

AM Ruth 1 Ruth - The Outsider who came in

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 August 2026

Preacher: Mr Colin Rogerson

[0:00] 7, Ruth chapter 1. From the beginning.

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Malon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.

They went to the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives. The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other was Ruth.

They lived there about ten years, and both Malon and Kilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab.

[1:11] For she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

The Lord grants that you may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

And they said to her, No, we will return with you to your people. But Naomi said, Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?

Turn back, my daughters. Go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait until they were grown?

[2:20] Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters. It is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me.

Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, Naomi said, See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods.

Return after your sister-in-law. But Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go.

And where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die. And there will I be buried.

May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you. And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said, No more.

[3:26] So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, Is this Naomi?

She said to them, Do not call me Naomi. Call me Marah. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty.

Why call me Naomi when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me? So Naomi returned and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter, with her, who returned from the country of Moab.

And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest. Amen. This is God's word and may he bless it to us. Let's now look at and consider Ruth chapter 1 and indeed the book of Ruth as a whole, the person of Ruth.

That's what I want to do. I want to give a kind of holistic view of Ruth as a person today. But first of all, the book of Ruth itself could just as easily have been called the book of Ruth and Naomi.

[4:51] Because it is the story of not just one woman but two women. And how these two women were dealt with by the mercy and grace of God and his providence in some very remarkable ways.

And can I just encourage you at this point to say that it would be really good if you took time this afternoon perhaps just to read the book of Ruth.

Which is only really four sides of the Bible. It has four chapters. It is a story which on one level is a love story.

On the other hand it is a wonderful metaphorical depiction of how God deals with his people. As a story of Naomi, we have an account of how a family of God's people left the community of Israel. Something which God never envisaged that they should do. But this family went out to live outside the community. You could say outside the covenant community.

[6:02] Among a people who were not friends with Israel to say the least. We can come to that as to why in a moment. But they went on to suffer terrible loss in Moab.

And when Naomi's husband and sons died, she returned to live among God's people. That's as we read about in chapter 1.

As a story of Ruth, it tells us of a young Moabitess who was an outsider as far as God's people were concerned. And she returned with Naomi, her mother-in-law.

And was accepted into the community of Israel. So then we see Naomi as an insider who went out but came back.

And we see Ruth as an outsider who came in. So this morning I just want to focus on Ruth as the outsider who came in. And what the book of Ruth shows us in a very eloquent way is Ruth's search for security.

[7:11] That word is really key to understanding Ruth's situation. Her search for security.

Ultimately, I guess that one of the most major things that we desire in our own lives is a sense of security.

And we're living as we're thinking in prayer of a world in which there's so little now security in so many places. So I'd like us to focus on these four points with regard to security as we consider Ruth and her experience.

First of all, to have security is to belong to a community. Secondly, to have security is to have someone stronger than yourself to rely on.

Thirdly, to have security is to have sufficient resources for your life. And fourthly, to have security means to have a future.

And we're going to go through these and consider them in regard to Ruth, the Moabitess. First point is security.

[8:36] First point of security is community. Ruth, she actually did, you may say to me, well, she did belong to a community. She belonged to the Moabite people. When Naomi was leaving to go back to Bethlehem, she said, Naomi said to Ruth, look at Orpah, your sister, she's gone back to her people.

So she did have people. But what kind of people were the Moabites? That's a good question. It's clear that her community did not have the favor of the God of Israel.

The Moabites hated Israel. They lived, by the way, to the east side of the Jordan River, on the other part, which I think would now be considered to be part of Jordan.

They hated Israel as the Egyptians had before them. Remember the Egyptians, the Pharaoh who gave a command to kill all the little boys so the Israelites would not become too numerous and so on.

There is in Deuteronomy, sorry, in Numbers, the book of Numbers, there's a saga of how the king of Moab became afraid of Israel because of their numbers, because of how they had, up to that point, after leaving Egypt, how they had headed in their direction.

[10:05] And even though they didn't want, even though the Israelites didn't want to stay there on their way to the promised land, yet the Moabites king didn't even want them going anywhere near his territory.

Not even to pass through. And he sought to put a curse on them through a false prophet called Balaam. And when that didn't succeed, the Moabite king and his forces tried to get the Israelites to indulge in idolatry and immorality.

So they really had it in, you might say, for the Israelites, as so many have done since, we may say, even to the present day.

As a result of all this, the Lord had given Moses a special law that no Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord forever. Now that was, entering the assembly of the Lord was equivalent to saying, be counted as one of the Lord's people.

So we may say, well, how then is Ruth able to be finally accepted into Israel if no Moabite is able, it should come. And the answer to that is that God's judgments are balanced by his mercy.

[11 : 25] In fact, his mercy outweighs his judgments. We've just been singing Psalm 67. And Psalm 67 lays out this general principle that God wants all nations to sing his praise.

And so although as a general rule the Moabites were ruled against because of what they did and what they tried constantly to do to Israel, yet God still had mercy upon one of them.

Just like he had mercy upon Rahab the harlot in Jericho and others too who were not of Israel. God is the God of exceptional mercy.

The community of Israel were counted as a special people to the Lord. They were not to be contaminated by the lifestyle and attitudes of idolatrous people who were outside of God's covenant.

And that was why it was wrong of Naomi and her husband to go in the first place to Moab. Even if there was a famine. Because when God's people were faced with the decision of where to live, he had made them a promise, I will provide for you in this land.

[12 : 40] This land will be to you a land of milk and honey. And if that was not the case, if suddenly their crops began to fail, if other things, if the olives would drop off the trees, if all these things were happening, they were not to say, right, that's us off to the neighboring nation who haven't got a famine.

They were to sit down and ask themselves the reason. Why? Why is this happening to us? And if they'd simply read then in, for example, the book of Deuteronomy, which was in their possession from Moses several generations before, they would read there that when famines come and when there is scarcity, what you should do is return to the Lord your God.

Repent and return. Show him that you're grieving for having turned away from him. Because he says, the only reason why these things exist is because you've turned away. So turn back to me, return to me, and I will return to you, as he said to them in the book of Malachi.

So it's really important, however, with regards to community, to ask the question, what are the values that bind a community together? What does it stand for?

Another Old Testament example of this would be, you've probably heard of Lot and Abraham. Abraham and his nephew Lot, we'll hear more about Abraham this evening.

[14 : 08] Abraham and Lot were traveling on a journey, and there came a point when they had to separate, because there were too many of them living together, two distinct families and tribes, clans rather.

So Abraham gave Lot the choice of where to live. And Lot chose the well-watered plains of Sodom, basing his choice on purely environmental factors, rather than asking, what are the values of that community?

How will my spiritual life be affected by living among the people there? In Lot's case, we're told by Peter in the New Testament that as a result of living among the Sodomites, Peter says, Lot's righteous soul was tormented over the lawless deeds that he saw and heard.

So we need to consider how the values of a community will impact upon us, upon our families. And although we've no detailed knowledge of what impact simply living among the Moabites had upon Naomi and her family, what we can say is it was not an edifying experience, especially after the death of her husband and two sons.

But the truly remarkable thing is that despite the fact that Naomi was at a spiritual low in her life, that she still had witnessed somehow, effectively, to her daughter's in-law.

[15 : 36] It's quite striking, actually, that when it came to Ruth's desire to become a part of Naomi's community rather than her own, indeed to the forsaking of her own community, she was doing so because of what she saw in Naomi, what she got to know about the God of Naomi.

So, there is something there to be encouraged by that though we may not think sometimes that we are maintaining any kind of meaningful witness to the people we live among, we may consider ourselves to be quite feeble witnesses to the gospel of God's grace.

But yet, simply by living among people and being ourselves as Christians and being constantly aware of whose we are, that we belong to the Lord, unworthy specimens that we are, yet somehow God will still use us to influence people, our neighbours, our friends in the community. And that certainly is, I'll tell you, that is my own, my wife's own experience just now. We've moved to a little village just outside, not far from Pennycook. And the people are lovely, lovely people. There's no strong gospel witness there, however. And so, although we do, we don't feel we're up to the job, if you know what I mean, as in terms of effective Christian witness, yet we do pray and hope that through our daily encounters with folks, that we will be used by God.

[17 : 25] So that is exactly what he did with regards to Ruth, as she observed Naomi, her life, her person, her faith.

Even though Naomi had, and her husband had, turned aside at a point when they shouldn't have, what we discover, as we go through the book of Ruth, is that God is wonderfully forgiving. He is wonderfully restorative. He wants to restore his people. It's his heart. He wants people to come back to him, who may have turned aside at some point. Then, it must have been a really striking witness that Ruth observed, because what Ruth does, in that declaration that she makes, when Ruth says, when Naomi says, go back, follow your sister, Orpah, go back to your people, and your gods. Ruth says, no, don't urge me to leave you, or to return from following you. Where you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people.

[18 : 31] Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there shall I be buried. And then she invokes the name of the Lord. May the Lord do so to me, and more also, for anything, but death parts me and you.

So what she did there, and this is why Naomi stopped speaking to her about it, because she, Ruth had taken a solemn vow, forsaking her own gods, and her own people, in favour of the God of Israel, and his people.

And that's a truly remarkable thing, which someone who had been brought up, in an ungodly, idolatrous society, should do.

Clearly, God was preparing the heart, of Ruth, for that, for Naomi, to witness to her. Clearly. And who knows, whose heart God may be preparing, for you, to speak to them about Jesus. We don't know. No one ever comes to Christ, except the Father who sent him, draws them to Christ.

[19 : 39] So we don't know, what preparatory work may be done, to the people we have, in our circles, in our lives. It's a remarkable vow. It stands against, in stark relief, against much of what was going on, even in Israel at that time.

This was a time, when the judges ruled, we're told in verse 1, of chapter 1. And as the last verse, of book of judges tell us, in those days, Israel had no king, they're judges. Because, everyone did what was right, in his own eyes.

So with people doing, stuff that they, that suited them, without any reference, to God's laws, or values. That's quite remarkable, that Naomi had such an influence.

This reminds me of, another thing Jesus said, about the faith of another, non-Israelite. A Roman centurion, whose servant Jesus healed. And, this man, who believed Jesus, could heal from a distance, he didn't even need to come to his house.

Lord, I'm not worthy for you, to come to my house. Jesus is hearing this, from a, a Roman, a Roman centurion, a rugged centurion. And, Jesus says, I've never seen such faith, faith like this.

[20 : 52] No, not in Israel. And so, and they also, the people who brought, the man, and his servant, the man, to Jesus, when they, when they asked him, to heal his servant, they said to Jesus, he loves our nation.

And, that's clearly something, which was also true of Ruth. She obviously, had a love, for the people of God, for the, for Israel. Whereas, the rest of our nation, were, um, gnashing their teeth at Israel. In Ruth's case also, she, she'd come to love, the people of God, as we say. Uh, interesting little point. There's some interesting, little cameo features, in the book of Ruth.

And, one of them is this, we're told in, chapter 1, verse 14, that Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, goodbye, but Ruth clung, to her. Ruth clung.

That word clung, denotes a strong, unwavering commitment, that we'll never let go. It's the same word, that was, Joshua used, in Joshua 23, 8, when we, uh, read that Israel, uh, Joshua said, you're not to mix, with the nations, remaining in Canaan, or make mention of them, or the names of

their gods, or serve them, or bow down to them, but he says, you shall cling, to the Lord, your God. [22 : 10] And that's the kind of, of love, the kind of, sense of, belonging, that we should have, towards our God. That he is someone, whom we cling to, just as Ruth clung, to Naomi, that we love him, in the same way.

That's the strength, of that embrace. Um, so moving on, I'd like to, uh, consider the second point, of security.

First point being, a community, to belong to, a true community. Second point of security, someone stronger, than yourself, to rely on. Now the normal thing, in the world, which Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth, would, uh, the world they lived in, would have been, to lean on the support, to a husband. That was, that was what, uh, was normal for the time, certainly. Uh, but we know, and it still is, still should be, but we know that, uh, Elimelech, Malon, and Kilion, all, all had died, leaving behind, three widows, without support.

Now where in Moab, would a young, widowed Moabite woman, find, uh, someone to lean on? Uh, the Moabite God, people often lean on, their gods, don't they?

[23 : 25] Um, the Moabite God, Chemosh, was a, bloodthirsty idol, to whom the Moabites, would sometimes, even sacrifice, and I hate to say this, in, in public, sacrifice their infant children.

Terrible thing. Uh, but God's word tells us, that this is what they did. Um, the God, they had called, Baal, of Peor, was an idol, whose worship involved, gross immorality, and deep superstition.

So where could a young Moabite woman find peace and support in her own country after she became a widow? Um, well she couldn't, that's it. But later on in the book of Ruth, after Ruth came with Naomi to, to Judah, we read about Boaz.

Boaz, who became Ruth's husband, and he, he was one of the, uh, quite well off landowners of the area. And, he, he commended her in this way.

He said, uh, you've trusted yourself to the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you've come to take refuge. He recognized that she was really genuine in having put her faith in the Lord.

[24 : 41] To the extent it was like she, she'd cut, if the Lord had her wings like an eagle, it's like she'd come under his wings for refuge. That kind of picture.

So the Lord was Ruth's chief support. She felt herself surrounded and borne up as though by God's protective wings. So that's why she committed herself to this God because she, she'd learned from, uh, experience of worshiping him rather than those false idols of Moab.

She learned that he was really a good God and a protective God. One on whom she could rely.

And, uh, isn't that just, isn't that just, uh, what so many people in our own day are looking for?

Someone stronger than themselves to support them. But they're looking in all the wrong places.

They're looking in, for the security, um, largely in themselves so often.

Then they discover they don't have that. so they, it has a terrible effect on their lives. Um, Ruth felt, well, the book itself, the book of Ruth itself is an amazing study of how the Lord provides for and guides his people.

[25 : 57] Especially how, when Ruth started to go out into the fields to glean, to pick up the, the leftover grain after the harvesters had been, she just happened to come into the field of Boaz.

Now she had no idea who owned that field, but it happened to be Boaz who, who became her husband. God guided her and when she came home that night with, uh, with quite a lot of grain that Boaz had really arranged for her to, to get in addition to the, the, the stuff that she was, she would ordinarily have picked up.

Um, when, when Ruth, Naomi heard whose field she was in, she's, she realized that God was providing, providing support for them and the things they needed, but most especially even then we could almost see Naomi's, the cogs of Naomi's, uh, brain thinking, well, Boaz is, is, is, is, is available as a husband.

In fact, he's, he is actually related in a, a distant way to us. Perhaps he could be Ruth's husband.

So, by the way, in, Boaz's name is quite interesting because Boaz means in him is strength and that's exactly the kind of husband that Naomi, that Ruth rather, needed.

In him is strength and Ruth leant upon him. We could realize though that once a person comes under God's wings as Ruth did, that then they have the strongest person of all to lean on.

[27 : 39] Leaning, having a human being to lean on is good. It's good to have a strong person that we can turn to for advice or for help. But if we put, the Psalms are very clear on this, if we put our trust and strength in human beings, no matter how strong they are, ultimately we will be

disappointed.

Because at the very least what will happen is after their life, if they, die before us, they will then be left without them. But having God to rely on, we know that he is always there.

He will always be available. And just as Ruth herself, in symbolic terms, is a symbol of Christ's bride, the church, and every believer in it, so Boaz is a symbol of Jesus on whom every believer can rely.

Paul the apostle said, I can do everything through him who is strengthening me. Christ was strengthening him and he felt that he had the strength he needed to do the very difficult job he was doing.

The next point of security I want to mention is to have enough resources. Did Ruth have enough resources? There is no mention of any property or savings accumulated in Moab by Naomi or her daughters-in-law.

[28:58] What we do know is that after ten years Naomi returned to Israel poor. She said, I went away empty, sorry, I went away full from Israel, I went away to Moab full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.

She was right that when we do walk contrary to the Lord's will, we shouldn't expect to be blessed with prosperity, but what she didn't know or realize at the time was that the Lord's hand was not upon her for punishment, but for parental chastening.

We read in God's word, the Lord disciplines those he loves. And Naomi's judgment on her situation was made when she said, I've come away, I went away full, I've come back empty, don't call me Naomi, which means pleasant, call me Mara, which means bitter.

that was all before she saw the pieces of the jigsaw falling into place in the days following that, that she began to realize that although she came back empty, that the God of her fathers was going to provide for her everything she needed.

Again, as Paul says, my God shall supply all your needs through his riches in Christ. Psalm 21.3 mentions something very interesting.

[30:30] It says in Psalm 21.3 the Lord goes ahead of you with blessings. So sometimes where we are in our lives we don't see blessing.

But what we don't realize is that God has gone ahead of us and prepared the way for us to be blessed at some point after that. That he's already arranged that.

And that's what happened here. God had already gone ahead even before Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem. God had already gone ahead and prepared the way for what Ruth and Naomi were to experience after they arrived back.

So Ruth didn't know as I said that the owner of the field was going to be kind to her. He didn't know he was going to generate he was going to generously supply her and Naomi's needs.

And she didn't know that he was going to marry her. None of that was known when they came back. But the lesson for us I think is that it does us well always to be optimistic, to have the optimism of faith.

[31:38] If we know the Savior in whom we have trusted, we can trust him for everything, not just for a few things. he loves to show kindness and mercy to his people.

Sometimes we don't get what we think we need, but we realise in retrospect that sometimes the things we think we need were actually things we wanted, or perhaps it's because something much better was available.

I remember a young couple in Edinburgh, friends of ours, who went to see a house one day. young couple, first house, they're full of the optimism of young love, and they just got married, and I'm sure you know what I mean when you think of your first house.

It's a special house, among all the houses you may have after the years following. Anyway, they went home that night after seeing this house, and the next morning were phoned up by the state agent, sorry, the house has gone to somebody else.

So they were quite devastated because they were so sure that this house was going to be for them. But before the day was out, they got word of another house in the same area, and it turned out that was even better.

[33:02] It doesn't always work out that way, but sometimes what we experience in our lives, though we don't understand the reason for it, it can be, it certainly will be for our good in terms of the wisdom of our heavenly father, but sometimes he does hold back something because there's

something better just about to happen.

So that was the case certainly in Ruth's case, but that's also not just what God did for Ruth, but it's what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us.

He has saved us, redeemed us from a state of what you could call spiritual bankruptcy, having nothing, into a state of great prosperity, having all things.

You may think that's a trite saying, some kind of misguided optimism on my part, but Paul again writes, if God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, all things that is that we need, all things that we should have.

Through Jesus Christ, God has provided his people with everything they need. David, the writer of the Psalms, said, the Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing.

[34 : 28] And this is something that Naomi and Ruth came to realize, and it's something every Christian believer experiences. My fourth point of security is to have a future. Now, if Ruth hadn't gone with Naomi, she would have had no future to speak of.

As Ephesians 2 puts it, persons in her situation were excluded from citizenship in Israel, foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

And as Paul says, the basic reason these things are so, because people are separate from Christ. In Christ and in Christ alone, is the hope of a bright future.

And that's something that we should realize for our own lives. As we begin to wrap things up here, let's have to ask a couple of questions.

One question I'd like to ask is, who and where are the Moabites today? Can anybody tell me where the Moabites are today? I'd really like to know where they went to.

[35 : 38] But we don't know. They've disappeared into the mists of time and never to be found again. Lost without a trace, disappeared.

Whereas we do know where Israel is today. The Jewish people have been preserved in such a wonderful way that it's clear that God yet has firm purposes and promises for them.

Those promises, having said that, those promises are in Christ. And before they can reap the blessings of those promises, they must turn to him as their true and only Messiah.

Second question there I want to ask is, as we move to a conclusion, what was the future of Ruth and Naomi? Ruth's great grandson was King David.

And we know that David was the direct ancestor of none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. It's truly remarkable that Ruth the Moabitess, who came from such an obscure and also such an evil society, that she was so fully integrated into the family of God's people, Israel, that as to become the ancestor of the saviour of mankind.

[37 : 09] No greater or more glorious future could be possible. And we could even say that just as was said of Abraham, he was told, through you all peoples on the earth will be blessed.

we could take that verse and apply it also to Ruth. Through you all peoples on the earth will be blessed. In exactly the same way, through her descendant.

Now as we do talk to a close, let's ask the question, what about us and the security we need for our own life? Question, what community do you consider you belong to?

Where do you belong to most strongly? Is it the community of Scotland or England or is it some sub-community of those countries?

Is it a community that will stand the test of time? Or is it one that will pass away like everything else does in this world? What we do know, because Jesus told us it's so, that the community, that he is building will stand forever.

[38 : 26] And he even said that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. The community of believers in him is the only community that will stand the test of time.

At the end of time, there will be, around the throne of God, people drawn from every nation under earth.

there will be a multitude, a crowd that no one can number, just like those stars I was talking about earlier, uncountable, and they will be drawn from every nation, every kindred, tongue, and people. But, although they will have, although ethnicity itself will not be eradicated in the kingdom to come, in the new earth, there will not be these communities that will count.

People will have been drawn from them, yes, but only to be forged and welded into one community in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, which there are no ethnic distinctions as regards

belonging to Christ.

[39 : 41] In Christ alone, our hope is found for that. Secondly, what about someone to lean on, a strong person?

We all need such a person, not just for time, but for eternity. Someone who will always be there for us, someone whom we will not lose through death. Who do you know that best fits that description? Or will we simply be waiting until one by one, all our friends, family, and people we lean on will disappear through death. That is not a good situation.

We must put our reliance on someone stronger than that, someone who will last. And Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He will never grow weak, and he's the one who said, I'm the living one, I was dead, but now I'm alive forevermore. And he's alive forevermore to strengthen us, to unite us, to himself.

[40 : 47] Where do we look to for the resources we need in our life? God showed Ruth that Boaz was the one person on whom she could depend for her future.

And every Christian knows in their heart of hearts that they do not need to worry about tomorrow. Because if they give priority to seeking God's kingdom and his righteousness, then everything they need will be given to them.

As I've said earlier, my God, says Paul, my God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. What does our future look like, lastly?

What is our hope? If you were to ask, this is an interesting little experiment. I'm not suggesting that you necessarily do it, but you could. If you're talking to someone about their future, maybe like that young couple I was telling you about who took up that first house of theirs, that kind of situation.

If you ask a series of questions, what will you do in the future? Then you would, if they're at school still, they would say, well, after school I might go to university, I might get a job.

[42 : 01] What will you do then? And then what? Get married, have a family, then finally retire, and then, yes, I'll retire, and then what will you do?

Well, I'll try and enjoy the retirement as much as I can and be useful, perhaps, in certain ways. If you keep putting these two words, okay, and then, and then, and then, they reach a point, if you do that experiment, people reach a point where first of all they think you're a wee bit weird, then they feel uncomfortable because they don't have any answers for what comes next.

And they may in a sort of mumbly way say, well, I suppose I would die. But you can still ask the same question, okay, and then, and then.

If it's someone like my brother, who I know that is known to some of you, you know of him anyway, he's firmly atheistic, and as far as he's concerned, after death there is nothing for him, no consciousness of anything, no existence in any way, and believe me, I've tried to speak to him about that, but that's his future, he thinks, and I dread to think of what will happen the moment after he dies, when he realizes this was not this is not the future I thought I was going to have, standing before God, being judged for my life, for who I am, and what I've not done, especially not putting my trust in Jesus, that's the most horrific realization that anyone could ever make, but to have a future, not just to have a future, but having the most glorious future is what the

Christian's destiny is, because in Christ we have a secure living hope, as Peter has said, being born again through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, this living hope is an eternal security, and if you do not already know this hope in your own life, that hope could be yours, that security could be yours today, if you put your trust in him, and do what Ruth did, and take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel.

[44 : 47] And I just want to conclude with the words that were spoken years and years later to the people of Judah, who thought that they had no future anymore, because at that point, they were then in exile, but God came to them and said, I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

And may that be the experience of us all. Let's pray. O gracious Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you and we rejoice that our future is secure if we trust in Christ.

We thank you that we have someone stronger than anyone ever could be on this earth to lean on.

We have someone who provides us with all the resources that we could ever need for our lives.

And not just for here on earth, but for eternity. We thank you, Lord, that you are building a community which will never end, which will never fade, and which we will always be thoroughly fulfilled in as members of it if we have trusted Jesus.

So we pray, Lord, that you will search our hearts and if we have not so far closed in with your offer of forgiveness through Jesus, that good word of the gospel, we pray that we would do so today.
[46 : 36] Help us to draw near to you and to know that our future is secure, that in you, Lord, we have all the security that we could ever want or need.
in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.