

# God's Good Providence Unfolds

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to share with you from this beautiful story how God's providence unfolds. So that in the mind and the wisdom of God, his decree, it's there.

It's all known to God. And he has the joy of unfolding it, one fold after the other, as it opens up before his people. And that's my simple message for you today.

I just want you to see in this beautiful story from the book of Ruth, how God's good providence unfolds. And that from that, you'll be strengthened and encouraged that this same God, his same providence is good for you.

And I want to draw your thoughts and your imagination to my favorite protagonist, because I see him almost like a Ruth type of a character. And it comes from my favorite novel by C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*.

You know that one? Every Christian should read *The Horse and His Boy* at least one time in their life, maybe once a year. Well, the protagonist's name is Shasta. And his story begins as an orphaned baby.

[ 1 : 06 ] He's this baby on a ship in the ocean. Everyone else died. And there's this little vessel now, this little boat that the baby is placed on. And there's that boat with the baby on it and far away from the shore.

And if it hadn't been for the lion getting into the water and pushing that little boat all the way to where a fisherman was working at night, that baby would have perished.

Well, then, as that boy grows up, he gets placed on this adventure. And turn after turn, it's near brushes with death. He is chased on this magnificent horse.

And there's a wild cat whose claws are like blades chasing after them. At another point, it's dark and cold. And he has to take refuge among the tombstones.

And these jackals start to surround him. And he thinks he's going to get devoured in the middle of the night. But there's a great, mighty beast that drives the jackals away.

[ 2 : 07 ] Well, I don't want to spoil the story. But through every one of those moments, it was Aslan. It was the great lion who both chased him and drove away the enemies who pushed that boat to shore.

And so Shasta, looking back on this whole adventure he's been part of, he sees Aslan, the great lion, with him at every point in the story. He had been downcast.

He had been about to quit. And when he thought his finish line had been crossed and he was done, he's asked to be the one now to take one final message. The only message that could save the people of Narnia.

And in Lewis's words, when he heard that he had to go do this one other mission next, Shasta's heart fainted at these words. For he felt he had no strength left and he writhed inside at what seemed the cruelty and unfairness of the demand.

He had not yet learned that if you do one good deed, your reward usually is to be set to do another and harder and better one. Have you felt that before?

[ 3 : 13 ] It might seem that the life of a Christian as a traveler, a sojourner, a pilgrim in this present evil age is full of those same emotions that Shasta went through.

Fear, exhaustion, confusion, comfort, protection, doubt, depression, and hope being restored. Well, I want to show you in this passage two different pictures of the believer.

The first one is what I'm calling the depressed believer. A believer who is depressed. And that's Naomi. And the second one is the determined laborer.

And then I want to show you how God, his providence unfolds for both of them through the character Boaz, a historical man named Boaz. Because Boaz is a type.

He is the profile of the man of Bethlehem that would be fulfilled and exceeded by Jesus Christ. So first, Naomi, the downcast believer. How did God's good providence unfold for the downcast believer?

[ 4 : 17 ] I should define the term we're using first, providence. In An Orthodox Catechism, question 27, it defines providence this way. The Bible teaches that providence is the almighty and ever-present power of God by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures.

And he so rules them that the leaf of a blade, the rain of the drought and the drought, the fruitful and the lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty.

All things, in fact, come to us not by chance, but from his heavenly fatherly hand. That's providence. So how did God's providence unfold for Naomi, the downcast believer?

First, I feel like I need to show to you why I've come to the conclusion that I think Naomi was a believer in the first place. First reason is because she confesses that God is almighty.

She recognizes the sovereignty of God. She does recognize his providence. Now look at chapter 1, verse 20. Naomi says, Do not call me Naomi.

[ 5 : 31 ] Naomi, we saw last time, it means pleasantness. Don't call me pleasant. Instead, she says, call me Mara. Mara means bitter. She used to be pleasant. Now she feels bitter.

Now notice the term she uses. For the almighty. The Hebrew word is Elohim, the almighty creator God. So he's sovereign.

He rules. He has dealt very bitterly with me. Now look at verse 21. She says, The almighty, Elohim again, has brought calamity upon me.

She's a believer and she recognized God is sovereign. He has power and his providence is over all his creation. She feels that all of her losses that she experienced in the land of Moab have wounded her so deeply that it's unimaginable how God could possibly restore all that she had lost.

How could God possibly bless her to the point that it would exceed all the suffering she's already gone through? By going to Moab, we saw she was leaving the place where God promised to dwell.

[ 6 : 38 ] And through God as king, they would enjoy blessings. By going to Moab physically, her family had removed themselves from the refuge that God had promised to provide. And she had, in fact, now seen God's unfolding providence in the worst possible way from all of those things she loved.

Husband, children, her sons being stripped away from her. And now in poverty as a widow. Away from God's presence, there is no refuge.

I do think Naomi was a believer. But I think why she was downcast was even more complex than that. She was not downcast because she was worldly, necessarily, I don't think.

I think she was in question of God's trustworthiness. She was having a hard time understanding how can this God who promises to show covenant faithfulness leave me feeling so empty to the point that I am bitter.

And the reason I say that is because of the other two terms she gives to God in verse 21. Look at verse 21. She says, I went away full. So when she left God's land, went into Moab, she was full.

[ 7 : 50 ] And now she uses a different name for God. She says, the Lord. This is not Elohim Almighty. This is the Lord. This is Jehovah. This is the covenant name for God.

It was the Lord who brought me back empty. Where is his faithfulness to his promise? She says, why call me Naomi when the Lord, there it is again, Jehovah, the covenant Lord, has testified against me.

That's my conclusion. Naomi was a believer. And she was extremely downcast. She was not the only believer to be downcast. Paul said in 2 Corinthians chapter 7, God who comforts the downcast. That's who God is. He is the one who comforts his own people when they are downcast. He has comforted us, Paul wrote, by the coming of Titus. So here's Paul in the life of the church, downcast. Questions, doubts, rolling through his mind, waves of deep, heavy emotion. And God comforts him by sending Titus. I think that's significant as well.

[ 8 : 57 ] But first, I don't want to pass over this too lightly. David Murray, he's a current pastor and he's been a professor of the Old Testament at Puritan Reformed Seminary.

He wrote a book called Christians Get Depressed Too. And he says, this is his quote, The psalms treat depression more realistically than many of today's popular books.

David and other psalmists often found themselves deeply depressed for various reasons. They did not, however, apologize for what they were feeling, nor did they confess it as sin. It was a legitimate part of their relationship with God. The psalmists interacted with God through the context of their depression.

Christians get depressed too. But Naomi saw that God has providence over her life and she was feeling empty. She was maybe wondering, is there anything God could possibly do now to pull me out of this, to lift my sight, to cause me to once again to look up with hope?

[10:04] What could God possibly do? Our 1689 confession tackles that same question. I'm a believer and yet I'm suffering.

I have these deep, heavy emotions. Does God let his people suffer? Here's how our confession answers it. The Bible teaches that our most wise, righteous, and gracious God does oftentimes leave his children for a season to endure manifold temptations and corruptions of their own hearts. Why? It's to discipline, to refine, and to sanctify them for their own good. It's to show them that within your indwelling flesh, even though you're united to Christ, there's still a great war waging on that you need to fight against.

There are deceitfulness and corruptions that need to be surrendered to the Lord once again. You need to be made low by God stripping away these things that have brought you comfort and make you even more dependent upon him.

That's the lesson that the Lord needed to teach Naomi. She can trust him. He is wise. See, back to the story of Narnia. The boy felt that same emotion.

[11:23] He had seen the princess who he was running away with. She was also chased by that ferocious wild cat. And at one point, that cat leaped up and scratched her on her back, and it left the marks across her back.

And so when they finally came to the conclusion of the story at the end, he has a chance to talk to Aslan, the great lion. And the boy asked Aslan, why did you allow her to get scratched and hurt that way?

And we feel that. There are loved ones that we, it breaks our heart to see them suffer. And how could God allow that? Listen to how Aslan and Lewis's words responds.

Child, said the lion, I am telling you your story, not hers. No one is told any story but their own. And there may be a time if you're comforting a loved one who's been so deeply wounded, that might be the answer that you need to hear. Trust the Lord. He deals with you, and he will deal with them.

[12:26] And the Lord is not silent. Aslan then spoke to the princess, and he said to her, It was I who wounded you, said Aslan. I am the only lion you met in all your journeys.

Do you know why I tore you? No, sir, says the princess. The scratches on your back, tear for tear, throb for throb, blood for blood, were equal to the stripes laid on the back of your stepmother's slave.

The princess had lied, and that slave had been unjustly punished because of her sin. You need to know what it felt like. And the Christian is brought to the place where we see our sin for what it is, how hurtful our sin is of others.

But our God is faithful, and he is patient. And when you do experience suffering, may it just remind you of how much sin he's forgiven in you, and how much destruction our sin has caused others. This reminds me of a pastor, John Flavel. He was a Puritan minister at the time where the Puritans were being shut down. They had to go flee into the fields and preach in the open air because it was illegal to be proclaiming the gospel straight from the Bible.

[13:36] He lost five immediate family members. And when the crowds were coming out, and they're trying to arrest Puritan ministers, it was John Flavel's face that they put on an epitaph, on a picture to say, This is who we need to take down.

And here's what John Flavel said about the providence of God, even through that suffering and hardship. And remember, he's a minister. He knew the Bible and Hebrew and Greek, and he loved the Word of God.

He said, The providence of God are like Hebrew words. They can only be properly read backwards. What a comfort that is.

Now look at verse 18. Chapter 1, verse 18. When Naomi saw what will lift her eyes. Remember, Paul had Titus come and join their church, and they were so encouraged.

Verse 18. When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said no more. Now look at verse 22. Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

[14:40] See how God often uses others in our lives. We're in this present evil age, awaiting the age to come together. And God uses the faith of others, the faith in action. God had converted Ruth.

And when Naomi, the downcast believer, was at her lowest point, God brings along Ruth to comfort her. And Naomi saw this faith in action. And then they returned together to Bethlehem, taking refuge in God's presence once again together.

And it was the beginning of barley harvest. There's a little hint. Remember, why did they have to leave Bethlehem to begin with? It's because they had turned away from God. They had turned to idols as a nation.

And as a result, the Lord withheld the rain. And they had famine in the land. There's no harvest. There's no food. There's no abundance or surplus. They had to go anywhere just to survive.

And now it's the beginning of barley harvest. And God is blessing his people again. There's a hint of how God is restoring now to Naomi. That she can trust him and hope in him once again.

[15:43] It's as though the Lord says through each event in this beautiful story that his good providence will unfold for Naomi. Naomi, I am the one who dried up the rain.

I am the one who took your family to the place where Ruth was. I am the one who taught Ruth about my salvation as a covenant-keeping Lord through your son, her first husband, and through your family.

The Lord says to Naomi, I am the one who brought your sons and your husbands sooner to glory with me. I am the one who gave Ruth a new heart.

And it gave her a faith. And I called her to return with you to my land to take refuge where my wings protect my people. I am the one who will decide when it is your time to leave this earth, Naomi.

And I am the one who is not through with you yet. I need to sanctify your soul further, Naomi. I need to prepare you for glory and for eternity with me.

[16:49] And I am the one who will give you strength for yet another day. Yes, I am the one who fills the empty. No one else can do it. Dear daughter, the Lord says, I see that you are downcast.

Find refuge in me. Take refuge in my good providence. I will unfold it for you one step at a time.

Trust me yet again today. And I know that among our group, there are believers who feel or have felt, maybe for long seasons, extremely downcast.

And in thinking of Naomi and this beautiful story, my prayer has been for you this week that when you are struggling to see God's good providence in your life, that you too will take refuge in the Lord.

He is your covenant-keeping Lord. In those moments, don't flee from him. Don't run to temptation. Stay near to your Lord and let him fill you.

Let him strengthen you. You belong to his family. I pray that this church can be a spiritual family.

Just like Ruth brought that great encouragement to Naomi when she saw her, she stopped arguing and followed where the Lord was calling her.

[18:09] I pray that we can do that for one another. And I'll share that each of you have done that for me. I see the Lord working in your lives. I see his faith in action in you.

And what an encouragement that is. For as many days and months and years as the Lord will give us, may we always be that spiritual family that builds one another up. And the prayer is that Psalm chapter 3.

In that dark moment or that heaviness that you feel, may you cry aloud to the Lord. And he will answer you from his holy hill, from his kingdom in heaven.

He hears you. You can confess like the psalmist, you, O Lord, you are a shield about me. He is your refuge. And you are the lifter of my head.

Well, that's Naomi, the downcast believer. Let's focus next on Ruth, the determined laborer. Look at chapter 1, verse 18. Naomi saw that Ruth was, what's the word?

[19:13] Determined. So she's determined. That means the Lord has called her. And his calling is effectual. She will go back to the refuge of the Lord. Now look at chapter 2, verse 7.

This is the servant who's in charge of the laborers. Notice the reputation Naomi's already got. Chapter 2, verse 7. Here's what Ruth said.

Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers. So she came and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.

If there's one word that describes Ruth, that she's a worker. She is here to labor. She's determined. And she's a worker. I should explain. What is it to glean?

You know, God, even before there were kings in Israel, there was still the law where God would be ruling over his people. And when Moses gave the law, he took care of the poor. And to be a reaper means that you are going through.

[ 20 : 10 ] You're hired by the owner of the land. You're reaping. You're cutting the barley. And you're collecting it and tying it up in sheets in these bundles. Now, the gleaning is what the poor people would do. They would go and take those little bits that were missed or maybe on the corners, the edges, and they would gather those one by one by one and just gather up a little bit like the scraps that were remaining.

That's what it means to glean. So Ruth, widowed, foreigner. She's as low as you could be in this society. And she is out there gleaning, just basically collecting, you know, the scraps that might be left.

Now, I want to show you two things with Ruth. Number one, how powerfully God converted Ruth's desires. See, we saw last time how Ruth had turned.

She had forsaken Moab, worldliness, idolatry, the darkness, and she had turned now to the land that God promised to bless. So she converted. She had turned away from sin, turned to the Lord. But now God has powerfully put a desire, a longing deep inside her soul. She is after not physical comfort. That's what Orpah, the other stepdaughter, wanted.

[ 21 : 20 ] She wanted a husband, a land, a comfortable place among the polytheistic gods of Moab. But Ruth wanted something else. She did not want physical comfort.

She wanted spiritual blessing. And here's why I say that. Look at chapter 1, verse 15. Naomi is going to use a phrase here in chapter 1, verse 15.

She's going to refer to two things, a people and a God. Now, she's referring to Orpah, the other sister-in-law who went back to Moab. She said, see, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods.

Return after your sister-in-law. Now, look at Ruth's response. She takes that phrase, your people and your God, and she goes all in and she goes big with it.

This is how committed I am to not being part of Moab's people and those gods, to being committed to the true God and his covenant people. Look at verse 16. Ruth said, Ruth desired to take refuge with the covenant-keeping God.

[ 22 : 43 ] Why do I say that? That phrase, people and God, that's the language God uses when he's making a divine covenant. With Abraham, God said, you and your descendants will be my people and I will be your God.

At Mount Sinai with Moses, the people of Israel delivered out of Egypt. Even every time we read the law, the Ten Commandments, you will be my people and I will be your God. It's a covenant relationship between God the Creator and the people he is putting his love on.

And that's what Ruth has to be part of. God converted her desires. Look at verse 17. Ruth says, Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts me from you.

Ruth reminds me of that princess in Narnia. Yes, after she understands the goodness and the kindness and the might of the lion, she says to Aslan, That's the converted desire in Ruth's heart. She has to be near the Lord. She wants to be near him. And it's like Ruth could pray like we do from an Orthodox catechism question number nine. The eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and everything in them, who still upholds them and rules them by his eternal counsel and providence.

[ 24 : 16 ] He is my God and Father because of Christ his Son. And can you say this too? I trust him so much that I do not doubt he will provide whatever I need, body and soul, and he will turn to my good.

Whatever adversity he sends me in this sad world, he is able to do this because he is the Almighty God. He desires to do this because he is a faithful father.

Well, Ruth was that determined laborer. God converted her desires. And God also provided for her as she labored. See, the providence of God is not one that contradicts the means that God has put

in place to carry out his will in this world.

Look at verse three. I want to show you what I mean. Chapter two, verse three. Ruth says that we're told that she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

See that phrase? She says she happened to come to the part of the field. The word happened in the Hebrew. It's really like he's saying a happenstance happened.

[ 25 : 34 ] You know, and this is a book that's all about God's providence. And he's saying now it just so happened that Ruth, as she was gleaned, was now in the part of the field that belonged to Boaz.

And that's the first time we hear this great name, Boaz. And what's the detail we're reminded of here? He is from the clan of Elimelech. Who was Elimelech? That was Naomi's husband. And last time we saw Elimelech, Naomi's husband, it means God is king. God is king. And when he left to Moab, Elimelech dies. God is no longer king.

So Samuel, as he's writing this origin tale for the great King David, pointing the way to Jesus Christ, the king of kings, he wants you to make those connections. Boaz is a man under whose rule God is king.

So his field, his dominion, Ruth is now here. It just happened by happenstance. Ruth is now here and God is king. He rules over the place where she is gleaned. But you see, she was the one going out early, laboring hard.

[ 26 : 37 ] And God then directed the circumstances. It happened that she was right there. See, that's God's beautiful providence working through means. And the question in the 1689 comes up.

Does God's providence eliminate the need for other means? Can we just say, well, God will save all the nations. We can just sit here and do whatever we feel like doing.

Well, guess what? The Bible teaches that God in his ordinary providence makes use of means. Yet he is free to work without them.

Yes, he can do miracles. He is free to work above them or even against the means he's ordained. That's how great his providence is. But God provided for Ruth as she labored.

And as we labor within the Lord's kingdom, he is the one who will do the miracle and bring the harvest. We trust him with that. So I know as a church plant, every single one of you, I believe you are a determined laborer.

[ 27 : 36 ] And I praise God for your partnership and gospel ministry. I also pray that God will protect you and preserve you. That he will multiply your strength and energy. So my prayer for you as a determined laborer in God's kingdom, like Ruth, is that you will also continue to take refuge in the Lord.

Trust that as you labor, he will provide. He will work through the means that he is ordained. And you will get to also see his good providence. It just happened that because we did this, the Lord chose to do this.

And as this happened, the Lord opened up this. Isn't that so beautiful? We see his good providence unfold even as we labor. Well, they came to Bethlehem and the whole town was astir.

You see how powerful the Lord is using this lady, Ruth? The poorest of the poor, a woman that's been orphaned from Moab, the enemies. And God is bringing her now.

And people are trying to understand why is she with Naomi? Look at verse 19, chapter 1, verse 19. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was astir because of them. Isn't that an encouragement?

[ 28 : 46 ] That as we put the faith that God is giving us into action, we labor, we see his providence unfold. The Lord blesses and he causes that to have an effect on others as well.

So Psalm 37, verse 4 can be our prayer and our encouragement. May we once again delight ourselves in the Lord who alone can satisfy our desires.

Well, this brings us now to Boaz. If Naomi was the downcast believer and Ruth was the determined laborer, Boaz is a desired comforter.

Look at chapter 2, verse 2. He was desired. After him in whose sight I shall find favor, says Ruth. She is looking for someone who could show favor and just be merciful.

Let me have a little extra to glean so that Naomi and me can survive. She was desiring someone that would show such kindness. Now look at chapter 2, verse 13. Ruth said, So Boaz was the desired comforter.

[ 29 : 59 ] And all the words that come out of Boaz's mouth bring exactly that. They bring comfort to those the Lord draws to him. All right.

I want to show you two things about Boaz. First, how I'm going to call him the Bethlehem man. The Bethlehem man's profile. Then second, I want to show you how this profile is met and fulfilled and exceeded by the greater Bethlehem man.

So the Bethlehem man's profile. I want to paint this picture of Boaz with 11 observations. I'm going to go kind of quick.

So put your finger on the scripture. Try to keep up. Ready? Number one. God is his king, as we saw. Chapter 2, verse 1. He was a man of the clan of Elimelech. And that's exactly what it means. So the Bethlehem man is a man whose king is the Lord himself. Number two. His reputation is solid. Same verse.

[ 30 : 59 ] Chapter 2, verse 1. He is described as a worthy man. Number three. Boaz is strong and effectual. We're told his name was Boaz.

And Boaz in the Hebrew means strong, swift, slayer. That's a great name. You picture Boaz going out into battle. When he strikes, he will slay.

And it will be swift and strong. You could say he is effectual. That's who the Bethlehem man is. Number four. The dominion, the field, the rule over which Boaz was in charge was abundant and generous.

Look at chapter 2, verse 4. Behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. Bethlehem means house of bread, a place of abundance. That's significant. From Boaz in Bethlehem, blessings will flow and overflow. Number five. Boaz pronounces God's blessing on those who labor in his field. Look at verse 4. His laborers, to them he said, into the reapers.

[ 32 : 09 ] How does he greet them? The Lord be with you. Here's a man from Bethlehem. He goes around blessing everyone that God brings into his path. Number six. His people also bless him.

Look at chapter 2, verse 4. They answered back, the Lord bless you. So if you're around Boaz, there's blessings flowing back and forth. Number seven. Boaz pays attention to his beloved.

Look at verse 5. Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, whose young woman is this? See, Boaz takes note. He pays attention and he sees Ruth, who will become his beloved wife one day.

Number eight. The man of Bethlehem keeps his beloved close by. Look at verse 8. Boaz said to Ruth, keep close. Number nine.

He protects his beloved. Look at verse 9. I charge the young men not to touch you. And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink the water that the young men have drawn.

[ 33 : 12 ] So he keeps her close. He protects. He provides for her. There's food. There's water. You will not be harmed. You stay here and you'll enjoy my blessings. Number 10.

The man of Bethlehem evokes humble gratitude within the heart of his beloved. Notice humility and gratitude in Ruth's response to him. Look at verse 10.

Ruth fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should take notice of me since I am a foreigner? She's humble and grateful.

And the number 11, our last one for Boaz, is that he encourages his beloved, not with his own goodness and his own provision, but with God's providence.

Look at verse 11. Boaz answered her, All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother in your native land and came to a people that you did not know.

[ 34 : 12 ] Verse 12. The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

So Boaz says to Ruth, You have come to take refuge in the Lord. May you be able to watch, just watch, and see how his ever-unfolding providence for you will continue to be so good.

Well, Boaz represents protection and provision. And it's paving the trail for King David, the man who battled, who was a swift slayer, but also the man of peace, which was Solomon.

So David Solomon, the one-two punch, setting up that full type for Christ. What I mean is this. If you come under the rule of Boaz, like Ruth did, that's a taste of what God would do through David and Solomon.

All the nations would come to Jerusalem. They would enjoy the peace and abundance that the king from Bethlehem had provided. But it was not about David and Solomon. That was really pointing to

the greater man from Bethlehem, Jesus Christ himself.

[ 35 : 26 ] I want to walk through those same 11 points in this profile of this man from Bethlehem. And I want you to think of Jesus Christ fulfilling and exceeding each one.

How is Jesus the greater Bethlehem man? Number one, God is his king. Jesus prayed in Matthew 6, 10, Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus Christ is a worthy man. In Revelation 4, verse 11, we're told he is worthy to receive honor and glory and power because he created all things and by his will they exist and were created.

Jesus Christ is the worthy man. Number three, Jesus is strong, swift. He is effectual. In John chapter 10, verses 14 and 15, Jesus said, I laid down my life to save my own.

And my own know me. So when the shepherd calls the one he laid his life down for, they will hear his call. He purchased them. They are his.

[ 36 : 37 ] Jesus, number four, has a dominion that is abundant. Jesus is the bread of heaven. John chapter 6, verse 32, Jesus says, Amen, amen.

Believe this from God. The Father gives you the bread from heaven, which is Jesus Christ himself, the man of Bethlehem, the house of bread. Number five, our Lord Jesus Christ pronounces God's blessings to those who labor in his field.

In Luke 10, verse 2, we read that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

And then in Luke 24, 51, as Jesus in his glorified, resurrected body, ascending back to the right hand of the Father in heaven, we're told this, while he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

Number six, his people also bless him. Jesus Christ fulfills what Zechariah 168 prophesied, Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people.

[ 37 : 52 ] And he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. In Ephesians 1, 3, blessed, he has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

Number seven, Jesus Christ pays attention to his beloved. Revelation 2, verse 9, the Lord speaks to the church in the city of Smyrna, and he says, I know your tribulation, your poverty, but your blessing is in the heavenly place.

Verse number eight, he says that Jesus keeps his beloved close by. Listen to the words of our Lord in John chapter six, whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.

If you are part of this new covenant through the work of Jesus Christ, he keeps you close to him.

Number nine, Jesus protects his beloved. Hebrews 6, 18, we who have fled for refuge might find strong encouragement and hold fast to the hope set before us.

So we hold fast to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our refuge for the church today. Number 10, Jesus evokes humble gratitude within the heart of his beloved.

[ 39 : 08 ] What should be the response? What will be the response of everyone who truly has tasted the kindness of Jesus? Well, it's like that leper that Jesus healed in Luke 17. He saw that he was healed, and instead of going to the temple, he returned back to the one who healed him, to Jesus, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, just like Ruth fell at the feet of Boaz.

And he said, praise be to God. And then the author gives us the note, and he was a Samaritan, just like Ruth was a foreigner. Humble, grateful response to the Savior.

And the last one, number 11, Jesus Christ encourages his beloved with God's providence. In John 14, 1, Jesus says, believe in God, believe also in me.

And in Luke 22, 20, Jesus says, you can believe in God because of the covenant promise. This same God who is faithful to keeping his covenants, as he unfolds his good providence for every soul.

I now bring that covenant faithfulness to you through my blood. The new covenant in my blood poured out for you. That's why you can believe in God and his goodness.

[ 40 : 26 ] Let's pray. O Lord, teach us to be patient when things go against us and thankful when things go well.

Give us good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing will separate us from his love now or in the future. Keep us, Lord, once again in your good hands that you will be glorified in our lives, we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.