

The Three Widows

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Date: 24 January 2021

Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] I want to extend a very warm welcome to everybody this morning on behalf of Stormy Free Church as we are going to worship God and we pray that as we all gather in our own homes or wherever we are and able to meet together online that we will know the Lord's presence and the Lord's blessing.

Before we start I have a couple of notices to read out so if you'll bear with me and the first is with regard to the freewill offerings and it's the most recent meeting of the Deacons Court it was agreed that until such time as normal services of worship can resume a monthly opportunity would be given to return freewill offering envelopes.

So the arrangements are basically the same as previously. So on Thursday 28th January and Saturday 30th, that's this Thursday and Saturday the Church Hall in Kent State will be open between 2 and 4pm to receive the freewill offering envelopes.

If you wish to take advantage of this opportunity you should come along during these times or arrange for a family member or a friend to deliver the envelopes on your behalf.

You can also contact your district elder or deacon and arrange a time for one of them to collect the envelopes from your home. On arrival at the hall a one-way system will be in place and you will enter by the main door and leave using the exit door at the far end of the hall.

[1 : 35] Wearing of face coverings is mandatory and should be worn while you are inside the hall. Office bearers will be on hand to guide you towards the area for depositing the envelopes.

Hand sanitizers will be available for use at both doors and it's important that you maintain the recommended 2m social distancing on your arrival and while you are inside the hall.

The other intimation is regarding a special collection for Bethesda. In normal circumstances a special collection would be taken at the end of January each year for Bethesda.

Due to the current restrictions the special collection for this year will be taken on the days referred to above that's this Thursday and Saturday between 2 and 4pm.

Contributions can also be made by forwarding a cheque in an envelope clearly marked Bethesda and made payable to Stornoway Free Church to Murdoch Macphail Treasurer 12A Jameson Drive Stornoway HS12LF These details will be on the website and on Facebook as well.

[2 : 49] Let us now worship God and we are going to do so by singing from Psalm 90 the Scottish order.

Normally in our services we include pre-recorded singing from over the last year or year and a half. So we are going to try also putting a singing in at the beginning as well as at the end. So we are going to begin singing from Psalm 90 the 90th Psalm Scottish Psalter from verse 14 O with thy tender message Lord as early satisfied So we rejoice shall all our days and still be glad in thee According as the days have been wherein we grief have had And years wherein we ill have seen So do thou make us glad O let thy work and power appear thy servants face before And show unto their children dear thy glory evermore And let the beauty of the Lord our God be us upon Our handiworks establish thou Establish them each one These verses of Psalm 90 O with thy tender mercy Lord as early satisfied

As early satisfied So we rejoice shall all our days And still be glad in thee And still be glad in thee And still be glad in thee According as the days have been Wherein we grief have had Wherein we grief have had And years wherein we ill have seen So do thou make us glad So do thou make us glad

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of the Lord Our God be us upon

[6 : 22] Our God be us upon Our handy works establishes love, establish them each one.

Let us bow and pray. O Lord our God, as we gather before you this morning, we give thanks that you are the God of heaven and earth, the God with whom we have to do, the God who holds our life in your hand, because it is in you that we live and move and have our being.

We give thanks, O Lord, that we are not victims of chance or just even masters of our own destiny, although many people think that and sometimes we think it ourselves.

O Lord rule over all things. This is your creation and all things have been formed by your will and by the power of your own hand. We pray that we might acknowledge you in all our ways.

We give thanks, Lord, that your word tells us that if we acknowledge you in all our ways, that you will direct our paths. And we pray that that might be true in our experience, that day by day that we will find the directing hand of God leading us in the right way to do your will and to do your way.

[8 : 00] Forgive us, Lord, for when we don't. Forgive us for our selfishness and self-centeredness and our will that is so often opposed to your will and where we don't speak in the way that we should and we don't think in the way that we should and we don't act in the way that we should.

So often our behaviour is not Christian. It is not in keeping with your way, in keeping with your word. And forgive us, Lord, for that and forgive us when we're not prepared even to change the way that we are, when we come short, when we realise that we're coming short and yet we just say, well, that's the way I am.

But that is not, that doesn't cut it with you because you have said very clearly in our word how it ought to be. And so we ask that we might truly repent of our sin and that we might turn to you, that that you will forgive us our sin and the willful streak that is within us and that you will have mercy upon us and that you will incline our hearts to do good and to be good.

And so that we will, our aim in life will be to do good to others and for others and that we will be seeking the well-being of others. And above all that is through, through the great gospel blessings that are found in you.

We pray that you will open your word to us today as we come under it. We pray that this truth will go deep into our hearts and we'll be challenged by it, stimulated by it, rebuked by it, that we will find ourselves in it and we will find your word speaking to us.

[9 : 38] We pray then that you will bless us and have mercy upon us. And we pray that you'll bless the young folk. We ask, Lord, that you'll be with them. It's a difficult time for them. Difficult to us.

They're not able to go to school at this time, the home learning. It's a challenge for parents. It's a challenge for the children. We pray, Lord, that you'll bless them with regard to the Sunday school. But we give thanks for all the provision that is made.

Thanks for our Sunday school teachers and the way that they've embraced this and what they've been able to do. And we give thanks, Lord, for their many gifts that have been bestowed upon them and using these gifts for your gospel's sake, for your glory's sake.

So we pray for our Sunday school teachers and our day teachers. We commit them to your care and keeping. Ask, Lord, your blessing upon all our carers and upon our NHS staff. We're living in very difficult times, challenging times.

We're aware of the impact that COVID is having again throughout the land. Just there have been so many deaths and so much that brings an apprehension over the whole of society.

[10 : 50] Remember, in particular, Barra at this point. We pray for that island that has been so struck with the COVID illnesses. And we pray, Lord, that your healing hand may be upon them.

Likewise, we pray for all that we know. And we pray your healing hand upon all whom we know and love who are ill at this time, who are laid aside. And we ask that your healing, helping, restoring hand may be upon them.

Lord, it's a time of anxiety for families when loved ones are ill. And we pray that you will grant them grace and strength and that you'll be with them in their illnesses.

Pray for those who mourn as death is never far away. We've had deaths just in this last week, funerals in this last week. And we commit grieving families to your care.

And ask, Lord, that you will bind up the broken heart, that you will grant peace into their souls, that they will know the healing, helping hand of God, that your arm will be around them and that they will know your peace.

[11 : 52] And even although sometimes the death that has occurred in a home, that it might be months, maybe even years away, yet there's still a settled sore.

There is still that pain. There is an ache in the heart that never goes away and probably never will. But we ask, Lord, that every single day you will grant grace sufficient to bear with and help your people, encourage your people as they go on day by day.

Lord, we look to you and we seek your blessing upon us, the riches of your grace. Bless our leaders and all in authority over us. Oh, Lord, we pray then again for the NHS staff and for our carers in the homes and in the community.

We pray that the vaccine will begin to protect people and that the number of virus positive cases will diminish, will go down week by week.

We pray, Lord, that you will be with us and that you will overrule all things for good, that we might begin again nationally to look to you, even in the midst of our own pride and our own self-sufficiency.

[13 : 05] We pray that our leaders and those in authority might turn to the God of heaven and earth and that you will make yourself known to them, we pray. Watch over us and guide us in all that we're about and we pray that we will know you and love you and that we will seek you with all our heart.

Watch over us then, we pray, and guide us in all that we're about today and take away from us our sin in Jesus' name we ask it. Amen. Just a wee word to the young people.

So, you know, birthdays are things that, it's a day, a particular day that you enjoy having. Everybody enjoys a birthday. It was Dolly's birthday, my wife's birthday, yesterday.

And yes, I did remember. But the thing is, when we get older, we're not nearly so excited about our birthdays as when we were younger. When you reach my age, you're not really interested in a birthday because every year it's telling you you're just getting older and older and older, you're getting into an old bottle.

But when you're young, birthdays tended to be good days because you've got cards, you've got presents. And people tended to be nice to you on your birthday, although sometimes in school they weren't very nice when you used to get bumps and all that kind of stuff.

[14 : 30] But people generally, and certainly at home, people are always nice to you on your birthday. And of course, your birthday comes round every year.

But I remember when I was growing up, there was a man, Bertie, and he was great for riddles and questions and all sorts of things. In fact, he was a postie and he was quite comic because he used to, he was very, very nosy.

I think I mentioned this before. He used to always read the postcards and he would tell you when he would hand you a postcard, he'd tell you everything that was on it. He would tell you who it was from, where they were, what they were doing.

You didn't even need to read the postcard. It was all there because he had read it first. But he would tell you. So he was quite, he was quite comic. But he said to me one day, he said, and I knew that he was, this was just before I, before we left, Bertie.

And he said to me, you know, he said, I'm retiring next year. And I said, oh, right. He said, how old do you think I am? Well, I thought to myself, well, if he's retiring next year and retiring age then was 65, he must be 64.

[15 : 45] So I said, you'll be 64 your next birthday. No, he said, I'm 16. I said, you're 16. You can't be 16. I'm 16, he said.

How? Well, he said, I only have a birthday every four years. I said, how's that? He said, I was born in L.A. And I was born on the 29th of February.

So there's only 29th of February every four years. But of course, he said, I keep my birthday. It's the 28th of February. So he was actually coming to 64.

64. So in one sense, he was absolutely right. 16. He only had 16 actual birthdays on the day. So I was thinking to myself, boy, I would hate that if you'd only get a birthday once.

And every four years, you wouldn't have people be very nice to you on a special day. But you know what got me thinking about when we say, oh, we should be nice to people on their birthday.

[16 : 48] You know, we should be nice to people every day. And you know what I would like you to do today, and what I would like myself to do today, is say, right, treat everybody in your home as if it was their birthday.

And be nice to them. Be nice by what you say. Be nice by what you do. And in fact, not just those in your home.

This week, wherever you go, make it the rule in your head and ask God to help you. Lord, help me. Help me to be kind. Help me to be nice.

Help me to be caring. Help me to every day live as if it was everybody's birthday and that I was being specially nice to them. Because actually, that's how we should be every day.

Because you think of how good God has been to us. Because God has given us the greatest gift that anybody could ever get. He gave us the gift of his son, Jesus Christ.

[17 : 52] And he says, whoever believes would be saved. Imagine if he had said, the only opportunity you have to believe is on your birthday.

And for that man would be every four years. Imagine, imagine if it was like that. Or God said, the only opportunity you have to believe is when you worship like this on a Sunday.

No, it's any time. Because God's goodness is so great to us. He's giving to us all the time. And he's given us the gift of his son.

And he says, any time. You can believe, you can go to him any time and ask him to be your Lord. Day or night. Morning, noon, night. Isn't that wonderful?

God is good to us 24-7, as they say. May we then seek to and ask God to help us every day.

[18 : 51] That we will be nice. Instead of being grumpy, that we'll be nice to people. It doesn't cost anything. It might have to work at it.

But it's good that we would do that. That we would be careful and that we would be nice in all that we say and in all that we do to one another. Because God has been so good to us.

Let's say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

Amen. Let us read God's Word now. And we're going to read again in the book of Ruth. And although we looked at Ruth last week, we looked at Ruth chapter 1, verse 6.

[19 : 55] Today, I want us, we're going to look at Ruth from verse 8 to the end of the chapter. Ruth chapter 1. So we'll just read this chapter again. In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land.

And a man of Bethlehem and 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 name of his two sons were Malan and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem and Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died.

And she was left with her two sons. These two come Moabite wives. The name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years.

And both Malan and Chilion 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.

[20 : 55] 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 your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

The Lord grant 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 would 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 till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying?

[22 : 00] No, my daughters. For 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, 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. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will 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. 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.

[23 : 03] And the woman said, Is this Naomi? She said to them, Do not call me Naomi, but call me Mara. 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-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab, and they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Amen. And may God bless to us this reading of his own holy word. I want us today to look at the second part of this chapter. Last week we looked at Naomi ending up as a widow in Moab.

Because remember how her husband, along with her husband and her two boys, she had left in Bethlehem to go to Moab. There was a famine in the land. But that famine was there because God was dealing with his people.

[24 : 10] He was trying to bring his people back to himself. And they weren't listening to his voice. So his providence was against them in order to turn them back to himself.

And instead of humbling themselves and submitting themselves before God and crying out to him, they decided to make a decision which you can understand from a human point of view.

Let's go to Moab. There's food in Moab. There's no food here in Bethlehem. But by going to Moab, remember we saw this, they were going directly against what God commanded.

Because God had said that there were two nations, the Ammonites and the Moabites, that Israel really were to have nothing to do with. They weren't to seek their peace of prosperity or to mingle with them.

And yet, this family go down to Moab. Now, remember how everything seemed well to begin with. Now, of course, Moab, Moab in a sense represents the world.

[25 : 11] Because Moab was a heathen country opposed to God, involved in heathen practices that had nothing to do with the living and through God. And we live in a world that is utterly opposed to God, a world that hates God.

And when you strip it down, that's exactly where the world stands. When we talk of the world, we don't mean the actual creation, the world with regard to the earth and such like.

But all the philosophies and the aims of the world that is opposed to God. There is at work within this world everything that's against God because we have to remember that Satan is the God of this world.

And it's under, he is the one who is influencing so much of this world, which is in absolute opposition to God. So, it's, for a believer to go back into the world, of course, it's going into a, it's going to an awful place.

It's like going to Moab. Because sometimes a Christian will stop reading his or her Bible, stop attending church, will lose interest in God's people, will just begin to drift.

[26 : 25] And in a sense, when that happens to a person, it's like, it's like they're going, it's like they're going back to Moab. But of course, we know that when they went back to, when they went to Moab, disaster struck, and Elimelech died, and the two boys died.

So, here's poor Naomi, in this strange land, without her son, without her husband, and her two sons. And of course, the two sons had married, they'd married Ruth and Orpah.

And last week, we picked up, or we saw the story, and we left it, when Ruth had, when Naomi had heard, that the Lord had visited his people again, by giving them food.

And we saw that Naomi, had made up her mind, I'm going home. It's time to go home. And that's what we, what we looked at. We left that challenge last week, about the importance, of looking at where you are yourself, and seeing, and recognizing, that it's time, to go home.

And, can I reiterate it again, if there's a, a believer listening today, who has lost his, or her way, and your heart is more, and more than it is, with the Lord.

[27 : 42] That you are, more with the world, than you are with the Lord. It's time to get back. Because you know, there's nobody more miserable, in the whole wide world. Than a Christian, who has lost his, or her way.

You're in the world, but you're not off the world. You're in the world, but you're not enjoying the world, the way that you once did. And you're not enjoying, the Christianity. You're, you know, you're in no man's land, as they used to say in the war.

It's not a good place to be. So it's time to go home. And if you're not a Christian, but you've had the upbringing, and you know, what, you know what the word of God is saying, and you know, what is required of you, and you know ultimately, what is for you, good.

It's time, that you, went home as well, and called, upon the name of the Lord. So, Naomi, heads off with the girls, with Ruth, and with Orpah.

And, she said to them, they reached a point, and she said to the girls, right, you go back. Don't, come, anymore, to Israel with me. Now, the thing is, it wasn't that Naomi, didn't love the girls.

[28 : 53] She loved Ruth, and Orpah. And Ruth, and Orpah, were, they were obviously, really nice girls, within themselves. And Naomi said to them, you know, you couldn't be better to me.

Your love, your commitment, to me, is, it's, it's greater than anything. And, it's obvious that, Naomi really loved these girls, but she didn't want them, to come to Israel with her.

Now, at a human level, you can understand that, because, it would have been very difficult, for them in Israel, because, particularly coming from Moab, which is kind of an enemy country, they would have no privileges, no rights, there would be nobody, to stand up for them.

They could be taken advantage of, and nobody would say anything. So, Israel actually, could be a very dangerous place, for them. And so, Naomi is thinking, along these lines, but, her thinking, still is wrong.

It's the same thinking, that took her to Moab, in the first place, because she's putting God, out of the equation. Although, she talks about, the Lord's hand being against her, she still, her knowledge of God, at this point, is sketchy.

[30 : 07] Naomi has really, lost her way. And, she should rather be, saying to the girls, well, it's going to be difficult. But, she should actually, be wanting them to go, because God, has visited his people.

The presence of God, is once again, in Israel. What an opportunity, for these two girls, to come to know, the God of heaven and earth, to be saved. And yet, here is a supposed, believer saying, no, I don't want you, going to Israel.

It's too dangerous. And as I say, at a human level, but that's been the problem, with Naomi all along. She's been operating, at a human level. And if we go through, our lives, operating at a human level, we're going to miss out, so much of God's blessing.

And even when God's hand, is against us, we're not going to see, his hand working for us. You see, Naomi's problem, was she was, she was overcome, with grief.

And, we don't find any, please get, don't, misunderstand me. We have, absolute sympathy, for Naomi. Because, what she has gone through, is beyond, I hope I will never have to, go through the kind of pain, that Naomi went through.

[31 : 25] To have lost your, life partner, and your two sons. That's awful. And of course, her heart is consumed, with grief. And it couldn't be, other than be consumed, with grief.

But, what's added into the mix, is that Naomi, has become bitter. There's a bitterness, that's come in. And you know, when you mix, bitterness, with grief, you're really, in a bad place.

There's really nothing, you can do with a person, who's consumed, by grief, and by bitterness. It's a terrible mix. And that's where, that's where Naomi is.

And she is incapable, of seeing properly. She can't think straight. It's purely, negative thinking. And she thinks, God's against her, life's against her, everybody's against her.

And so she says to the girls, you've got to go back. Don't call me, that's what she said. Don't call me Naomi. Naomi means pleasant. Call me Mara, bitter, because God's hand, is against me.

[32 : 30] But you know, the wonderful thing, about the Christian life is, that the Christian life, is full, of new beginnings. And Naomi was going to, come to understand that.

That although her situation, was bad, and sore, and difficult, wasn't the end. God wasn't finished with her. And you know, that's one of the things, that we discover, in our Christian life as well, is, that God, seems to be never done with us.

Even although, we go, come to times, and we think, you know what, I think I've blown it. I really feel, as a Christian, that, that I, I can't go on like this.

And you sometimes think, that God is going to say, that's it. I am leaving you, all on your own. You, you don't deserve, but you say, that's the beauty of grace.

It's got nothing to do, with deserving. If it was deserving, it wouldn't be grace. Grace, unmerited favour. It's, it's, it's, it's blessing us, when we don't deserve it.

[33 : 36] That's a beauty. That's why it's so amazing, Grace, because God continues, to bless us, despite, who we are, what we are, what we've done, what we've said, what we've thought.

And we look back over our life, and so often, we see failure. But God, doesn't leave us there. If you sat down with Peter, or sat down with Jonah, or sat down with David, they would tell you about blowing it big style.

They did it, they blew it on a, on a big scale. Was it the end for them? No. God brought them back, restored them, into usefulness, into further service.

That's what God does. You know, Naomi was going to, discover that as well. because her bitterness, one day would give way. And her grief, at one level, would never leave her.

But the Lord was going to, make her laugh again, and smile again, and know joy in her heart again. And that's what God does. He's an amazing God. So you, you ask the Lord, to come in.

[34 : 44] If you're today with, you might be broken hearted, and grief, is mixed with bitterness. Ask the Lord, to deliver you, from that bitterness, and to help you, in your grief.

And to restore, you, his joy again. Weeping may, for a night endure, and mourn, doth joy arise. So, anyway, Naomi, and Ruth, and Orpah, they, they, they head back.

But, there comes a point, where, Naomi says to the girls, right, that's it. No further. And we read about this, that they, they lift up their voices, and they, and they weep, and spend, wouldn't be just, a tear rolling, rolling down their, their cheeks.

Because it tells us, is then she kissed them, Naomi kissed, and they lifted up their voices, and wept. They were howling. They were in this huddle together, crying, and sobbing.

They were united in love. They were united in grief. They had gone through so much together. And Naomi says, no, no, no, just leave me. I'm going back on my own. You go back.

[35 : 52] You have a future. I don't. You go back and find husbands for yourselves. And you know, it's really, it's a very solemn thing, what Naomi is doing.

She's telling them to go back into a pagan culture, a pagan society. Go back. It's almost unbelievable to a certain extent, what she goes, what she, what she says.

Because she, she tells them that, that to go back to your own, to your own people, and to your own, to your own gods.

It's like, I've got, I've got nothing. See what she says in verse 15. See your sister-in-law has gone back to her people, and to her gods. Return after your sister-in-law.

Back to her people, back to her gods. Naomi, you're telling this girl, Ruth, and Orpah, go back to your, heathen gods, and this is her light.

[36 : 54] You're supposed to be promoting, the God of heaven and earth. But you see the bad place, Naomi is in. So she tells the two girls to go back, and we read about Orpah.

Now, a couple of years ago, we looked at Orpah, we were going through alphabetically, different characters from the Bible, and we looked at Orpah. And I'll just say that, if we can remember, if you can cast your minds back, Orpah stands as a warning in the Bible, of somebody who started out well, and went back.

Because, now, Orpah had every intention, of going to Bethlehem. She set out to go to Bethlehem. But you know, when the crunch came, when push came to shove, when the deciding time had come, her old ways, her old culture, her gods, her way, was too powerful, was too strong.

Because when it came to the point, and when Naomi said, go back, we find that eventually, in this huddle of weeping, and howling, that, now, that Orpah leans forward, and she kisses Naomi.

and you can see her hands, as it were, dropping down, and eventually, she lets go, and she heads back. And you know, she heads off, as it were, the very pages of scripture, because we never read, or hear of Orpah again.

[38 : 26] It's sad, a lovely woman, a good woman, in many ways. And if you had met Orpah, you would say, what a lovely lady she was. And Naomi testifies to that.

But despite her goodness, and the loveliness of her character, she didn't know the living, and through God. And she didn't really want to know, the living, and through God. And it's one of the sad things, in this world, there are so many nice people, lovely people, by nature, but they don't want to know, the living, and through God.

And your heart goes out to them, and oh, if only you would come, to trust the Lord, and put your faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so, Naomi says to Ruth, look, your sister-in-law's gone back. You go back to your people, and go back to your gods. But there's a different outcome for Ruth. Ruth is saying no. Ruth doesn't want to go back.

She's been in Moab. She knows all about the gods there. She grew up with them. But she heard, and obviously saw enough, in Naomi's life, and heard enough, to know of the God of heaven and earth.

[39 : 38] And the God of heaven and earth, had obviously begun to touch, the heart and the life of Ruth. Because there's nothing, in all the world, that will put her back, to where she once was.

And even although, she might face hostility, and enmity, and she might be the victim, of abuse, or what not, when she goes to Israel, because there's no protection for her.

I'm going there. And it's not just the love, she has for Naomi, which is powerful. But it is the love, that is growing in her heart, for the Lord, of heaven and earth.

Your God, shall be my God. It's that most wonderful declaration. I'm sure, this confession that Ruth makes, is one of the greatest confessions, in the scripture.

Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you, or to return from following you. Where you go, I will go.

Your people, shall be my people. That's a Christian.

[40 : 38] We love the brethren. It, the people of God, become our people. We're family. That's one of the wonderful things, when you become a Christian. You become into this, global family in Christ.

There's this bond, that develops and grows. Your people will be my people, and your God, will be my God. Isn't that beautiful, commitment and confession?

And you know, the wonderful thing, about this book, is, and I don't know, whether we'll go through, I preached on Ruth, probably 20 years, I don't know, a long, long time ago. The book, whether I, forward with it or not, I don't know.

But, the beauty of this book, is that it shows, God's providence, working in the most wonderful way. You know what God says, them that honour me, I will honour.

Ruth, stood there, and honoured God, at that spot. Come what may, God is going to be her God.

Now, the people of God, are going to be her people.

[41 : 43] And she goes, into Israel. Back to Bethlehem. And you would say, there's nobody more vulnerable. Ruth, what are you doing? She, is trusting the God, of heaven and earth.

And what does the God, of heaven and earth do? He works, provide, works, wonderfully for us. And what, you know what happens? Maybe we'll go on, and move at it.

This man, Boaz, Ruth, is gleaning in the fields. She meets Boaz. And she enters into Boaz's life, and into Boaz's heart.

And in the end, Boaz marries her. And they have a little, little baby boy. And at the end, in chapter four, we find a beautiful picture, of Naomi.

She's sitting with, the little baby, called Obed, on her lap. And the women, in the place, are rejoicing with her. It's, because, then the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day, without a redeemer.

[42 : 54] It was beautiful. This is where God, had turned Naomi's, whole situation round. And here she is, she's become nused, to this little, she's adopted him, as her own grandson.

Ruth, Naomi is now, granny, as it were, to, to, little Obed. But you know what, when you, when you follow through, Obed, Obed grew up, married, and had a son, called Jesse.

Jesse grew up, married, and had a son, called David. So Ruth, this Moabite girl, this Ruth, is great granny, to King David.

Isn't that amazing? Greatest king, that Israel ever had. But more than that, go to Matthew's Gospel, read the human genealogy, of Jesus. And there, in the line, that Jesus, the human line, that Jesus, comes, directly through, you will find, this woman Ruth.

God, blessed, and God, honoured her. And you know, that's what God does. And we will never, ever, ever lose out, by deciding, to close in, and to follow Christ.

[44 : 15] I have never heard, a Christian, coming to the end, of their days, and saying, you know the biggest regret, of my life is, that I ever became, a Christian. I've never heard that. I've heard, many people, who are filled, with regrets, at the end of their days.

And I'm sure, we all have regrets. We do. But we will never, have a, the only regret, a Christian will have, is, how poorly, they follow the Lord.

They will regret, how little faith, how little, they did for the Lord. But they'll never, ever say, you know, I regret following the Lord. I've never heard that, ever.

And you never will. No true Christian, will say that. And that's why, it is so important. You make sure, that you follow the Lord. Because in following the Lord, he will bless you.

And the blessings, will come, they will, he will surprise you, with the blessings. And, you see how he restores, your fortunes. And today, you might be bereft, you might be in a bad place.

[45 : 19] But you know, if you trust the Lord, he won't leave you there. I don't know what he might do, or how he will work. But he won't leave you, utterly broken hearted, and bereft.

No, he never thought, that she would laugh, or sing again, ever. But she did. And that's, the God, that we serve. Lord, our God, we pray, that you will bless us.

That you will hear our cry. That you will be good to us. Take away from us, our sin, in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing, this time from Psalm 30, in Sing Psalms.

We're going to sing verses 1 to 5. Psalm 30, verses 1 to 5. O Lord, I will exalt your name, for you have rescued me. You did not let my foes rejoice, and gloat triumphantly.

Lord God, in need I cried to you, and you restored my health. O Lord, you brought me from the grave, and saved my soul from death. Verses 1 to 5 of Psalm 30, sing Psalms, O Lord, I will exalt your name.

[46 : 26] O Lord, I will exalt your name, for you have rescued me. You did not let my foes rejoice, and no triumphantly.

You did not let my foes rejoice, and no triumphantly. Lord God, I will exalt your name, and you restored my health.

O Lord, you brought me from the grave, and saved my soul from death. O Lord, O Lord, you brought me from the grave, and saved my soul from death.

You've only once, sing to the Lord, sing out a joyful voice. When you recall his holy name, then praise him and rejoice.

When you recall his holy name, then praise him and rejoice. His anger, what a moment last, strife of his save my days.

[48 : 06] Though tears may last, through light the night, joy comes with morning praise. Though tears may last, through light the night, joy comes with morning praise.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and abide upon each one of you, now and forevermore. Amen.