participate in the time of worship. I really believe that this has just been an evening that's engaged our hearts and minds together and a..., just been a time of lifting our spirits a..., in praise as we've offered our praise to the Lord. So, I'm very thankful for that.

Many of you, in fact most of you know that a..., I had the privilege this summer of a..., going with Dr. Graham and about 140 of our a..., Prestonwood members and others to Greece and a..., to take a trip, called *The Journey's of Paul*. And one of the stops along the way was an island by the name Rhodos, you know it as the island of Rhoads and a..., one of the things that Rhoads or Rho-dos is known for is a..., some incredible pieces of pottery that are made there some a..., pieces of...of a..., earthenware that they paint and that they bake and a..., that they make and they're just wonderful pieces and I have to tell you that after our 130 a...a..., member group went to this a..., pottery factory and a..., you know, North Dallas hit them with 3 buses, I don't mind telling you they were very grateful as we were leaving, I mean just couldn't do enough to say thank you for all that we'd done and a..., a number of people bought some really beautiful pieces and a..., a number of beautiful pieces and had them shipped back to the states and things of that nature and Connie and I a..., purchased a piece, a small piece that we brought back as a gift to someone and a..., went to great pains to try to be sure that we could get it and get it back and a..., we got it here and actually held on to it all through the summer and even into the fall and just a few weeks ago made a trip a..., where we were going to give this gift and were so excited about having the opportunity of doing that. Well, of course, the day came when we got there, took the gift, took it out and had it all wrapped up and ready to go, handed it a...,

to the person that we were giving it to and as you might imagine they opened the gift and guess what? It was in about 6 or 7 pieces. Heh, and that's exactly how I felt. [congregation laughter] Because, before the last trip that this little vessel took it had made it all the way home from Greece just fine, but in the trip that it took from here to Virginia that piece found it's way into many pieces and it was a very disappointing thing to see this piece broken and of course, I found myself with Super Glue tryin to put it back together, of course I got more Super Glue on my fingers than I did anything else, had my fingers together for a period of time. And a..., it was just one of those experiences in life when you're disappointed because something was broken and I'm sure if I were to go up and down the aisles tonight and ask the question, how many of you have ever had something that really mattered to you break or be broken by someone, I'm sure almost all of us have a story of one sort or of another, because things in life, even things of great value and things of great importance and things of great appreciation in life have a tendency to get broken or even sometimes to get lost.

I asked several people today about things in their lives that have been broken or been lost and I asked my secretary and she told me about an experience in her life when as a teenager she went on a hayride and the night that she went on that hayride that she took a ring that had just been given to her a few days earlier by her grandfather. Her grandfather passed away in just a couple of weeks and it was an heirloom in her family, but she was in a...on a hayride riding along with a boy and she gave the boy that ring to put in his pocket for her and to keep it that night and guess what? When he got back in that night the ring was nowhere to be found and she just talked about what a moment of grief that was in her life to realize that something like that was lost. And so whether it's something that's broken or something that's lost we all know what it is to experience that kind of...of...of emotion and that kind of feeling and that kind of disappointment. But how much greater is the degree that we all feel in life when what is lost or what is broken is a relationship, a relationship with someone that matters. I remember just a few years ago I was up in Ashville, North Carolina and I was in a department store and we were checking out and as we were going through the checkout line there that day my daughter Liz was with me and we were purchasing something for her and I was writing a check and signing the check and as many of my documents have and have had since a..., 1989 it says Dr. David McKinley on it and when so when I tore the check and handed it to the lady behind the cash register she looked at it and she said Dr. McKinley, she said what kind of doctor are you? And so I immediately was looking at all the people standing behind me and I didn't wanna say well I'm a theologian and so a..., [congregation laughter] I just looked and you know I said I'm a heart doctor [more laughter] and she said really? I said, well of sorts, I said actually I help people a..., to be able to have a heart that's right with God and with others. And then she looked at me and I'll never forget this, standing in that store she said, do you help people with broken hearts? And I realized standing in that moment that there was a young lady who regardless of everything else going on around her realized that there was a connection with something in her heart and she had a broken heart. Well,

I know that all around us there are people who have broken hearts and all around us there are people who are dealing with broken and lost relationships and as we think about that and as we understand that I want us tonight to take the Word of God and to open it to one of the most precious and one of the most tender of all of the stories in the Bible. It's an incredible story of grief and an incredible story of grace. It is found in the book of Ruth in the Old Testament. Now that's right before you get to Samuel and Kings, so if you get in Samuel and Kings you've gone too far in the Old Testament a..., but it's Joshua, Judges, Ruth, so if you get the J. J.'s Joshua and Judges just get right in there and you'll find Ruth. It's a small 4 chapter letter in between and right there in the book of Ruth we find something of a message and something of a story about setbacks and starting over. In fact I think if I had to summarize the book of Ruth I'd just have to say it's a book that talks to us about setbacks and a book that talks to us about starting over. Let me read to you the background of the book beginning in verse 1:

¹Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ²And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—...

Next time you have twins maybe you wanna think about that, Mahlon and Chilion. [congregation laughter]

...Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. ³Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴And they took wives from the women of Moab: and one was named Orpah,...

Not Oprah, but Orpah, let me be sure you understand that.

...and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. ⁵But both Mahlon and Chilion also died; and so the woman survived here two sons and her husband.

And then if you'll jump all the way down to verse 20 you'll read the response of Naomi.

She said to them do not "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."

The name Na...Naomi actually means pleasant, graceful, good, but the name Mara means sorrow. It means that which hurts and brings pain and so here this woman who had been so blessed in her life ultimately came to a place in life that the only thing that could be said of her and the only way that you could characterize her life and her family is actually what begins to form the opening scene of the book of Ruth and the opening scene of Ruth is simply found and put together in this word heartache...heartache.

It's a **SCENE OF HEARTACHE**, a woman who a good woman, a woman who had a good marriage, a woman who had been blessed in so many ways, but suddenly she finds herself as a widow and then not only does she find that she goes through the grief of the loss of her husband, but then she goes through the grief of the loss of both of her sons. And so now everything that had mattered in her world was gone and not only was that gone, but she did still have, as though it were, this relationship with these two girls, these two daughter-in-laws, Orpah and Ruth. Now you know, as well as I know that the mother-in-law, daughter-in-law relationship is not always depicted as being one of the, well should we say, happiest of all relationships. If you've ever watched even a single episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* [congregation laughter] it doesn't take long to watch Marie, Raymond's mother interact with Deborah, Raymond's wife to understand that there is a significant amount of tension that can come between mothers and daughter-in-laws. It's sort of like the young lady who said my mother-in-law sent me two sweaters for my birthday. When they came to visit at Christmas I decided to wear one and when she saw me in it she immediately said what's the matter don't you like the other sweater? Heh! [more laughter] I mean sometimes girls just feel like they can't win with their mother-in-law.

But I want you to know that what was seen here was a scene of heartache and of tragedy, but a scene where rather than hearts filled with tension because of conflict there are hearts that were tethered together with love and tenderness. And the two girls who were here in this picture, Ruth and Orpah had a great relationship with their mother-in-law Naomi and they loved her and they cared for her and they appreciated her very much. But, not all of this scene called heartache is...is purely about tragedy. Certainly we've seen the tragedy of the life of Naomi and the life of her daughter-in-law Ruth, but it is important for me to bring one more character into the picture and one more character into this a..., into this background tonight and that is that over in chapter 2, verse 1 we read that there is another person here, it is a man who is introduced and the Bible says:

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech and his name was Boaz...Boaz.

Now Boaz' life was anything but a tragedy, his life was anything but heartache. He was a man who had been prosperous and successful, he was a wealthy landowner, he had many, many things in life, but one thing that is very evident to us about this man Boaz is that Boaz was a bachelor. He was a man who had gotten up in years and he had never married and I really don't think that I can go any further in sort of painting the scene in the background of this portion of Scripture without pausing to say that it is significant that we see two of the three categories of single adults represented in this passage of Scripture that are represented in the ministry of our church and are represented in our society at large. There are those who like Boaz are people who had made a decision in life to be single. In fact did you know that 40% of the population in America, between the ages...well of 40% of the adult population in America is

actually single and have never been married. That's a significant part and a significant sector of the population in America. We don't know all of the reasons and all of the issues but there are large groups of people who are single adults in our populous today who are living and working and interacting among us and a part of the life and the ministry of this church and they are unmarried and many of them have made a decision to be unmarried and there's certainly nothing wrong with that. Nowhere does the Bible ever indicate that to be single is not to be blessed and to be favored of God. In fact the Bible tells us that those who are single can devote the whole of their life and their heart to God. But there is this picture of this man Boaz, who is there, and he's a man who had made a decision not to get married. Now, there is one biblical prohibition, let me be sure that I'm clear to say that tonight, that making a decision to be single and to remain unmarried is fine as long as you maintain the prohibition of purity in your life. Choosing not to get married just so that you can be detached and disconnected and can basically sleep around is not something that the Bible ever condones or accepts. In fact the Bible calls immorality in every form a sin and in particular that form of fornication which is simply taking advantage of others for one's own gain and so there is nothing wrong with being single, but the Bible does say that if that's a decision that has been made in life then there is a standard of purity that is to be upheld and clearly that standard is seen in the life of Boaz. That's something I love very much and appreciate about him as I read of him. He's a man who maintains standards of personal purity in his life.

But then of course there's another group that are represented here and that's those who have faced death, those who have experienced loss and death is no respecter of persons and it cuts across all ages and stages of life and so there are those who like Naomi have lived a full life and have gotten into the mature years and there are those who like Ruth are still very much in the prime of life and experience the reality and the impact of death and so we not only have those who are single among us who are single by decision, there are those who are single and are single again because of the invasion and the disruption that death had brought into their lives.

And then of course the third category are those who have faced divorce, those who chose to marry, who moved towards marriage, but who ultimately found themselves faced in a broken...faced with a broken marriage. I don't know all of the life circumstances and situations that are here, for some it could simply be that a..., you were faithful to your marriage and you sought to be the very best spouse and mate that you could be and someone chose a path of irresponsibility, someone made a decision of rejection and ultimately a dissection and broke your heart. Some of you tonight are here and frankly you aren't walking with God and you just simply were not following God's plan and pattern in your life and you chose to get married and you moved into a relationship and everything about that relationship brought disruption and division in life and today you find that you're unmarried because of that conflict and you're really seeking to come back to the Lord at this stage of life. And I do wanna say to you and I wanna say very clearly tonight that while it is very clear that divorce will

leave a scar in the heart, divorce does not mean that you are stained for life. Now there are very specific, biblical instructions about those things which provide and are allowed to allow for divorce when there has been injury and rejection and irresponsibility by someone else and that's another message and I will try to deal with that before we finish this series, but I say all of that tonight to just say that these are categories of people that are here. In fact you may be interested to know I did just a little bit of background a..., study today to learn that we have 7963 members listed as single adults at Prestonwood; 7900 of our members are single adults and that's the total category of never married, divorced and widowed. In fact let me just tell you something else very interesting that you need to know, between January and October of this year, listen to me, we had 1638 single prospects come and visit Prestonwood for the first time between January and October, this month, 1638. This is such a significant part of our populous and such a significant portion of our ministry platform. How vital it is that we not miss or mistake the significance of the opportunity and of the responsibility that God has given to us.

But now I've moved way away from Ruth and I need to come back. I feel like that's an important point of perspective, but I wanna come back to the text and to what's happening here and what is unfolding is that we have two women who's life can be characterized and categorized by heartache.

The second major scene that begins to unfold in this book tonight is the **SCENE CALLED HARDSHIP**. Because the hard part about heartache is it's not just a wound that comes and goes there are things that come with it and what happened in Naomi's life and what happened in Ruth's life was that the death of their mates created an opportunity and created a place for change and there were changes that began to unfold and changes that began to occur and that began to have impact on their lives and so as we continue reading in chapter 1, verse 6 we see some of the hardships. We read about the fact in 1:6 that Naomi rose with her daughters and said that she was gonna return from the country of Moab and she was going to go back to her homeland and she began to talk about her need to go back so the girls said well we're gonna go back with you, but she looked at the girls and she said girls you know that I'm up in years I can't have more sons, I can't provide you with husbands, you need to stay here in your land with your people and your family so that maybe God in His grace can give you another husband in the days to come, but I need to go back to my homeland. I'm poor, I'm destitute and the only place for me is to go back to Bethlehem. And so Orpha stood up and hugged Naomi, kissed her and she went away. But Ruth, refusing to hear the words that Naomi spoke responded to Naomi in chapter 1, verse 16 and these are some of the most beautiful words that we find in all of the Bible; it's a favorite portion of Scripture expressing commitment, devotion and resolve and this is what Ruth said, she said to her mother-in-law:

¹⁶... "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; You shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. ¹⁷And where you die, I

will die, And there I will be buried. And the Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."

You've heard that at weddings haven't you? You thought that was some romantic expression of a husband to a wife or a wife to a husband, but it was a daughter-in-law speaking to a mother-in-law who she loved and whose God she had seen as the God who was real and the impact of her mother-in-laws faith and walk in life had so touched her that she expressed this devotion to Naomi. And so they journeyed back to Bethlehem and in chapter 1, verse 19 we read that they went to Bethlehem and when they came there a..., they got there and it was there that Naomi said, now my life is to be called Mara, bitterness, because she was poor and she was destitute and she was back home and all she had were the memories of what had started in such a sweet and a precious way there. Well, not only was there the change of the move and all the things that happened there and Orpha going back and staying in Moab while they made this journey, but then the Bible tells us in chapter 2, verse 2 that:

...Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after a..., after him in the...in the sight of whom I may find favor." And she said, "Go, my daughter."

There was a provision in Jewish law where in the fields when the harvesters would be there that anything that was dropped during the harvest the poor could come and could glean it and gather it and so women would go out and work in the field as you see in these pictures and they would gather massive amounts of barley or wheat and would try to bring them together, but invariably some of it would fall and the poor would just come and so every day Ruth was going to the field and now she's out working and now she's out sweating and laboring and all of the protection and the provision that she had trusted from her husband Mahlon was now on her shoulders and she's facing one of the hardships of life. But you know even when life is hard God is good and even when it feels as though life has hurt us and has bruised us we begin to see that in the hardships God's at work. There're several ways that we see the work of God in the hardship that was being experienced by Naomi and by Ruth.

One of those that we read here is in chapter 2, verse 1 and that is the **EVIDENCE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE**. The evidence of God's providence, for you see when they went back to Bethlehem, the Bible just inserts this one little statement.

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth,...whose name was Boaz.

It just tells you about this guy Boaz. He just kinda comes out of nowhere, he's there and the next scene we have Ruth down working in the fields and day after day she's going and she's working. But interestingly enough this man Boaz came out to look over his field and while he was there he pulled one of the other workers aside and he said who's that woman out there? He immediately recognized that she wasn't a Jewish woman, she was a Moabite and he immediately recognized wow, she was beautiful and even though she

was workin hard he was amazed, not just so much by her physical beauty, but he heard the story about what she had been doing for Naomi. He heard about the character of this woman. He heard about her commitment to come and to help her mother-in-law, how she was out there every day working and caring for her mother-in-law and Boaz was so impressed you know what he did? He said all right let me tell what I want you to do, from now on I want you to intentionally drop extra portions in front of Ruth. I don't want her to have to work so hard. A woman like that needs to be rewarded and so he said you know what, I want you to do, I just want you to let that happen and the amazing thing that happened in that moment was that there began to be an evidence of God's providence. He wasn't just any man, he was a man who had a family relationship with Elim...Elimelech who was Naomi's husband and it just so happened that they ended up on his field. No it didn't just so happen it was a part of the providence of God and the providence of God was evident and one of the things that has been so amazing to me to see time and time again in life is that when everything in life seems to go wrong and heartache and hardship seems to begin to overwhelm people around me I'm amazed at how many times the little evidences of God's hand and of God's work and of God's providence is there. I don't know how many storms I've been through or watched others go through that while I didn't understand the storm I couldn't deny the fact that God was there, the evidence of His providence.

There was something else in the midst of this hardship and that was the **ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS** and Ruth was clinging to that. In chapter 2 the Bible tells us that eventually Boaz made his way out to meet Ruth. In fact he invited her to come up to the pavilion where he was as the landowner and to join them for a meal and he had the opportunity to meet her and to speak with her and ultimately this is what he said to her in verse 12 it says that he says:

¹¹... *"It's been reported to me,..."*

Verse 11:

"...all that you've done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, how you left your father and your mother, the land of your birth and have come to the people who you do not know."

And then he said this:

¹¹*"The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you to the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."*

Do you hear that phrase. He said you've come here to be under the wings of the God of Israel and he said I want you to know God is gonna be faithful to you. There's a...a statement that I found in a Bible comm...by a Bible commentator that I thought was significant to share with you about this passage of Scripture. He said that:

"The figure of the eagle is used in the Pentateuch..."

That is the first five books of the Old Testament.

"...as an image of God's power being utilized for the protection and the nurturing care of His people. Speaking of Jacob, Moses declares, "As an eagle stirs up it's nest, hovers over it's young, spreading out it's wings, taking them up, carrying them on it's wings so the Lord alone lead him."

And in Deut...that was in the book of Deuteronomy.

"And then again , moreover, God Himself compares the Exodus with deliverance to an eagle's activity. You've seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself."

Exodus 19.

So the wings of which Boaz speaks in verse 12 symbolized the power of the grace that Ruth is experiencing in protection and in provision. It's the faithfulness of God and when you face hardship in your life I want you to know that not only is there going to be the evidence of God's providence, even though you may not understand His plan, there is the assurance of God's faithfulness. If we come to the Lord, if we seek the Lord, we trust in the Lord with all of our hearts, we prove His faithfulness.

And then there is the **GRACE OF GOD'S PROVISION**. Because you see the interesting...that happened is, is that she began to gather and the Bible says that as she gathered and as she brought the grain together that she went home one day to speak to Naomi and Naomi said where in the world did you get all this grain, how did you bring so much? And it was the wonder of God's grace at work and though these two women went by faith from Moab back to Bethlehem and had nothing and were destitute and were impoverished, God began to supply the needs of their life in ways they could have never imagined and the grace of God and the abundance of God accompanied them. They didn't manipulate it. They couldn't accomplish it, but God did it. And I say all of that tonight just to say to you that when you go through hardship in your life, whatever kind of hardship it may be, whether it's something as difficult as grief or whether it's something as disruptive as the loss of a job or a physical health or sickness, whatever it may be there're three thing that you can count on in life and that is the evidence of God's providence, the assurance of God's faithfulness and the grace of God's provision in your life.

But that brings me to the 3rd and the final scene of the book tonight and that's the **SCENE THAT WE HAVE TO CALL HOPE**...hope. I love that word, would you say that word with me? Let's say it. HOPE! That's a lot better than heartache and hardship isn't it? Let's say it again together, the word HOPE! You know what our world needs? Our world needs HOPE! That's right and every person in this room needs a sense of hope in heart and life. Well, what was the hope? Well, the Bible says in chapter 3, verse 1 that:

¹...Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, [That is Ruth.] *"My daughter, shall*

I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? ²Now Boaz, who...whose young women you were with, is not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself and put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to this man until he is finished eating and drinking. ⁴And then it shall it be that when he lies down that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in and uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you shall do."

Now some of you are thinking hey, that's gettin a little racy there isn't it? [congregation laughter] I mean you're talking about these godly women and all the sudden Naomi's got her in the corner and sayin hey baby let's fix you up, girl you goin down there tonight, we gonna put you at his feet, he's gonna smell you, he's gonna see you. Well, if you don't understand the culture you not ever gonna understand what happened. This wasn't seductive, though certainly it was beautiful and it was sensitive. This wasn't improper or immoral; it was something that was very much a part of something called the Levirate Law in the Old Testament and because it would be difficult for me to just try to quickly compress all this for you I brought a very simple synopsis from a website called *Growing Christians* written by David Reed that I thought might help you to understand what in the world is happening here. So let me read it to you.

"Certain stipulations of God's law were designed to care for the extended family and can according to Leviticus 25:25 when an individual became so poor that he had to sell or forfeit his property. A prosperous relative was to redeem or buy back the property for the poor family member. The Hebrew word used...word that is used for this close relative is "go'el" and is translated either as redeemed or relative in the Old Testament. This person is this...thus called a kinsmen redeemer. Another responsibility of a close relative is found in Deuteronomy 25:5 thru 10. If a husband died before having a male heir then an unmarried brother of the deceased was to marry the widow and produce the firstborn son in his brother's name. If there was no eligible brothers available then the duty passed on to the closest eligible male relative. In Ruth's case there were no brothers available, thus Boaz as a close relative had a responsibility towards Ruth, as well as towards the family property, which Naomi was forced to sell out of poverty. So Ruth's behavior in chapter 3 was not some indiscreet escapade, but rather her legally proper initiative to tell Boaz that she was willing for him to take on the responsibilities of kinsmen redeemer."

Naomi understood the law. Naomi knew the importance of this step and so Naomi encouraged her to do it. She went and what's interesting is that the Bible goes on to tell us that when she got under the edge of that cover at his feet that Boaz set and said who in the world is this and what are you doin here. That's what tells me a little bit about the kinds of man he was. This wasn't a man who reached for the woman, this was a man who was immediately going woo, wait a minute, somethin's wrong here, but then he listened and then he responded and he said you don't have to say any more. See I think God had been doing something in his heart. Most Bible

commentators believe he was probably at least 20 to 25 years her elder, but he saw her and he thought of her and he responded to her and it was yes a matter of law and provision, but it was much more than that, clearly it was a matter of love as well. And this story begins to unfold with a beauty of a man who has not been married, falling in love with this Moabite widow and a woman who was destitute having this man, who not only was a good man, but was a great man and was God's man and was going to fulfill a part of a plan of God in her life and that of her mother-in-law and we begin to see it unfolding in this place. But there was a problem. Boaz had to tell Ruth that there was actually another man who was closer in kinship than he was. So you know what he did? He got up the next morning and went down to the market where the man was and he said hey brother I gotta talk to you, he said there is a woman named Naomi, Naomi's destitute she needs to sell her property, you're closest of kin you can buy the property. He said well I'll do it no problem. Boaz said, but there's one other stipulation she has a daughter-in-law who has never had a child and you would also have to take her to be a wife. The man said woe...woe...woe wait a minute, I'm already married I already have kids, I'm not gonna share my inheritance with my children with anybody else. He said I can't do it. And so the Bible says that he took off his shoe and he handed it to Boaz because that's the way they seal the deal. He took the shoe and he handed him the shoe and he said here's the deal and so in front of all the witnesses the shoe fell. Heh! And the result was that Boaz was given the legal right and the legal clearance to take Ruth to be his wife and he did and there is a beautiful story in chapter 4 of hope where Ruth becomes the wife of this wealthy man Boaz and where God's grace begins to be seen in their lives and through this experience together and as the deal was sealed with the shoe there were some amazing things that began to unfold in the process.

So let me quickly say that as much as I love the story of Boaz and of Ruth all of this points to someone and to something else, because when you go to the very end of the book chapter 4, verse 17 you read that after they married she did in fact conceive with a child, it was a son and the Bible says in verse 17 that:

...the women gave him a name, "There is a son born to Naomi."...

That is a grandchild to Naomi.

...and they called his name Obed. And he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Do you know where we read about this again? Matthew chapter 1 in verse 5, listen to this, in Matthew 1 the Bible says:

Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab,...

You know that name don't you?

...and Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, and Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot King

David...

And David was the heir to the covenant by which Jesus Christ would come. Where did it all happen? Bethlehem, and the picture was the picture of the Redeemer Who was to come. Galatians chapter 4 tells us: [verses 4-5]

⁴...when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who are under the law that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Jesus came to be our Redeemer and it doesn't matter who you are or where you are in heartache or hardship tonight, here is the hope, there is a Redeemer and His name is Jesus Christ. I love the way that John Piper wrote it in his reflection on the book of Ruth. He said:

" The life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but they do get there. The life of the godly is not an interstate through Nebraska, but a state road through the Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee. There are rockslides and precipices and dark mists that bear the slippery curves and hairpin turns that take you and make you go backwards in order to go forward, but all along this hazardous twisted road that does not let you see far ahead there are frequent signs that say, the best is yet to come, and at the bottom right corner writer with an unmistakable hand are the words 'As I live!' says the Lord!"

There is a Redeemer. I love the words to the song, I think you know the as well.

*There is a Redeemer, Jesus God's own Son;
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.
Thank you oh My Father, for giving us your Son,
and leaving us your Spirit till the work on earth is done.*

I'm so grateful tonight for the book of Ruth. I'm so thankful for the beauty of this testimony and I'm so grateful that God has given it to us to let us know that hope floats, even when life sinks. And just so you know I'm not makin all this up Romans chapter 15, verse 4 says:

And whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

I want you to have that hope tonight and I want us to pray for that hope, for people who need hope and healing in their hearts and in their lives tonight. Some tonight in this room are grieving. Some tonight in this room are struggling. Some tonight in this room are waiting. Some tonight in this room have been walking in sin. Some tonight in this room are doubting and my prayer is that God would move and work in these moments that we might have hope and comfort through the Scriptures.