

Ruth's Unexpected Decision

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Date: 10 July 2016

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[0 : 00] Well, this is our second sermon in the book of Ruth. And last week we saw that the climax of the book of Ruth is a genealogy. And that genealogy gets picked up in Matthew chapter one, as we read last week during the service.

And in Matthew chapter one we have Jesus genealogy. And Jesus genealogy has something in it that's totally contrary to all ancient Near Eastern customs.

Okay? It's very ancient, it's very primitive, if you will, looking back at it as modern folks. But it's this, that no respectable genealogy in ancient Near East would ever have women listed in it.

It would always be the name of the fathers, the generation of the fathers. That was just the custom.

That was the norm. That was the way things were. And in the first five verses of Matthew chapter one of Jesus genealogy, it's not only three women present, but it's even more than that.

You remember who the three women were. The first is Tamar, who was the girl who prostituted herself to her own father-in-law and slept with him secretly.

[1 : 08] The second was Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho, who hid the spies from the king of Jericho. And the third is Ruth, the Moabite.

And Ruth wasn't a prostitute, but she was a Moabite. And in Deuteronomy chapter 23, Moses pronounced that no Moabite would enter the assembly of the Lord.

You see, Jesus genealogy is something very strange, very unusual, very contrary to ancient Near Eastern custom. And it's important because genealogies in the ancient Near East are the CVs of the ancient Near East, the resume.

If you were going for your job interview in the Promised Land, they would say, who's your great grandfather? What land are you from? Who are your fathers to the back ten generations?

This is your CV. This is your resume. This is who you are. It's everything. And if you're a woman in the ancient Near East, the question becomes, who are you married to? How many sons do you have?

[2 : 10] Whose lineage are you? That's everything. That's your resume. That's your CV. Now, this little story of Ruth, this little bitty book in the midst of the Bible, is a little romance, a beautiful little romance about Ruth and Boaz.

But it's all about a genealogy. That's the ultimate point. We said that last week. We're going to be saying that every week. It's about the genealogy of Jesus Christ. And last week we saw that a limilech, the husband to Naomi, left the land of Israel during the time of famine, and every indication in the text gives us a sense that he had committed a grievous sin in doing this.

You never leave the land of Yahweh. You don't leave the promise land. You don't leave Israel, no matter what, famine or plenty. And one of the ways we know this is because his two sons are named Melon and Chilean.

And these are Canaanite names, Moabite names. If you were a Hebrew father, you would never name your son Melon and Chilean.

This is a pagan origin. And so it's likely the case that in ancient areas when you go to a new territory, you take upon yourself their gods. And so everything that a limilech had run from in Israel, he left the land hoping to get food, and he goes and he gets nothing but death.

[3 : 30] He gets nothing but death. And so where we pick up in our passage today is that it's narrowing in on these three women. A limilech's dead, Melon's dead, Chilean's dead, and you've got nothing but these three women, the grandmother of which is in a completely foreign land, and that's where our passage picks up.

They've got no hope of a genealogy, you see. That's the point. They've got no hope of a genealogy. Everything that they're looking for for fulfillment, it's not there.

It's not there. All the men are dead. All the men are dead. No babies coming. And so in verse 15, they're about to return to Israel, and there are two things I want us to look at this morning, very simply, according to the reverse order of the passage.

Naomi's emptiness and Ruth's fullness. Naomi's emptiness and Naomi's empty, Ruth is full. And I think what we're going to see is that this is also true for every single one of us.

You're one or the other. You're one or the other. You're empty or you're full. You're empty or you're full. So first, Naomi's empty. The thesis statement of the entire first part of this book is found in verse 20 in our passage.

[4 : 51] Naomi has just walked back into Bethlehem. The people are like going crazy because they haven't seen her in over a decade. And who is this? Who's this woman? And this is what she says.

They call her Naomi and she says, don't call me Naomi, call me Mara. Call me Mara, which the ESV tells you right there that it means bitter.

Now why in the world did she choose this name bitter? She's referred to being bitter already once in this passage. This is the total opposite of all the renaming ceremonies in the Torah in Genesis Deuteronomy.

You'll remember that Abram becomes Abraham, right? Abram's name means father. And Abraham means father of nations. It's a naming ceremonies or covenants.

They're blessing ceremonies. And this is the total opposite. It's a cursing ceremony that she's self-deprecating. She's cursing herself. Why is she doing this? Why is she calling herself Mara?

[5 : 46] Well, Naomi knows her Bible. She knows her Old Testament, which Genesis Deuteronomy would have been the only thing she would have had. But she had it and she knew the story of the Exodus. And in the story of the Exodus, Israel leaves, crosses the Red Sea, the Great Salvation.

They've been given great salvation from slavery to salvation. And when they cross the Red Sea, they get to a land and they're thirsty. They're thirsty. They're dying of thirst. And they start to grumble.

It's the first instance of grumbling after the Exodus. And when they get there, they finally come upon a spring of water and they go and they start lapping it up and they spit it out.

Why? And the text says, because they realized that the water was Mara. But the water was Mara. It was bitter as the ESV is translating. Now what does it mean for water to be bitter?

I had no idea what this might mean. What does it mean to have bitter water? It means it's salt. Salt water. You see, they've come across the Red Sea. They've come to their own their way of the Promised Land.

[6 : 47] They've come in salvation. They've come to get life. And as soon as they start to lap up, the one thing that they think is going to give them life in the midst of the desert, salt water, what does salt water give you? It gives you death.

You drink salt water for hydration and it kills you. It destroys your kidneys. Your kidneys can't handle it. You see what's happening here? Look, right after this in the very same passage, what does God do?

God tells Moses, I'm sending you, I don't know why, a log, a stick, a tree. And he says, throw the tree into the water and the water will become, and what's the word, sweet, sweet.

The waters that marra were turned from marra to sweetness. And then, look, Naomi's name, the ESV tells you in the footnote that it means pleasant. It's not exactly pleasant. It's closer.

It's more like the word sweet, sweetness. You see what's happening here? The Israelites left the land of Exodus. They left, Yahweh brought them out to be saved and they got to this place of bitterness, but they were given sweetness.

[7 : 49] They were given salvation. They were given life. Naomi, look, Naomi, the exact same things happened to her. She didn't come out of Egypt. She came out of Moab. She's in exile, come back to the land of Israel.

And as soon as she gets there, the exact opposite of what happened to Israel is happening to her. She says, I'm not Naomi like the Israelites were in the Exodus. I am Mara.

It's still saltwater for me. Everything that I'm drinking up right now, it's just killing my kidneys. It's sucking life right out of me.

She wears it on her face. She wears it on her face. She walks into the city of Bethlehem and the text tells us that a great commotion came out.

Why? She's been gone for over a decade. Look, to get to Israel from Moab, you have to cross the Dead Sea, the Salt Sea.

[8 : 48] She's wearing the salt on her face. She's old. She's decrepit. She looks like death. She's experienced nothing but a life of death while she's been away. They can see it on her face.

And so the way she expresses this bitterness, this saltiness in her life, is through poetry. There are two points in this passage.

The one is found in verse 20, 21 from when she says, don't call me Mara. She cites a poem there. The first is in the previous section of the passage, Ruth's famous poem, which we'll get to in a moment.

But look, this is why it doesn't look like poetry in your Bible, but this is why it is poetry. Because if you notice, she uses two words for God. She says the Almighty, which is the word should I should I you've heard of probably heard of that word should I is the reference to God's is a reference to God's sovereign power and acting in the world.

It literally comes from a word for mountain, the great mountain. He's the great mountain. He's he can't be moved and he moves everything else. You see it's about God's providence. So the poem is bookended.

[9 : 59] She says Almighty should I and then she says Lord, Lord Almighty. See it's bookended by should I should I Yahweh Yahweh should I it's a it's a point.

And what is she saying that the Almighty and the in Yahweh do to her? What does she say? She says should I gives me bitterness and calamity. You see should I as a reference to God acting in history, God's actions to her in history are nothing but saltwater and calamity.

And then in the middle, what does Yahweh give her? What does Yahweh give her? Yahweh has made her empty. She used to be full, but now she's empty and Yahweh has testified against her. Now when a person uses the name Yahweh instead of should I they're trying to make a contrast about God's activities. God as Yahweh that's a reference to his eternal his counsel above the world outside of the world.

You see she's saying he's God and his eternal counsel Yahweh has testified against me. That's a that's a juridical term. It's a judicial term. You know what she's saying?

[11 : 08] She's saying God and the heavenly of heavenlies and the great counsel above all things has pronounced a judgment, a curse. He's testified.

He's witnessed against me. And how does that play out? The should I God the mountain has come down into this world and cast calamity upon me. You see, you see what she's doing?

She's reading her circumstances of calamity back into the providential councils of God. The councils no man can see. She's reading it back in.

She's saying God's testified against me. Why is she empty? Why is she empty? Is it food? Is it about food?

You know, she says, I left this place full and I've come back empty. You remember what the context was. Why did she leave? Because of a famine. She didn't leave full of food.

[12 : 03] She left empty. Her stomach was absolutely empty when she left town. Why is she empty? It's not about food. It's about status. It's about a genealogy.

You see, it's it's about a quiver as Psalms and Proverbs puts it. The quiver full of arrows, which is of course a reference to children. At the end of this book, when, of course, you know the end of the story, when she actually gets blessed, what's the blessing?

It says that, Ruth has been to you better than seven sons. Better than seven sons. Why do they say that? Because seven, the number of completion, seven sons, that's the greatest thing a woman can possibly have in the ancient Near East.

If you produce for your husband seven sons, you've produced the greatest of genealogies. Your name will last forever in the books. This is what, this is hope for them.

This is the cultural standards. This is so badly what they want. This is security. You see, this is security. This is security. If you're a woman in the ancient Near East, an old woman that cannot bear children any longer without a husband and without sons, that means one thing for you.

[13 : 13] It means homelessness. It's just a simple fact. It means homelessness. What does it mean to be full? What does it mean to be the opposite of empty?

What does it mean to be fulfilled? You know, we could use other words. It means to matter. It means to be somebody. It means to enter into society and that society give you some type of value.

To pronounce to you, you're worth it. You're worth it. It means something to us. In ancient Near Eastern culture, the question, who is your great grandfather?

That's what would tell you you're worth. Do it for the Klan. Do it for the group. In modern urban culture, it's totally different from that, isn't it?

You don't get security through Klan's, through asking who is your grandfather. You get your security mainly in modern urban culture through individual accomplishment.

[14:10] It's literally the total opposite. Through your strong bank account. Your strong bank account. Not anybody, not your dad's, not your great grandfather's, not your 10 generations back, but your strong bank account.

You get it through your ideal weight, through your beauty, through your youthfulness, from setting yourself apart from your colleagues in competition.

When you go to a job interview, they're looking for marketable skills. Do you have marketable skills? Can you make me money? That's the question I want to know. I don't care who your great grandfather is. Can you make me money?

That's the cultural standards of fulfillment in modern urban cultures. Are you a first born? I don't care if you're first born. I don't care how many brothers and sisters you have.

Work hard and you can be anything you want to be. That's the American dream. That's the Western dream. We all exist in cultures and subcultures.

[15:11] If you live in Edinburgh, you live in a modern urban culture, a meta-culture. But also, in addition to that culture, every single one of us lives in multiple subcultures. I live in the subculture of high academic theology over there across the street.

I live in the subculture of people that have little kids that take their buggies out on Saturday mornings together. I live in the culture of sports. All of you live in different cultures.

Some of you live in a mom culture, you live in a retired culture, you live in all sorts of subcultures.

You live in professional cultures, work cultures. Every single subculture that you live in, within this big meta-culture of modern urbanism that we live in, they make demands of you.

They make demands of you. Every single one of these subcultures is defining the word fulfillment in a different way.

What does it mean to be fulfilled? What does it mean to be the coolest, the best in secondary school? It's totally different than what it means to be the coolest, the best, the most fulfilled, the most successful amongst a group of young 30s moms.

[16:20] Every subculture is making demands of us. It's making demands on who we ought to be, right? And whether or not we say it out loud, every single subculture and the one you're in, and we do it to, is we make differentiations about people according to rank, according to who's the most successful in every single subculture.

You know you do it. We all do it. We do it even inside this little conclave of ours called St. Columbus. It happens. It's what we're prone to.

Now look, we could sweep the desire to be fulfilled, to be successful, to be somebody, to matter in this world.

We could sweep it under the rug right now of cultural idol, right? But it's not that simple. Because one thing that the culture gets right, every single culture in all of history has gotten right about it, including the ancient Near East, including our modern, urban, individualized culture, is that we all want to be somebody.

We all want to be fulfilled. We all want to be successful because being successful is what we're made to be. You see? Look, you want to be fulfilled. And they only want to be fulfilled because you were made, look, the Bible uses this preposition for, you were made for insert an object.

[17:38] You were made for something. You're not made to be static. You're made to move, to go somewhere, to have a trajectory, to have an end goal in sight. You're made for fulfillment. Every culture gets that right.

The question then simply becomes who, what, how? Where are you looking for it?

Where are you looking for it? You all want it. I want it. We all want it. We want to matter. But where are we looking for it? Look, Naomi's search for fulfillment ends in self-deprecation.

If you saw that, she says, just call me Mara. I'm bitter. I'm saltwater. And for some of us, when we face the insecurities of life, we do the exact same thing.

Some of it, this is subtle and nuanced, but you'll know what I'm talking about. Some of us have a tendency to self-deprecate when we face the insecurities of life, the fact of being unsuccessful, of not feeling like we matter, of looking for worth, of straining, for self-esteem, of looking for it for some fulfillment.

[18 : 52] We self-deprecate in the most subtle of ways, just like Naomi. We don't scream out for a name change, but we self-deprecate in a conversation in order to hear the nicest form of a lie that exists in all the world, and that's flattery.

We talk poorly about ourselves in public just so we can get somebody to tap us on the back and say, no, no, no, you're good. You're okay. This is what's great about you. I'm going to flatter you right now.

For some of us, we find security in the midst of the insecure, in the midst of being unfulfilled. We look for fulfillment through gossip. We look for it through belittling in conversation.

You get that one single jab in, very subtle, just enough that it won't offend, but just enough that you gain a moment of power, moment of power, so that it makes you feel like you matter, like you're better.

The competition has been won. For some of us, we have a constant need to draw attention to ourselves in conversation. We don't know how to conversate because we don't know how to ask questions about other people's lives.

[20 : 05] We just talk about ourselves the whole time. For some of us, our insecurity is expressed itself in an inability to forgive, an inability to forget what we've forgiven, an inability to be wrong, an inability to ask for forgiveness, a need to always feel harmed by others.

For some of us, and this is especially true for me, insecurity, unsuccessfulness, lack of fulfillment manifests itself in anxiety and worry.

The type of anxiety that proves psychosomatic conditions are real, the type of anxiety that makes your stomach hurt, you know what I'm talking about.

It manifests itself in all sorts of ways. We cling to our insecurities like golem clung to his precious. Look, what's the point of Ruth?

What's the point? What's the point? Very briefly, what's the point of Ruth? I don't want to say it all today so I can have something to preach on in the next couple of weeks, but what's the point of Ruth? Ruth isn't about Ruth.

[21 : 09] That's the point of Ruth. Ruth is about Naomi. Naomi is the subject of chapter one. Naomi is the subject of chapter four. Look, at the end of this passage, what are you asking?

Is Naomi going to be fulfilled? She's empty, she's bitter. Is she going to ever find sweetness again? Is she ever going to find fulfillment? Is she ever going to find hope? And you know the answer to the question?

Yes, she does. She finds exactly what she was looking for. At the end, there's a baby. There's a baby. Her quiver. Look, you know this book is so much about Naomi's fulfillment that in Ruth 417, listen to this, in Ruth 417, right after Ruth has birthed the baby, the women of the city come and circle around Naomi and they cry out, a son has been born to Naomi.

Not to Ruth, to Naomi. A redeemer, the text literally says, has come to Naomi. She was redeemed. She was fulfilled. So here's the point.

Here's the point of Ruth. If you shape your desires after the cultural standards around you, just like Naomi did, then eventually, if you want it bad enough, God will give you exactly what you wanted.

[22 : 25] No, no, that's not it. Of course not. That's not the point. It might appear like that on the surface, but look, how does she actually get fulfillment? Yeah, sure, she gets her genealogy.

But how, how, how does the son come? And Israelite has a good CV if they enter into an ethnically pure Israelite marriage.

And Israelite has a good CV if they marry someone above their socioeconomic class. You would never, a father would never look for a wife or a son in a lower socioeconomic class that offers nothing to the family, that doesn't do anything for the genealogy.

Look, Naomi gets fulfilled through an interracial marriage to a woman that's so below Boaz socioeconomic class that she takes upon herself the activity of only the poorest in the country, gleaning from the outer edges of his fields.

You see the point? Yeah, she gets fulfillment. Yeah, she gets a genealogy, but in totally an unexpected way against every cultural standard that was present in the ancient Near East.

[23 : 39] That's how God does it. Even more, even more. No Moabite can enter the assembly of God, but even more in the book of Judges, the time in which Ruth is set in, Moab in Israel were at war with one another.

She's an enemy of the state. There's a foreign enemy on home soil. We'll talk a bit more about that when we come to Ruth in just a moment.

This is God's, God fulfills Naomi through an interracial, how modern, how modern, an interracial marriage to a woman of no socioeconomic class that is an enemy of the state and then comes Jesus Christ.

You see? What's the point? The point is this, God doesn't care about the culture's definitions of success. He doesn't care. He doesn't work according to those standards of what it means to be fulfilled.

God has always been about the business of subverting cultural norms for fulfillment and success. Just think about it. Every time in the Torah, Genesis to Deuteronomy, when a firstborn is supposed to get the blessing, who gets the blessing against all cultural norms?

[25 : 00] Who does God give it to? The secondborn, not the first. When a genealogy for a king can only be composed of men, of great men, whose Jesus genealogy composed of prostitutes.

Look, David should have never been king. It was not his right. He was the youngest son. The weakest. His family weren't in the lineage.

And yet it goes to him. Look, you see the point. You see the point where the book is getting at. Naomi pronounced her emptiness in the little town of Bethlehem.

You see? Oh, little town of Bethlehem. The place where Naomi comes. The land of food is literally what Bethlehem means, the place of bread.

Naomi comes and pronounces her emptiness. That place was too full, too full to accept the birth of a great king.

[26 : 07] You see? Jesus washes the feet of his own disciples. Jesus is the king that subverts all cultural norms. His kingship looks nothing like what a kingship should look like.

The cross is the great ancient Near Eastern instrument of curse. No king should be lifted up on a cross. No king. The king should march straight to Rome.

He should take the throne. He should restore the promised land. Look, God is in the business of every time we think that our cultures have got it right about what it means to be fulfilled, what it means to be successful, God comes in and says, look at the cross.

Look at the cross. The king of the whole world looks like nothing but a beggar, a criminal. What does it mean to be fulfilled?

To be blessed. What does it mean? Blessed are the wealth seeking. No, blessed are the poor in spirit. The culture says blessed are the safe, blessed are the secure, blessed are the persecuted for the kingdom's sake.

[27 : 10] Blessed are those who are proud of themselves, says the 21st century. Blessed are those who have the best self-esteem. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger for opportunity. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The culture's totally right.

Everyone's looking for fulfillment. But here's the great irony of history. If you want to be happy, if you want to be fulfilled, if you want to be successful, and you all do, to be happy is to stop trying to find it.

To be happy, to be self-fulfilled is to stop self-seeking. To be surprised by joy, as C.S. Lewis put it. This is the point of the cross. The greatest happiness in all the world comes from the most self-forgetful activity. You want to be happy, forget about yourself. Forget about yourself, and then you'll be happy.

[28 : 17] That's the great secret of how God made the war-fold. That's what it means to be fulfilled. Look at the cross. What are the demands of your subcultures?

That's the question we all have to think about. What are the demands of success, fulfillment, and happiness that the subculture you live and work in is demanding of you?

Who are you looking for to find fulfillment? Secondly, and briefly, very briefly, less than half of that one.

Ruthfulness, very briefly. Naomi's empty. Ruth appears to us in this passage as full. In Verpa, the other sister-in-law has left in verse 15.

Naomi urges Ruth to do the same. Naomi knew something about the ancient Aries. Any territory you go to in the ancient Aries has a God, or gods.

[29 : 17] When you go there, you will take upon yourself there, gods, or probably face some type of violence. She knew that. The God of Moab is Komosh.

Komosh was, we actually have what's called the Stone of Moab in the Louvre in Paris that was found in the 19th century from around the time of the Book of Judges, most likely, that describes the ancient kingdom of Moab.

It mentions Komosh all over the place, and actually corresponds almost exactly to what the Book of Numbers and First Kings describes about the land of Moab. What Numbers and Kings describes about Moab is that Komosh is a God that demands one primary form of worship.

Maybe some of you remember it. It's the same form of worship that Mollek or Maloch sometimes in the scriptures demands, and that's child sacrifice.

Komosh demands child sacrifice. Look, we've already given Naomi a hard time, a bit of a hard time, and we look at this, and Naomi says, bless them in the name of Yahweh, and then said, now go back to Komosh.

[30 : 22] Go back to the God of Child Sacrifice. What you want to do with that would be like, Naomi's a total failure in this passage. That's what it appears on the surface. But look, there's something more going on here.

If you read the rest of the book, it's a little bit more nuanced than that, and we've already mentioned it. When Ruth comes to the field of Boaz and meets Boaz for the first time in chapter 2, verse 9, Boaz says to her, stay in my field.

Don't go to any other field. Stay right here. Don't glean at the outer edges of the field. Come in and take an actual harvest, which is an enormous gift for a man of his stature.

Why? Well, he explains why. Have I not told the men not to touch you? It says. Now, the word touch there is more literally strike.

It's a word of violence. It could mean sexual or brutality in general. You see the point? She's an enemy of the state. She's a moabite.

[31 : 23] It's not just that Boaz would be nice. Boaz is saying, if you stay on the outer edges of the field, I'm not sure if you won't get raped and murdered. You see?

Naomi knows this. Naomi knows this. It appears actually once in chapter 4, a strong indication that Naomi knew this whole time. She's sending her daughters-in-law back. You see what she's saying? If, Ruth, if you measure success by the cultural standards of the day, by genealogy, I got nothing for you. I don't have a son. I'm not going to have a son. I'm too old.

And you're a moabite. There's nothing for you in Israel. Go back to your lands because, look, if you come here, it's not only that you're not going to ever have a son. You're probably going to get raped and you're probably going to die.

This is the land of Israel during the time of the judges. Okay? Go read the book of Judges and you'll know why that's significant. It's a messed up season in the life of Israel.

[32 : 21] You're probably going to get raped. You're probably going to die. This is Ruth's situation. You see, Naomi looked for fulfillment in all the cultural norms of her day.

Ruth is told, you're not going to get any of the cultural satisfaction of the day and you're probably going to get murdered. And then the poem. Then the poem.

What's the poem? The first great poem. One of the greatest poems in all the scripture. It's epic, they say it at marriages sometimes. There aren't any connecting verbs, by the way. It literally just says, where you go, I go.

Where you stay, I stay. Your people, my people. Your God, my God. Where do you die, I die. And then at the end of the oath, she gives another part of the oath of deprecation, which means, she says, kill me, Yahweh, if I break this.

You see what's going on here? Look, scholars are all up in arms about this, about making sure that nobody thinks that what's happening here is a conversion. But it is a conversion.

[33 : 20] It's a totally conversion. You know how we know it's a conversion? She's not simply saying, look, if I move with you, then of course your territorial God will be my territorial God.

Look, no non-Israelite would use the name, the covenant name of God. If this wasn't a conversion, she would have said the word in Hebrew, Elohim, which is the generic name for God and other gods.

It's the name that all the foreigners would have used. But when she deprecates herself, she uses the name Yahweh. You know how she uses the name Yahweh?

The Israelites didn't call God Yahweh until late. When? Until Exodus 3. And even after that, it took a while for it to sink in, God does not reveal himself to Israel as Yahweh until the Exodus.

Abraham never knew to call him that. This is the personal name. It's the name of conversion. She's saying Yahweh. My oath is before Yahweh. Yahweh is my God.

[34 : 23] You see, Naomi looked for fulfillment in all the things that would make somebody empty. In cultural standards, everything that would make somebody empty is exactly what Ruth's going to get.

But where's her fullness come from? You're going to die. You're going to get raped. You're not going to find a husband. I swear by the name of Yahweh that I will stay in this land.

Listen, not just tell you die, Naomi. Did you catch that? But I will be buried where you're buried.

Naomi's an old woman. Ruth could have left after Naomi died, even if she just wanted to display a remarkable friendship.

But that's not what happens. Look, we'll close with this. We've got to stop. I have a big third point. I totally misjudged my time and I told the earlier service man.

I really wanted to get to it, but it's about the barley harvest. It's a fantastic point in the scriptures, but I'm going to sneak it in next time. Look, Ruth is the little, weak, culturally decrepit enemy of the state immigrant.

[35 : 28] You see? She's vowed herself to be an immigrant for life in a country that doesn't want her. You see what's happening? You see what's happening?

It's the same thing as the first point. The immigrant has come to Bethlehem with no place to lay her head. There's no room in the end for this immigrant.

There's no room. It's as if she knows the prophecy already. The prophecy of the son, she comes to Bethlehem without a look. The incarnation is the greatest immigration of all time.

He left his father's throne above, so free, so infinite is grace. He did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing taking on the form of servant. He stepped down from the throne room.

He looked one theologian, my favorite way to put it says this, Jesus Christ is the man who went into the far country. He did the total opposite journey of Ruth, you see.

[36 : 28] He's the immigrant that left the promised land of heaven to go back to Egypt, to go back to Moab. The cross is God's great immersion right back into the lands of slavery, into the lands of the Canaanites, into the lands of the Pagans.

Jesus Christ left Israel, you see, when he became incarnate, to get Israel back. Jesus became an immigrant. The great immigrant.

So that immigrants like us who have wandered all far from the Garden of Eden because of sin, would be brought back near to home again.

To find fullness in point one, to find fullness in Jesus' example of self-forgiveness at the cross, that's happiness.

That's the example. Self-forgiveness, that's how you find happiness. To get that, you must first find salvation in Jesus, the man going into the far country.

[37 : 34] The immigrant that came to bring all the immigrants home. You see happiness is self-forgiveness, but it's self-forgiveness in Jesus Christ.

And that's a difference. Well, we'll talk about the barley harvest next time. Let's pray. Father, thank you God for the book of Ruth, the sweet romance, that is Boaz and Ruth, that is the genealogy of the King David's greater son, Jesus.

And we ask that you would show us him in the midst of it. We ask for the Jesus' name. Amen.