

Joke: A man asked his wife what she'd like for her birthday. "I'd love to be six again," she replied.

On the morning of her birthday, he got her up bright and early and off they went to a local theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park: the Death Slide, the Screaming Loop, the Wall of Fear--everything there was! Wow!

Five hours later she staggered out of the theme park, her head reeling and her stomach upside down. Right to McDonald's they went, where her husband ordered her a Big Mac along with extra fries and a refreshing chocolate shake. Then it was off to a movie the latest Star Wars epic, with hot dogs, popcorn, Pepsi Cola, and M and Ms. What a fabulous adventure! Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed.

He leaned over and lovingly asked, "Well, dear, what was it like being six again?"

One eye opened. The wife said, "You idiot, I meant my dress size!"

Today I want to talk to those of you that might be disappointed in this season of your life. And for many of you, it's not that you don't believe in God, it's His goodness you struggle with.

Because right now, you may not be seeing His goodness in your life.

For some of you, you hoped maybe at this season that you would be financially strong, that you could be a blessing to a lot more people. But instead you're wondering how to make it through this month.

You thought you'd be somewhere else and you're not.

Some of you thought by this time in your life you'd be happy and content and have a great ministry and full of joy. Instead, you feel lonely, anxious and depressed.

And if you are hurting or maybe feel hopeless and you're trying to find the faith to hope for something better. I just want start by saying I am sincerely sorry and my heart hurts for you.

Honestly, I get it because there are times when I'll preach with all the faith that I have, but on the inside, my heart is hurting as well.

If your struggling today my prayer is that God would speak directly to you, and that He would give you a hope that builds your faith.

As dive into this last message on the book of Ruth I want to give you some backstory before we get started in case you missed anything in this series.

If you remember in Chapter 1, Ruth hit rock bottom. She and Naomi both lost their husbands. They were widowed, they had no job, no provision, and no hope.

We could say in Chapter 1, Ruth experienced heartbreak. If we had to title chapter 1 it might be Heartbreak city.

Then she makes a decision. Do you remember her decision? She decided to leave the sinfulness of the place where she was which was in Moab, and pursue the one true God of Israel in Bethlehem.

She decided to go back to Bethlehem to pursue God. And in Chapter 2 we would see that she worked, she waited and she served.

Instead of selling her body like many women would've felt forced to do she went and gleaned, and she worked in the fields of a guy named Boaz and she served faithfully waiting on God.

And Boaz this man the Scripture tells us was a man of standing asked her to lunch. They had what appeared to be a date, and she got pretty excited thinking maybe this guy is the one.

Maybe he's going to redeem me. He's an honorable man, he's a wealthy man. He's a man of standing.

So maybe we would call chapter two trusting in the waiting.

After their date, however, it appears this guy had gotten busy, because she was ghosted. No follow up, no text, nothing.

So in Chapter 3, we she does a few things. She initiates, she surrenders and she trusts.

She initiates, she put herself in the path of this guy, she actually put herself at the foot of his bed, which is not something I have ever recommended in premarital counseling. Or ever for that matter.

If you recall I said this was descriptive and not prescriptive meaning it's what she did but it's not Scripture telling us to do the same thing.

But in her doing what she was saying was, "Hey, remember me?"

She was saying, "I'm available, I need a Kinsman redeemer and I'm hoping you will be the one." And then she trusted God and waited.

So maybe you could title Chapter 3 Waiting in the process. And how many know that waiting in the process isn't always easy?

And then this week we're going to discover that Boaz actually does redeem her and marries her and God blesses them.

And together they have a son named Obed, which means servant of God.

And in Chapter 4, we see God's goodness when she is redeemed by a man of God, and restored by the blessings of God.

And all of the community starts rejoicing and celebrating the goodness of God in their lives.

And it's a journey from Chapter 1 to 2 to 3 to 4. Let me for a moment talk to those of you who may feel stuck in Chapter 1.

And I want you to hear me when I tell you that God loves you, He cares about you and He's with you. I realize that some of you may have been wounded and hurt by someone that misrepresented Jesus to you. But that doesn't change the fact that God loves you. It simply means they may not have loved as Jesus does. And if you've been hurt by church or a ministry I'm so sorry.

And my guess is there are some of you, you're in the in-between. You're waiting, you're in Chapter 2. But stay faithful to God in Chapter 2. Keep trusting God in Chapter 3. And my prayer for you is that in Chapter 4, you'll discover that God's plans for you are better than you can imagine, because He's good all the time. He's faithful always and His word is true.

So God, today we pray for those who may be disappointed in their current chapter, but even in this season let them experience you, come to know you better and be transformed by your love. We pray this in the name of Jesus.

Let's pick up where we left off last week. If you recall Boaz wanted to redeem Ruth, but there was a problem there was another relative who was more closely related and the author of the book calls him a baloney alimony.

What does that mean? That means Mr. No name. It means John Doe.

And so Boaz goes and meets with baloney alimony.

And he shrewdly works his plan and makes a deal so that he can marry Ruth, provide for her, protect her, and bless her as her kinsman redeemer.

Boaz is at the city gate, the place of business. When this guy just so happens to come by. Boaz lays out the plan and ultimately the guy says I can't do it, you do it.

And the elders that were gathered together as witnesses pray this prayer of blessing.

Ruth 4:11-12 (NLT) - Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, "We are witnesses! May the Lord make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. And may the Lord give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah."

The elders pray this one prayer of faith. And because of that one prayer we get to see that it not only resulted in a changed life, and a changed family, but ultimately a changed legacy that would impact us even to this day.

One prayer.

Church never underestimate what God can do through the power of prayer.

Some of you may be stuck right now and you may be one prayer away from the blessing that God wants to bring in your life.

And so we actually get to see the answer to this prayer in Ruth Chapter 4:13.

The elders prayed this prayer and then we see. . .

Ruth 4:13 (NLT) - So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the Lord enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.

The Lord enabled her to become pregnant and she gave birth to a son."

We see in this one verse an answer to one prayer that shows how God can take years of brokenness and turn it into blessings.

And when I say years of brokenness, if you remember Ruth and Naomi experienced 10 years of misery in Moab.

In other words, sometimes a chapter may last for a little while and then with one decision she decides to turn from Moab, turn to the God of Israel, and return to Bethlehem.

The Scripture tells us that weeping my stay through the night but joy comes in the morning.

Listen your season will change. Stay faithful.

Someone prays one prayer of faith and the results are dramatic.

It's not only a changed life, it's not only a changed family, but it is a changed legacy that even impacts all of us today.

But how did this all come to pass in the first place? There is a phrase in our verse that I don't want you to miss.

It said, the Lord enabled.

In Hebrew that phrase the Lord enables is translated as Yahweh Yitten.

Everybody say it with me, Yahweh Yitten.

This phrase is actually translated different ways by different Bible translators. In the NIV it says the Lord enabled, in the ESV it translates it as the Lord gave. In the CSB it says the Lord granted. And then in the good news translation it says the Lord blessed.

But no matter how you say it, it was the Lord who did it.

And church someone needs to hear this today we serve a giving God. His grace is sufficient, His mercy is everlasting, his love never fails. He gives life and that more abundantly.

The Lord enabled.

There might be a different translation of the verb for you, it might not be the Lord enabled, but it might be the Lord provided or the Lord healed or the Lord answered, or the Lord restored for somebody it might be the Lord opened a door. Or the Lord proved Himself faithful. Maybe for you the Lord made a way when there didn't seem to be a way.

It's the Lord who enables Yahweh Yitten

Whatever you're facing today, I came to tell somebody that God is able, our God is able.

Ephesians 3:20 (NIV) - Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Now to him who is what? Able.

Not only what you can ask or think, but more than all you can ask or imagine according to His power that is at work within us.

He is able. Whatever you need, God can do it and God can do even more than everything that you can imagine.

Now, I know what some of might be thinking right now. And if I'm being honest i know this because I have had the same thought from time to time. Some of you are thinking, If He can, why didn't He? If He can do it, why hasn't He?

If God is able, then why am I sitting here waiting on Him to do it?

And the truth is I don't know, but I do know He is there with you. Just trust Him in the waiting. He has a plan for your life.

And I don't know for certain but that might have been something that Ruth would've thought back in Chapter 1.

If you remember, her husband died, which wasn't her plan. And so she turned to God and she was very loyal to Naomi.

She said, Wherever you go, I go, your God will be my God, I'm sticking with you. And she stuck with her mother-in-law.

Her sister Orpah she's out. Her sister-in-law, she's gone.

And so this woman who's broke, what does she do? She goes and works early in the morning till late at night, gleaning in the fields, just trying to have enough food to eat in order to survive.

And in the gleaning she's worked hard, stayed faithful and she meets a cute guy who just might be the one who seems to be interested and then ghosts her.

God, where are you? I thought you sent Boaz, a man of God, a man of standing. I thought he would be the one to redeem me. And now here I am waiting. Where are you God?

Why didn't you do what I thought you were gonna do?

Maybe you ask, why didn't you heal the person that I loved when I prayed? Why didn't you save that marriage? Why didn't you come through in the way that I thought you would come through?

Where are you God?

And you're waiting. You're waiting. Stuck in Chapter 2 and stuck in Chapter 3.

But I want to remind you, and this is for somebody today, that while you are waiting, God is still working. Even though you may not see it, feel it, or sense it, doesn't mean He's not active.

And what I love about Ruth is even when she didn't see anything, she kept her faith and she didn't let her current situation or circumstances define her view of God.

So many times something will happen in our life that is less than stellar and we get angry with God. Changes our view on the goodness of God

Not Ruth she just kept on trusting. Why? Because Yahweh Yitten.

God is able, whatever you need, He is able. He Has an answer for every problem that you face.

We could say it this way, we could say, "He has a lifeline for every letter of the alphabet." Let me me give you an illustration..

A, He's able to answer your prayers. B, God is able to bless you abundantly. C, He can comfort you when you're hurting. D deliver you from evil. He empowers you that's your E, to do his will. F, He forgives all of your sins. G, He gives you your daily bread. He heals you when you are sick. I, He illuminates your path. J, He justifies us by his amazing grace.

K, He keeps you from stumbling. L, God loves you no matter what. M, He moves your mountains. N, He will never leave you nor forsake you. O, our God overcomes all your enemies by the blood of the lamb and by the word of your testimony. He provides P, for all of your needs. Q, He quiets your darkest fears. He restores what you lost. S, He strengthens you when you're weak. T, He transforms your life. U, He understands what you're going through. He vanishes your darkness. W, He works all things together for good. X, He extends you grace. Ok give me a little grace in that one as well. I know it starts with an E, but there's an X close by. Y, He yearns for all of your heart and Z, He zealously pursues you?

Whatever you need, Yahweh Yitten, God is able, our God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more than all you can ask, think or imagine.

Whatever you need, Yahweh Yitten. Our God is able whatever you need, and we see God show just how able He is. We see the answer, the provision in Ruth 4:14.

Ruth 4:14 (NLT) - Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel.

Let me pause here for just a moment. I want you to notice why they're worshipping God? It wasn't for Boaz's financial success, even though he had that, it wasn't for a promotion. It wasn't that they finally got to go on their dream vacation, but it was that God was providing a family legacy that would change the world.

He gave them life. Here this church, all life comes from God. Life is a gift from God. And we see them praising God that He provided for them.

"May this child be famous in Israel."

It continues. . .

Ruth 4:15 (NLT) - May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"

May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been," what?

Has been better to you than seven sons.

But this was not anywhere close to her plan. She never planned to leave Bethlehem to go in the Moab, she never planned for her husband to leave her hopeless because he died.

That wasn't her plan. That wasn't anywhere close to her plan.

But God had a better plan. And this baby Obed, which means servant of God was better.

Better than seven sons. Some of you right now are at a place that you did not plan.

And you may be disappointed where you are. But let me remind you of the goodness of a God who is able and whose plan is always better. God's plan is better.

And so when you don't get the job you want, tell yourself when you're in Chapter 2 or you're waiting in Chapter 3, but that there's something that God has for you in Chapter 4 that is even better than what you wanted in Chapter 2 because God's plan is better.

We see the story progress, In verse 17, we see this. . .

Ruth 4:17 (NLT) - The neighbor women said, "Now at last Naomi has a son again!" And they named him Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.

And they named him Obed, servant of God.

And he became the Father of Jesse and the grandfather of David."

Why does that matter? In the end of Ruth it goes into the lineage of who came next and who came next and who came next.

One of the major themes in the book of Ruth is the providence of God.

Remember what is the providence of God is? That's when God uses natural circumstances to bring about His supernatural will.

And in the Book of Ruth, you don't see any physical miracles. You don't see any parting of the Red Sea. You don't see anyone walking on water. You don't see anyone raising the dead. But you see the miraculous providence of God over and over again when He uses natural circumstances to bring about his supernatural will.

Last week we talked about the providence of God and we said it's a lot like Hebrew. When you read Hebrew, you actually read it backwards.

And the providence of God is best understood when it's viewed backwards. Let me illustrate it as I show you who are we as Christians?

We are followers of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything about our lives is about Jesus. He is our Lord. He is our savior, and our redeemer. He is our king and our righteousness. He is the door through which we enter. He is the good shepherd. He is the living water and the vine. His name is Jesus. Who loved us even before we knew Him.

And as we look at the lineage we looked at last week, we see Jesus and we read backwards just like in Hebrew, just like the providence of God is best viewed backwards.

We see Jesus, who came from Mary and Joseph, who came from Jacob.

And I won't read all the names because there's a lot of them and some are really hard to pronounce. But I think I did pretty good last week.

But if you go back through Jacob and Matthen and Zadok, down to Azor, to Jehoiachin and Josiah, and up to Jotham and Uzziah and down to Rohoboam. And then you get to the names we just saw, Solomon, David, Jesse, who came from Obed, who came from Ruth and Boaz.

As I try to wrap up today let's go back to who Ruth was in Chapter 1. Do you remember who she is? She's a Moabite woman. Do you remember Moabites worshiped the false god Chemosh.

They sacrificed babies to this false God. And she came from a people that were not the people of God. And this sinful Moabite woman turned to the God of Israel and He redeemed her and He restored her. And she left Moab and went to Bethlehem.

I want you to stop for a moment and think about this. When she married Boaz, that was her second marriage, her first husband died. This was not her plan.

And if you find yourself thinking you're at plan B right now, just remember God has a plan and God's plan is better?

Job 42:2 (NIV) - "I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

A different translation says no one can stop you.

And so, if you wake up somewhere in life and you didn't want to be here and you're disappointed and you're hurting and you're waiting, remember, while you're waiting, God is still working. God has something better.

His plan is still His plan and he will see it to completion. So even when you don't see Him, He's working. Even when you don't feel Him, He's working. Even when you don't understand it He's still working for your good and His glory in it.

And I want show you the progression of Ruth's identity. This is what we might call a buried treasure.

As you watch Ruth you see that her identity is strengthened by the presence of a loving God. And watch as the way she sees herself changes as she gets to know God even better.

Early on, she says this, she sees herself as a nochriyah. She sees herself as that. And in the Hebrew language, that means I am a foreigner. I don't even belong here.

And then in Chapter 2, she sees herself as a shiphah in Hebrew. And that is when she says to Boaz, "I'm lower than your servants."

I'm not even worthy to be a servant. I'm lower than that.

And then in Chapter 3, she sees herself as an ahmah. And that's a step up it means, I am your servant.

And then in Chapter 4, guess what she is. She's an ishah. I am your wife.

And as she gets to know the goodness of God, her identity starts to change.

Some of you right now, spiritually, you feel like a foreigner, not even good enough to be a servant. But God wants to change how you see yourself so that you can become exactly who He calls you to be.

In this Old Testament book of Ruth, we see the gospel all over it. Who is Ruth? She's a foreigner. She's a stranger, lost and broken in Moab. And she leaves Moab and pursues the one true God in Bethlehem. And she feels lower than a servant. She's not even worthy. She's a sinner.

But Boaz loves her. And he redeems her and he restores her and saves her not as a slave or not as a servant, but as a wife, as a family member.

And that's why I came to tell somebody, if you are in Christ, this is your story. If you have been born again and new by the grace of Jesus, this is your story.

Because one time in your life, God felt far away and you were hurting and broken, and you felt hopeless, but God had something better for you than you could ever imagine.

And God sent His one and only Son Jesus, the lamb of God who was without sin, who took on your sin, who shed His blood and died and rose again so that anyone who calls on Him would be safe and transformed.

He sent Jesus to love you, to save you, to redeem you.

And we see this very same story in the New Testament in the letter to Ephesus, Paul says this. . .

Ephesians 2:11-13 (NLT) - Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. You were called "uncircumcised heathens" by the Jews, who were proud of their circumcision, even though it affected only their bodies and not their hearts. In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.

And then it continues verse 19. . .

Ephesians 2:19 (NLT) - So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.

You're an ishah, you're a wife, the bride of Christ. You're an ambassador of the most high God. You are the light of the world. You are a child of the living God, a joint heir of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. Holy and blameless before Him.

That's who you are. When you know Him, you're not stuck in Moab. You find the blessings of God in Bethlehem.

So if you're stuck in the in between, stay faithful to God. Keep pursuing God because Yahweh Yitten, our God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than all you can ask or imagine according to His power that is at work within you, He is able.

And while you are waiting, God is still working. Even now, you may feel like you're in the middle of brokenness, but God's plan is better. There is a Chapter 4.

His blessings, His promises are for you.

2 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) - For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.

He's working in all things to bring about good to those who love Him and are called according to his purpose.

And one day you'll look back Just like Hebrew and see the providence of a good God who was with you all the time, even in this moment.

There's some of you that you might be a little bit kind of like Ruth was in Moab. Maybe you're not walking intimately with God right now. You may be lost and broken. You feel shame or regret for some of the choices you have made.

Well you feel that way because God gave you a conscience, and there's something in you that says that's wrong.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NLT) - Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end.

Talk about planted eternity

His plan is for you to come to know Him. Have a relationship with Him. Not just know the book, but the author of the book.

And you're here right now because God wants you to understand this, that He loves you, He loves you so much that He sent Jesus through the lineage of a Moabite woman to say to the world, you can have life and life abundantly.

Jesus, the son of God, perfect in every way, died for the forgiveness of all of our sins. And God raised Him from the dead, defeating death hell and the grave. So that anyone, that includes you.

It doesn't matter what you've done. Doesn't matter how alone you feel. Doesn't matter how far away God feels.

You can call on Him and know that He is as close as the mention of His name. Don't give up, get discouraged, or distracted in the waiting.

For my God is able.

Prayer