

Guest Speaker - Medical Missions Outreach

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Date: 08 July 2022

[0 : 00] your Bible. Turn with me to Ruth chapter two, Ruth chapter two this morning. Pastor, thanks for giving me the opportunity to be here. Um, I love your pastor. He is one of the most encouraging people I've ever met in my life. Anytime I'm around him, uh, I leave, I feel better off except for when he talks about Kentucky basketball. Uh, I feel like I'm way better off. Uh, I appreciate his friendship, his encouragement over the years. Uh, just a great man of God. I'm thankful for you and your family.

Thank you for your faithful support and thank you for your faithful service. Uh, what a great example he has been to me. Uh, and I appreciate him letting me be here. I was originally, I think y'all know I was supposed to be here next Sunday. And then this opportunity to be in Haiti and serve alongside a church that is in the middle of some of that chaos. They need relief. Uh, we'll be flying down to the Dominican Republic. We'll board a naval vessel, uh, that will have about 20,000, uh, 20,000 pounds of rice and beans and other goods that will be given to some of these people.

That are just, uh, if you've not watched the news and I know our news has not really been spotlighting this, the people of Haiti are hurting big time. They're hurting very badly. And so we're going to go in and there's a great church there with a missionary that's been serving faithfully in his community. Uh, we're going to meet them on the piers. We'll sail around the island.

Island there. We'll come into one of the piers. We're going to hold a clinic there on the piers. Uh, every night we'll have to board the boat again, go back out into open water where we can spend the night to stay safe as a team. And each day we'll just come back and forth into port. So we can treat these patients. We can provide them some humanitarian relief as the world would see it, but we want to give them spiritual relief. And so pray for us, if you will pray that God keeps us safe. Uh, but I appreciate him giving me the opportunity to change some of these dates. Uh, cause I wouldn't want to miss either one. Uh, they were both great opportunities that God has given me. So I'm thankful to be here. Ruth chapter two this morning. I know that you've probably studied, uh, you've probably read the book of Ruth a thousand times. I love this book.

There's so much information for us to get out of this, but this morning I hope I can just be an encouragement to you. Uh, anytime I preach at church for the first time, this is a message I like to share because God has used it in my life over the years in immense ways. He continues to show me more and more out of this passage and challenge me in my walk with Christ, as well as in my, my, my ministry life. Ruth chapter two, let's start in verse number four and let's read this together and let's see what it says here. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said unto the reapers, the Lord be with you. And they answered him, the Lord bless thee. Uh, then Boaz said unto a servant that was set over the, the, the reapers, uh, whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answers. And it's the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab. And she said, I pray you let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.

[2 : 39] So she came and have continued even from morning until now that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, here's thou not my daughter. Uh, go not to glean in another field, neither go from hits, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reaping. Go thou after them. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?

And when thou art to thirst, go into the vessels and drink of that, which a young man have drawn. Then she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said unto him, why, why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger. And Boaz answered and said unto her, it has fully been showed me all that thou has done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband and how thou has left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art coming to a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust. Now, you know the story of Ruth, right? You know, the whole situation, you know, that she was married to a man from a different country, different culture, probably spoke different languages.

They had a different religious background. She's married to this man and tragedy has struck this family that she has joined herself to. The father-in-law has passed away. Her husband has passed away. The brother-in-law has passed away as well. They're left in a male dominated society.

The mother-in-law has come to her and said, Hey, listen, you go back to your people. You two girls are still very young. Go back to your people, go get married again. Myself. I'm going back to where I came from to my people. My heart is broken. I don't understand why God has done this to me, but I'm going back brokenhearted and I'm just going to weep. I'm going to spend the rest of my life weeping. You go do what God wants you to do. The sister-in-law, she does. She ends up going back home and nobody would blame her. She's going back to what's comfortable, what's natural for her.

But Ruth, she looks at her mother-in-law and she makes this huge, all-important decision. When she looks at her mother-in-law, she says, Oh no, ma'am. No, ma'am. Oh, where you go? That's where I'm going. Your people are going to be my people. And I like what she says here. Your God is going to be my God.

[4 : 40] God, something must have happened. Something in the testimony of her in-laws, something about their relationship with God. There was something about the way they worshiped and the way they trusted and the faith that they had that caused this young woman to want to change everything in her life, to risk it all, to go, to be there because she wanted that to be a part of her life.

And here we pick up this passage. She's now in this foreign country. She's going out to try to care for her family, her mother-in-law in this time period. God still has mercy on the poor. He wants to bless them. And we know that they would go out. They called them reapers. They would go out behind the folks that were harvesting the field. They would go out and as they were gathering, these gleaners would come behind them and anything that the folks that were working in the field, the ones that were being paid to be there, anything that they happened to miss or anything that they accidentally dropped, it was as if God had said, I allowed that to happen. That's on purpose. I wanted that to happen.

You leave it behind. Keep on walking. Keep on working. I've left that behind for the folks that are impoverished. They need to be loved. They need to be cared for and they would go out and work for it. And that's exactly where we find Ruth in this passage of scripture. The owner of the field shows up, Boaz. He's looking out over his field. He's seeing all the hard workers that are out there and all of a sudden his eyes see that girl out there. And as I read this passage of scripture, as we would interpret this from Alabama where I'm from, he says, good gracious. Who's that good looking woman outchunder? And they said, well, you know who she is. That's Ruth. She's the one that came from Moab.

She's been here with her mother-in-law. He says, oh yeah, I know who she is. I know her testimony. He calls her over and he says, hey, Ruth, I know this this morning you came here to do some work and you came here to fill your bag with some stuff. But listen, Ruth, I want you to know, I want to bless you more than you could imagine. Ruth, today is going to be an incredible day for you. I want to bless you. I want to pour out into your life. This is going to be a fantastic day for you. But you've got to listen because I'm going to give you some instructions. I'm going to give you some parameters to this. And if you'll listen to what I'm saying, if you'll follow what I'm trying to put into your life, you will be blessed. And then Ruth, she falls on her face. Why in the world?

What are you doing? You don't know me. I'm a stranger. Why in the world would you be so good to me? And he says, because I know the decision you made. I know that you decided to trust God.

[7 : 03] I know the family you chose to be a part of. And as a result of that family choice that you made, I want to bless you. I believe that as I read this passage of scripture, there's so much truth to this that I can apply to my life today. If you're here today and you know Christ as your personal savior, you made a choice. You made a choice to walk away from a lot of things, hopefully, that you became a new creature, that the old things were passed away. Behold, there's new things in my life. I'm going to start a new relationship. I'm going to start a new trajectory in life. I'm starting a new walk. I'm going to start a new talk. I'm going to get new friends.

I'm going to get a part of a church family. Things are different. And do you know that because of that choice that you've made, God wants to bless and pour into your life just as well? I can't help but find myself so many times just like Ruth falling on my face and God, why? Why would you be so good?

I told you about being in Ouagadougou. I'll never forget that there was a woman who walked into our clinic. She was seeing one of the providers. The provider brought her to see me. I was working in the pharmacy and she hands me her son. His name was Fataz. I'll never forget his name. I'll never forget his face. She hands me this baby that was starving to death. I looked at this baby as I held him in my arms. He must have been about six to seven months old, weighed about six pounds. His skin was stretched so tight over his skull you could see every growth plate. As I kind of pulled aside some of the clothes that she had on him, you could see every bone in his body. He was starving to death and she came there expecting a miracle. She wanted us to intervene in a way that was not humanly possible by us. And I remember she handed me that baby. I said, could you give me just one moment? And I walked into a side room because I couldn't control my emotions anymore. And I just started bawling. God, what am we going to do? God, you have to intervene here. God, you have to do something. That's one story that I could tell you of dozens and dozens and dozens over the years where

I'm putting to positions and I see other people suffering and I see people coming with needs. And I sit there and think about how I got my four little fat piglets at home. They got a pantry full of food.

They got closets of clothes, multiple pairs of shoes. And I say, God, why would you be so good to me when there are so many other people that are suffering in this world? And I think the answer is still the same.

[9 : 26] He doesn't he's not good to us so that we can collect for ourselves and build our own little kingdoms. He's good to us so that we can push off on the plate of other people so that we can testify. Our God is good.

Ruth, you want to know why I'm going to be good to you? Because God is good. You found yourself under his wings. You came to know him and trust him. It's God that's going to be good to you today, Ruth. He's just allowing me the avenue to do it. So let me share with you some principles that you and I can apply. Some things that you and I, if we activate these things in our life, if we listen to the voice of God saying, I want to call you to something greater, I want to push you into deeper water, I want to bless you more than you've ever experienced, I guarantee you, you will see great results. And it comes from this verse in verse number nine. He starts here by saying to Ruth, Ruth, let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap. Now, when I look at this, I can't help but notice that he's saying, Ruth, I need you to be focused. Ruth, I want you to be focused. There's a lot of fields. There's a lot of farms, Ruth. There's a lot of things going on in all different parts. But listen, this field right here, this is the one for you. Justice Nepal is your field. Don't get concerned with other people are doing. Don't worry about other countries, what other missionaries may or may not be able to accomplish. This is your field. Be focused.

Paul would tell us multiple times through scripture that whatever we find our hands to do, do it with all of our might, to focus, to concentrate. Galatians would tell us, and let us not be weary and well-doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. But ye brethren, be not weary and well-doing according to 2 Thessalonians 3 verse 13. He's telling us in this passage of scripture, he says, Ruth, listen, this is your field and I want you to be all in. Do you know what Vision Baptist Church needs more than anything? It's not bigger offerings. It's not every seat to be filled. It's for all of us to be focused on the field that God has called us to. If you and I, we get serious about this, if you and I, we realize that God has given me the skill set to be an accountant or God has given me the skill set to be a teacher or God has given me the skill set to work in any field whatsoever, he's done that on purpose because this is my field and there are people to reach, we will see great things happen for God's glory. But we've got to be focused. I think one of the biggest failures for our church is we're so easily distracted. I don't know how many of you have an iPhone. Do you ever get convicted when that daily time log pops up and it tells you where you've been spending the majority of your time according to your phone? I don't know, is yours the Bible app? Maybe you're super spiritual.

What a convicting thing that we're so easily distracted by politics. We're so easily distracted by who's wronged us. We're so easily distracted by entertainment, by Hollywood, by sports, by so many things. When he's calling us just to be focused, listen, I want to bless you. I want to pour out into your life. I want to show you more joy and peace and happiness than you've ever experienced in your life. I want to show you how I can use you in great ways, but you've got to be focused. Ruth, let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, but he doesn't stop there and go thou after them.

You see, it's not just about being focused. Ruth, I want you to be following. I like what Psalm 63 verse 8 says, my soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me. Proverbs 3, 5 and 6, my life verses. I love these. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not into thine own understanding and all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths. Ruth, this is the field.

[12 : 54] And you know what? Ruth, I own this field. I could just say, hey, fellas, all you guys that are out there, y'all come here for a minute. Everybody come here for a minute. They would all walked over. They all dragging their bags full of all the different things that they've been collecting in the field that day. He could have said, listen, everybody reach in there, dip out and give Ruth, pour it into her bag. Everybody give her a little bit. He could have done that, couldn't he?

But he doesn't choose to do it that way. He tells her, Ruth, you're going to actually have to go out there and work. Ruth, you're going to actually have to get out there and do this yourself. You're going to have to work and serve if you want to see the blessings happen. I believe another part of our churches where we could use more encouragement is for us to consider this work for Jesus Christ, to actually get out there and go after it. I'm going to tell you right now, it's not going to be easy if you want to start a small group or a discipleship time with a new believer. You're going to have to find time in your schedule. It's not going to be easy when you open yourself up and you try to start ministering to that barista that you see on a regular basis. It's not going to be easy whenever you meet that server at the restaurant that's a single mom struggling and you start trying to see if you can intervene and be a blessing and encouragement and getting them into church with you.

It's not going to be easy when you see that person that's got track marks all over their arm that you want to say, hey, can I help you break those chains and show you the chain breaker of Jesus Christ? It's not going to be easy when we get out there and we serve, but it's our field and he's called us to it. Ruth, it's going to be tough. You're going to get out there and you're going to be stooping down and picking it up and putting in your bag and stooping down and picking it up, putting in your bag over and over and the bag's going to get heavier and heavier and you're going to keep dragging it all over the place. But Ruth, listen, it's worth it. Get out there and serve, Ruth. You've never seen the blessings like what I want to put into your life. You're going to get more out of this than you could have imagined if you just are focused and you start following. So what is he calling you to?

A Sunday school class? Then teach it. Give it everything you got. Pray for that class. Call them. Send them cards. Make sure that you study so that when you get up before them, you're able to rightly divide the word of truth and you're able to pour into lives and minister to them. Be focused, but be following.

This is a quid pro quo, as they would say in legal terms. Ruth, this is a this for that. If you'll do these things, this is what you can expect from me because he continues on in the same verse. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap and go thou after them. Oh, before I go, can I go back and tell you another verse that I love when it comes to following? I forgot this one.

[15 : 23] I can't forget it. Second Corinthians 4 verses 16 through 18. For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but on the things which are not seen for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. This is why we serve. This is the reason why we work because it's eternal rewards. We go out there. We're focused and we're following. And he goes on. Have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? Ruth, here's the deal. This is the field. I own this place. And I'm telling you right now, Ruth, you have complete liberty. You have complete freedom. I'm telling you right here from my lips, you go out there. I'll keep you safe. Did you notice what I said earlier? Because I said it on purpose.

This was a male dominated society. Very true. It would have been no, no big deal. It would have been a very common thing if she got out in this field, if she got too close to the workers for them to raise a hand to her, it would have been a very common thing for them to push her out of the way to talk disparagingly to her. It would have been a very common place for this to happen. But, but there's something different just took place. The owner of the field said she could be there.

He's already told the young men that are out there, Hey, y'all better not lay a finger on this girl. You better not touch her. You better leave her alone. She's, she's under my jurisdiction here. And I've given her full permission to be here. People ask us all the time, Bradley, are you nervous?

Are you scared to, to go to these countries? No, I'm more scared of downtown Atlanta traffic than I am scared of traveling around the world. Uh, I'm not, and I'm not trying to sound like captain spiritual up here. This is what God's called me to do. If I can't trust him, who can I trust? If I can't, if I can't just go headlong into serving him where he's called me to, where else can I go?

[17 : 20] Uh, when we were in Haiti after the earthquake, we were serving in a hospital there, a rural hospital. It had the big concrete walls that were built around the building. Uh, we had been there with a 28 person orthopedic trauma team and we were working pretty much around the clock. They were bringing us victims that were being pulled from the rubble, uh, doing rescissions and amputations nonstop. And we had set up triage out on the road. In fact, we had used the indoor, the, the out, uh, excuse me, the, the, the, the grounds area of the hospital as recovery, because there was no more room for all the people we were bringing in. And we're out on the street and we're kind of triaging these people. And we're trying to get people who didn't have as serious of case, a little bit of help. And then to be able to send them on their way while we're helping the rest of them. We're working on the grounds of a great Baptist church that was set up down there. And we're, we're being able to share the gospel. We're doing fantastic work out there. And all of a sudden these four guys come pulling up on their mopeds. They pulled up on their mopeds and they had basketball jerseys on.

They had these big golden chains. I call them Hades angels. They came pulling up on their mopeds and, uh, they're kind of looking around and we had two guys with us from Homeland Security that were armed personnel that were our security to kind of protect our team. One of them came over to me, said, Hey, um, we're being cased. We're, we're going to be robbed. I said, are you serious? He goes, yeah. He goes, there's no doubt whatsoever. These four men are here to rob us. I said, okay. I said, well, can you buy me some time to get the team inside the walls of the hospital? He said, yeah.

He said, go ahead. He and his, his partner, they walked over to kind of just provide a little bit of a disruption to these four guys. And I walked to the team and I said, Hey, uh, everybody just leave your stuff here. We're going to take a break. It's super hot. I want everybody to go in the hospital.

I want you to all grab some bottles of water, drink a bottle of water, and we'll come back out here to work. Leave your stuff here. I'm going to stay with it. You go inside the hospital really fast. They started putting their stuff down and they're walking in. And all of a sudden I heard this really loud rumbling sound. And I'm looking like, what in the world is that sound? And you could see it over the walls of the hospital coming across the back and then up the side street headed right for us. You could see dust coming over the walls of this hospital. There was something coming down the road and around the corner comes these big, huge Humvees. The Hummer stops and the doors open up.

And all of a sudden all these soldiers pop out and this guy comes walking. He says, who's in charge? I said, well, well, I am. He goes, my name is Sergeant. So-and-so from the 82nd airborne division of the United States army. And I'm here on a peacekeeping mission and you're in our security zone. I said, well, my goodness, your timing is wonderful. And he said, uh, are you worried about these men right here, sir? I said, yes, sir. We are. I said, our, our security guys think they're going to rob us. He goes, we're here for them as well. We've been noticed that they've looted and we've been tracking them.

[19 : 56] We're here to see them as well. He walks over. He said some stuff that I would never repeat in mixed company. And they got back on their mopeds and they left and we never saw them again. So that's 17 years. That's the best story I got. Uh, I'm, I'm just telling you the honest truth.

I've never felt in danger, not to say that there wasn't danger, not to say there couldn't have been a situation issue. But for me personally, uh, that's about it for me. That's all I got. Uh, you see, I'm not worried about the danger that could be. I'm not worried about the things that could happen or might happen. It's more about God. If this is the field you're calling me to, if this is where you want me to serve, then I'll go God. Cause I know I've got your protection.

I know I've got your hand watching over me, taking care of me. This, I recalled my mind. Therefore I have hope it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him to the soul that seeketh him. According to Lamentations three verses 21 through 25, Hebrews 13 verse six tells me this so that we may boldly say the Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. I'll tell my son this coming Friday when I leave the same thing that I tell him all the time, but I'm leaving. Mom and I are going out of town. You make sure to be the leader in the home while I'm gone. You make sure to help your siblings, help your grandmother while she's here taking care of you.

And if I don't make it, it's okay. If I don't get to come home, it's okay. They can do anything they want to do this body, but they cannot touch my soul. I'm eternally secure. I'm eternally safe.

And I will serve because this is my field. And I have the owner of the field giving me his protection, giving me his word that he will keep me safe. You're in my hand. You're my father's hand and no man can pluck you out. It's not that he just is going to keep me safe because Boaz keeps on going. He says, they shall not touch thee. And when thou art a thirst, go into the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Listen, it's not just the fact that he's going to keep me safe, but he's going to give me my supply too. I love that. Ruth is hot. It's hot. You're in the Middle East.

[22 : 09] You're in these long flowing robes and garments and you're out there bending down and putting it into the bag and you're walking all over this field. It's hot. You're going to get tired. You are going to get thirsty because that's what he says here. And when thou art a thirst, not if you get thirsty, but when you get thirsty, because it is going to happen, there's already water ready for you.

Water is ready. It's sitting right here in the pictures. The young men have already drawn it. It's sitting right here and yours is open for you. Whenever you need it, you come and get whatever you need. You see, I'm thankful that my God shall supply all of my needs. I know that when he's called me up to this field, he's going to equip me. He's going to give me everything I need so that I can go out and serve him. Matthew 6 verses 25 through 34 says this. Therefore, I say to you, take no thought for your life, what you should eat or what you shall drink, or yet for your body, what you should put on is not the life more than meat and the body more than raiment. Behold, the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly father feedeth them. Are you not much better than they?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto a stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothed the grass of the field, which is today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you? O ye of little faith, therefore take no thought saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly father knoweth that you have need of these things, but seek ye first the kingdom, your field, where he's called you to put him first in everything in life, but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you. Oh, Ruth, don't worry about it. I'm going to take care of what you need.

You see, I'm not worried. We have an orthopedic team that's going to be coming down to our surgical center very soon and we're in need of a few things. I'm not really super concerned because God has always provided. He's not going to let us down now. He's not going to let us down now.

Those people that are going to come into our clinic this year, you know what? I'm not worried about if we're going to be able to afford the plane tickets or how the transportation situation is going to work out because he's never failed me yet. This is his work. He's called me to. He will supply.

[24:18] So whenever you need those words, when you need that encouragement to give to that person, God will give you the words. He'll lay it on your heart. Whenever you need the time off to serve, he's going to arrange your schedule to help you be a part of the ministries. Whenever he needs you to be a part of anything, he will supply. And he's calling us to be busy about his work, to be in our field, to be focused, to be following so that we can watch him keep us safe, so that we can watch him give us our supply. And I end with this. If you just kind of fast forward a little bit in the story, go over to verse number 23. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean. I like these next three words unto the end. She was there to the very end. May I encourage you this morning to stay faithful to the end. Some of you are here this morning. You say, hey, Bradley, if I'm honest with you, I used to be a part of that field. I used to be working, but man, some other things have come up in life and I've been really busy. Hey, listen, go back, get back in it. We need you. We desperately need you.

Yeah, the fields are red, yellow, black, and white under harvest. There are people all over this world that need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. And we need more people out here serving alongside us. And listen, if you're out there serving right now, just stay faithful. I know it's hard work. Don't forget he's supplying your needs. Don't forget to look to the owner of the field. He will encourage you. He will provide for you. Stay at it. Stay faithful. Oh God, help us to stay faithful to the end.

Our Heavenly Father, I know I've talked really fast and there's a lot to this passage of scripture, God, even right here, right now in the quietness of this moment, would you speak to our hearts?

Maybe there's someone this morning, they've been really nervous. Maybe they know that you've been calling them to something great. You've been calling them to deeper waters, to get involved in this field. And maybe they need to just have that boldness to step out and watch how you will provide, to watch you supply, to watch your safety, envelop them to go and serve you. Maybe there's others this morning, they just haven't had the boldness. They maybe have not even taken the time to say, God, where would you have me? What would you, what would you call me to do? God, today, would you give us the courage to even ask those questions? But Lord, right now, would you speak to our hearts? Lord, would you help us to put aside all excuses, any reason that would keep us from serving you the way we should? And give us the boldness to make the decisions that you would call us to. Lord, work in our hearts, we pray.