

FIRM FOUNDATION

THE BOOK OF RUTH



MEN'S CONFERENCE

2024

SESSION NOTES

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MIKE WOODS

Ruth 1 – Loss and Loyalty

Session 1 of Firm Foundation Conference – November 1, 2024

The theme verse for Rock Mills men's group, 1 Corinthians 16:13, calls us to "Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong." This perfectly captures the heart of our conference theme: *Firm Foundation*. Over the next four sessions, we'll dive into the story of Ruth, a story that might seem unlikely for a men's conference, but one that is packed with lessons about faithfulness, strength, and standing firm when life doesn't go as planned.

As we journey through the book of Ruth, you'll see how relatable her story is to our own lives. In the most difficult moments—when heartbreak strikes, when God feels distant, and when the future seems unclear—there is a firm foundation we can stand on. God often gives us small glimmers of hope to test our faith and grow our trust in Him. Ruth's life shows us that God is always at work, even in the ordinary moments—through small acts of loyalty, through suffering, and in times of quiet desperation. Even when He feels distant, He is laying the groundwork for something greater, and His faithfulness never fails. As Boaz tells Ruth in 2:12, "*The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.*" (CSB) This is the kind of faith we need—one that seeks refuge in God, trusting Him as our *Firm Foundation* no matter what life throws our way.

As G. Campbell Morgan said, "*Remember that the work you do today, you cannot see the issue. It is wrought through faith in God. It may be in some great city or a hidden village among the hills, that your life may be lived, small, unknown, never published, yet you may be God's foothold for things to come, which if told you now you would not possibly believe.*"¹ God is frequently working out His purpose in places and times where it seems to us that He isn't doing anything.

Ruth chapter one paints a vivid picture of faithfulness in the face of profound loss and suffering. It reminds us that in our darkest moments, when the future is unclear and hope seems only a distant glimmer, loyalty to both God and others can carry us through. Ruth's commitment to stay with Naomi, despite the uncertainty ahead, powerfully illustrates that faithfulness is not just a feeling—it's a choice to trust God's plan and remain loyal to those we love, even when the path forward is filled with pain and doubt. Yet God can redeem loss and turn it into legacy.

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Paisley, Harold. 1995. *This Ruth*. Connecticut: OlivePress.

As we study each chapter together, let's keep this theme in mind: God is our *Firm Foundation*. He is working out His purpose, even when we can't see it. Whether in the big moments of life or the quiet struggles, God calls us to stand firm in Him. Ruth's story shows us that when everything else feels shaky, we can rely on God's faithfulness. Through this journey, we'll discover what it means to build our lives on a foundation that can transform loss into legacy and withstand any storm.

Ruth 1:1a – During the time of the judges

"During the time of the judges,"

- **Contextual Background:**

Ruth's story takes place during the era of the judges, a time marked by political instability and moral decline in Israel.

- **Dates:** Roughly 1200 to 1020 BC.
- **Global Context:** This was the Bronze Age. World events included the Trojan War and the rise of kingship in many nations. In Israel, however, the people were ruled by judges, and society was chaotic.
- **Israel's Context:** Judges 21:25 describes this era:

“In those days, there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him.” Judges 21:25

It was a time of great spiritual darkness despite being in the Promised Land.

- **Application:**

Even in times of chaos and moral decline, God is working. Ruth's story contrasts the instability of Israel during the judges with a tale of loyalty, faithfulness, and God's care for individuals in difficult circumstances. **God's providence is at work even in the midst of personal or societal turmoil**—a reminder that we can trust His faithfulness, no matter how dark the times seem.

Ruth 1:1b – Famine and the decision to go to Moab

- **Bethlehem (House of Bread):** Ironically, the "House of Bread" was experiencing a severe famine, driving this family to seek refuge in Moab.

- **Moab's Reputation:**

Moab had a contentious history with Israel. God had warned Israel to avoid the Moabites because of their idolatry and immorality:

- ***“Israel...began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab... So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the LORD was angry against Israel” Numbers 25:1-3 (CSB)***
- ***“No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the Lord” Deuteronomy 23:2 (CSB)***

Moab's Reputation Continued:

Descendants of Lot. Lot's daughter plot to prolong their family line by getting their father drunk and sleeping with them. The daughter whose idea it was first bore a son named - Moab.

- **Application:**

When faced with hardship, we are often tempted to run to places that seem to offer temporary relief, even if they are spiritually dangerous. This family's decision to go to Moab reflects a moment of desperation. **When famine—whether physical or spiritual—comes, where do we turn?** Do we trust God to provide, or do we seek solutions in places we know are contrary to His will?

Ruth 1:2 – Introducing the family

- **Names and their meanings:**

- **Elimelech = God is King.**
- **Naomi = Pleasant.**
- **Mahlon = Sickness or Weakness.**
- **Chilion = Wasting (or Pining).**
- **Bethlehem = House of Bread.**

- **Significance of Names:**

The names in this family carry deep meanings. Elimelech's name, meaning "God is King," is ironic given that he left the Promised Land to seek help elsewhere. Naomi's name, "Pleasant," will take on deep meaning as we watch her journey from fullness to bitterness. Her sons' names, "Sickness" and "Wasting," foreshadow their eventual deaths.

Ruth 1:3-5 – Tragedy strikes

- **Naomi loses everything:**

In a span of about ten years, Naomi loses her husband and both of her sons. This is more than just personal grief—it represents the complete loss of provision, protection, and security in that culture.

- **Cultural Weight:**

In Naomi's time, the greatest tragedy was the end of a family line. The loss of her sons meant not only personal heartbreak but also deep cultural shame, as there was no male heir to continue her family's name.

- **Application:**

Loss is something we all experience in different forms—whether it's the loss of a loved one, security, or purpose. **In our moments of greatest loss, how do we respond?** Do we allow ourselves to feel the weight of that grief, or do we push it away? Naomi's story shows us that it's okay to acknowledge our brokenness while still trusting that God is not finished writing the story.

Ruth 1:6 – A glimmer of hope

- **Naomi's hope:**

After hearing that God had provided food in Bethlehem, Naomi makes the decision to return home. This marks a turning point in her story—a faint glimmer of hope that God is still at work, even in the midst of her tragedy.

- **Application:**

In the midst of our pain, we often miss the small signs of God's provision. **Hope sometimes comes in small, unexpected ways**—a word, a provision, or a moment that reminds us that God is still with us. Are we open to seeing these glimmers of hope, even when life seems overwhelmingly hard?

Ruth 1:7-10 – Naomi's kindness

- **Naomi's selflessness:**

Naomi urges Ruth and Orpah to return to their families, knowing that staying with her offers them no future. In a moment of kindness, she blesses them and thanks them for their loyalty to her and her sons.

- **Application:**

True loyalty often involves sacrifice. In her own grief, Naomi shows selfless love by releasing Ruth and Orpah from their obligation to stay with her. This act of kindness reflects God's own heart for us. In times of loss, are we able to care for others, even when we are struggling ourselves?

Ruth 1:11-13 – Naomi's realism

- **Naomi's sense of hopelessness:**

Naomi explains that she has nothing left to offer them. She refers to the provision in Deuteronomy 25:5-6, which states that a brother should marry his brother's widow to carry on the family name. Naomi believes there's no possibility of a future for Orpah or Ruth if they stay with her.

- **Application:**

In moments of deep sorrow, it's easy to feel like God is against us. Naomi's bitterness reflects the weight of her loss, but it's important to note that she doesn't walk away from God, even as she struggles to understand His hand in her life. **We can bring our raw emotions to God—He can handle our grief and questions.**

Ruth 1:14 – Orpah leaves, Ruth clings

- **Orpah's departure:**

Orpah, understandably, returns to her family, but Ruth clings to Naomi. The word "cling" is the same word used in Genesis 2:24, where a husband is called to cling to his wife, signifying a deep bond of loyalty.

- **Application:**

Ruth's loyalty to Naomi is radical. **True loyalty to God often requires leaving behind what is comfortable or familiar** for the sake of something greater. Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi, even when it seemed hopeless, is an example of steadfast faith and trust.

Ruth 1:15-17 – Ruth's vow of loyalty

"Naomi said, 'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law.' But Ruth replied: 'Don't plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if anything but death separates you and me.'" (CSB)

- **Ruth's bold declaration:**

Ruth's vow to Naomi is one of the most beautiful expressions of loyalty in Scripture. She forsakes her family, her culture, and her gods to follow Naomi and commit herself to the God of Israel. Her statement is a declaration of both personal loyalty and faith in Yahweh.

- **Application:**

This is **reckless faith**. Ruth's decision mirrors the call of discipleship—leaving behind everything familiar to follow the true God. **Loyalty to God sometimes means radical risk and trust in His plan.** Are we willing to leave behind our past to follow God wherever He leads, no matter the cost?

Ruth 1:18-19 – Returning to Bethlehem

- **The journey back:**

Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, but Naomi returns a different woman than when she left. The town recognizes her, but she is no longer the pleasant woman they remember. Her heart is full of grief, and she feels that her life has become bitter.

- **Application:**

Returning to Bethlehem is an act of faith for Naomi. Even though she feels empty and bitter, she is still stepping back into the place of God's provision. **When we return to God, we don't have to come with joy—sometimes, all we bring is our brokenness, and that's enough.** God meets us even in our bitterness.

Ruth 1:20-22 – Naomi's bitterness

- **Naomi's name change:**
Naomi no longer wants to be called "Pleasant" (Naomi) but "Bitter" (Mara). She believes that God has brought calamity upon her and stripped her of everything good in her life. Yet, even in her bitterness, she doesn't abandon her faith in God—she acknowledges His sovereignty.
- **Names God:**
The Almighty = Shadai (All Powerful).
The Lord – Yahweh. Covenant name for God. A God who keeps His promises.
- **Application:**
Bitterness is often the result of deep loss, and Naomi's honesty about her pain is refreshing. But even in her bitterness, she has returned to the land of God's promise, where He will soon begin a process of redemption. **When we are bitter or broken, God is still working—He is the foundation that holds firm, even when we feel we've lost everything.**

Ruth 1:20-22 – Naomi's bitterness

"They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest." (CSB)

- **Hope at the Harvest:**
The chapter ends on a glimmer of hope, with Naomi and Ruth arriving in Bethlehem just. "As the barley harvest is beginning." This hints at the restoration to come, even though Naomi can't see it yet.

Conclusion:

The first chapter of Ruth begins with deep loss and heartache. Naomi has lost her home, husband, and sons—her life feels shattered. Yet even in the midst of this overwhelming sorrow, a small glimmer of hope appears: the barley harvest has begun. This is more than just a detail; it's a reminder that God is at work, even when life feels hopeless. In Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi, we see a profound act of faith—an act that trusts in God as a firm foundation, despite an uncertain future.

Ruth's faithfulness shows us that standing firm isn't about seeing the full picture or having all the answers. It's about trusting God when the way forward seems impossible. Ruth didn't know what was ahead, but she chose to stay loyal, to trust, and to believe in the God of Israel.

Just like Ruth and Naomi, we are called to stand firm on God's promises, especially when life feels uncertain. Our foundation is not in our circumstances, but in God's unchanging faithfulness. Even when all we have is a small glimmer of hope, we can trust that God is working behind the scenes. He often uses our moments of loss and pain to lay the groundwork for something greater.

Application:

Here are some questions to ask yourself this evening.

1. Where am I experiencing loss or bitterness in my life right now?
2. What does loyalty to God look like for me in this season?
3. How can I trust God as the firm foundation, even when life seems uncertain?

As you contemplate those questions in your heart, don't lose sight of the small glimmers of hope God provides. When everything feels shaky, anchor yourself in His faithfulness. You may not see the full picture yet, but like Ruth, choose to trust in God's purpose. He is the firm foundation we stand on, transforming our loss into a legacy of redemption.

Anchor yourself in God, for no storm or uncertainty can shake His unbreakable foundation. In every season, He alone is the unchanging rock – the firm foundation – and he will never fail.

Discussion Questions

1. In Ruth 1, we see Naomi feeling abandoned and bitter toward God, yet she doesn't abandon her faith. Have you ever experienced a time when you felt distant from God, but still chose to hold on to your faith? What helped you to stay firm during that season?
 - a. Follow-up: How can Naomi's story encourage us when we feel that God is far away?
2. Ruth makes a bold, life-changing commitment to stay with Naomi, even when her future was uncertain. What does Ruth's loyalty teach us about the type of faithfulness God desires from us? In what areas of your life might God be calling you to take a similar step of faith?
 - a. Follow-up: What does "standing firm" look like when the future feels unknown or shaky?
3. We often look for big signs from God, but Ruth's story reminds us that He works in small, seemingly ordinary moments—like the barley harvest. How can we learn to recognize and appreciate the small glimmers of hope in our lives? Can you share an example of how God used something small or ordinary to encourage you or to shape your faith?
 - a. Follow-up: Why do you think we sometimes overlook these moments, and how can we train ourselves to see God's hand more clearly?
4. Naomi returned to Bethlehem feeling empty and bitter, but she also trusted that God was still at work. What does it mean for us to trust God as our firm foundation, even when our circumstances don't seem to reflect His goodness?
 - a. Follow-up: How can we support one another in trusting God when life feels overwhelming or we're struggling to see His purpose?

Ruth 2 – Provision and Providence

Session 2 of Firm Foundation Conference – November 2, 2024

As we begin today's study on Ruth chapter 2, titled "**Provision and Providence**," let's first revisit our exploration of Ruth chapter 1, "**Loss and Loyalty**." We saw that Ruth's story unfolds during the time of the Judges, an era marked by chaos and instability in Israel. When famine struck, Naomi, her husband Elimelech, and their two sons left Bethlehem—the 'house of bread'—to seek refuge in Moab, a land distant from God both physically and spiritually. Tragedy soon followed as Naomi lost her husband and both sons, leaving her without family, security, or hope.

In the midst of this deep loss, we see Naomi's faith challenged. She feels bitter and believes that God's hand is against her, but she does not abandon her faith. Instead, she returns to Bethlehem after hearing that God has provided food for His people. Accompanying her is Ruth, her Moabite daughter-in-law, who makes a remarkable decision to stay with Naomi and follow the God of Israel. Ruth's loyalty and faith shine as she declares, "Where you go, I will go... your God will be my God." Despite the uncertainty ahead, Ruth's faithfulness shows us that real faith isn't about having all the answers—it's about trusting God when the path is unclear.

As Naomi and Ruth arrive back in Bethlehem, the chapter ends with a glimmer of hope: the barley harvest is beginning. This small detail is more than just a passing moment—it's a sign that God is at work, even when life seems hopeless. The journey from loss to legacy has begun, reminding us that God often uses our pain to lay the foundation for something greater.

As we move into chapter 2, we'll see how God continues to work through these small, seemingly ordinary moments, shaping their future in ways they couldn't have imagined. Let's keep in mind that God's faithfulness is our firm foundation, and like Ruth, we are called to trust Him, even when the way forward feels uncertain.

Ruth 1:22 – Rural Town at Harvest

"They Arrived at the beginning of the barley harvest." (CSB)

Joy and Rumours Confirmed: In rural community, harvest is a time of pure joy. Also, the rumours of God providing Ruth had heard in Moab were true!

Ruth 2:1 – Boaz enters the story

- **Introduction of Boaz:**

The reader is introduced to Boaz, a man of integrity, influence, and wealth. He isn't a prophet or priest, but a farmer—a man engaged in the everyday life of his community. He is a descendant of Rahab, the former prostitute saved during the conquest of Jericho (Matthew 1:5), which connects Boaz to a legacy of redemption and mercy.

- **Application:**

God often works through **ordinary people and everyday circumstances** to accomplish His extraordinary plans. Boaz's background reminds us that no past disqualifies anyone from being used in God's redemptive plan. What matters is character and faithfulness.

Ruth 2:2a – Ruth's initiative

- **Levitical law of provision for the poor:**

Ruth knows about the law that allows the poor and foreigners to glean from the fields (Leviticus 23:22, Deuteronomy 24:19).

²²“When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap all the way to the edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the resident alien; I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 23:22 (CSB)

- **¹⁹“When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. Deuteronomy 24:19 (CSB)**

- **Knowledge of the Law:**

This reveals her knowledge of God's provision for the needy and her willingness to work hard, rather than simply wait for help

- **Prayer for favor AND willingness to work: *Hitch Hikers***
She wasn't going to find favour in someone's eyes if she didn't put herself in front of someone's eyes. She didn't sit in bed all day in a prayer of "faith." She rolled up her sleeves and used the ability God gave her to work paired with his design to provide for those in need.

Common sense > careful thought > sensible action.

- **Application:**
God's provision requires our participation. Ruth didn't sit idle; she took the initiative and stepped out in faith. Similarly, we should be active participants in God's provision for our lives. **Common sense and hard work** often go hand in hand with faith. As Alistair Begg notes, "Common sense is not in abundance in the Christian Church." Waiting for a miraculous sign may seem spiritual, but often, God's will is found in the **sensible advice of those who care for us** and the opportunities He puts in front of us. God's providential plan is worked out through our free will.

Ruth 2:2b-3a – Ruth's Request and Naomi's Blessing

Ruth, showing initiative and faith, sets out to gather grain, trusting that God will provide for her and Naomi through her efforts. Her humble request to glean is met with Naomi's blessing, further highlighting the love and mutual respect between them. **She knew that the commitment she made would involve moments like this, so she decided "You stay, I will go."**

Ruth 2:3b – Divine Providence in Action

³She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family. (CSB)

- **"She happened to be":**
Ruth "happened" to end up in Boaz's field, but this was no coincidence. When we walk in obedience, what seems like chance is actually part of God's providential plan. As Ruth takes steps of faith, God directs her path, and this moment foreshadows the coming redemption and provision for Ruth and Naomi.

Ruth 2:4 – Boaz's Godly Greeting

- **Boaz's greeting:**

Boaz's greeting, "The Lord be with you," and the response of his workers, "The Lord bless you," reveals the godly atmosphere Boaz created. His faith wasn't something reserved for the Sabbath; it shaped how he interacted with his workers every day. This brief exchange gives us a glimpse of Boaz's integrity and the respect he commanded.

- **Application: God's Hand in Ordinary Moments**

Ruth's decision to glean, Boaz's arrival, and their interaction may seem like small details, but they are part of God's larger plan. Often, His providence unfolds in the ordinary moments of life, reminding us that nothing is too small for God to use for His purpose. God can use our daily actions to bring about profound changes.

Ruth 2:5-7 – Boaz Takes Notice

When Boaz arrives, he immediately notices Ruth and inquires about her identity. While some suggest he was drawn by her beauty or work ethic, it is more likely that Boaz's question reveals his compassionate heart. In this small town, news about Ruth had spread, and Boaz wanted to ensure she was properly cared for.

- **Boaz's Inquiry:** Boaz's question, "Whose young woman is this?" reflects his concern for Ruth's wellbeing and status. He wants to know who is responsible for her care and protection.
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Ruth 2:8-9 – Boaz's Generosity and Protection

Boaz addresses Ruth with kindness and tenderness, calling her "my daughter." He offers her both protection and provision, ensuring that she will be safe among his workers and have access to water—a gesture that reflects his merciful character.

- **Mercy Defined:** : Compassion towards those enduring hardship with acts of kindness and forgiveness. Mercy is the tangible manifestation of grace in this world.
 - **Compassion and Mercy:** Boaz's kindness towards Ruth, a foreigner, reflects his understanding of mercy. He goes beyond the legal requirements of the Law and demonstrates a generous heart that cares for the vulnerable.
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Ruth 2:10 – Ruth's Humble Gratitude

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Ruth's humility is evident as she bows before Boaz, overwhelmed by the grace she has received. She recognizes that, as a foreigner, she has no claim to his kindness, and yet Boaz has extended favor to her.

- **Answer to prayer:** This an answer to her prayer and hope to find favour in someone's eyes in Ruth 2:2
 - **Echo of Grace:** Ruth's question—"Why have I found grace in your eyes?"—resonates deeply with the redeemed. It reminds us of our own experience of unmerited grace from God. Her gratitude stands in contrast to a mindset of entitlement.
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Ruth 2:11 – Boaz Acknowledges Ruth's Character

Boaz affirms that Ruth's loyalty and love toward Naomi have not gone unnoticed. Her testimony of faith and sacrifice had made an impact in the small town of Bethlehem.

- **Testimony Matters:** Ruth's actions—her faith in God and her loyalty to Naomi—serve as a reminder that our faith is observed by others, and our testimony can speak volumes in ways we may never realize.
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Ruth 2:12 – Boaz's Blessing and Prayer

"May the Lord reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." (CSB)

Boaz speaks a blessing over Ruth, acknowledging that her refuge is in the God of Israel. This verse encapsulates Ruth's story: she left her homeland and sought shelter under God's wings, trusting Him for protection and provision – all in the context of the tragedy of chapter 1!

- **A Prayer of Blessing: Boaz's prayer reflects his recognition that Ruth's true refuge is in God. This is the central point of Ruth's story—her faith and trust in God to provide.**
-

Ruth 2:13 – Ruth's Need for Encouragement

Ruth, though trusting in God, still longs for comfort and encouragement. Boaz's kindness provides the reassurance she needed, lifting her spirits and giving her hope.

- **Encouragement in the Midst of Hardship:** Like Ruth, we all need moments of encouragement when facing difficult circumstances. Boaz's actions inspire us to consider how we might be a source of hope and strength to others.

Ruth 2:14 – Boaz Provides a Meal

Boaz's generosity extends further as he invites Ruth to share in a meal with his workers. This act of hospitality underscores his desire to provide not only for her physical needs but also to make her feel included and valued.

- **Provision in Abundance:** Ruth's hunger is satisfied, and she even has food left over. This foreshadows how God will continue to provide for Ruth and Naomi's needs in the future.
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Ruth 2:15-17 – Boaz's Extra Kindness

Boaz's generosity continues as he instructs his men to allow Ruth to gather even more grain than usual. By pulling out extra stalks for her, Boaz ensures that Ruth will have plenty to bring home.

- **God's Generosity:** Ruth's hard work, combined with Boaz's kindness, results in an abundant provision—enough grain **for five days of food** for two people. This abundance is a clear demonstration of God's grace working through Boaz.
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Ruth 2:18-19 – Naomi's Joy

Ruth's kindness shines as she brings her leftover food to Naomi. When Naomi hears the name **Boaz, she recognizes the hand of God at work**, providing for their needs and offering hope.

- **Thankfulness for God's Provision:** Naomi, once bitter and hopeless, now sees God's hand of provision in their lives. Her gratitude reflects the transformation in her heart, reminding us to be thankful for even the simplest provisions. *Grocery Store*
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Ruth 2:20 – Naomi's Recognition of Boaz as a Redeemer

***"Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May the Lord bless him because he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead.' Naomi continued, 'The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers.'"* (CSB)**

Naomi's excitement grows as she realizes that Boaz is a "family redeemer," someone who has the potential to provide not just food, but a future for Ruth and her family.

- **Family Redeemer:** The concept of the kinsman-redeemer will play a crucial role in the unfolding story. Boaz's role as redeemer hints at the future redemption and restoration that is to come.
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Ruth 2:21-23 – God's Continued Provision

God's provision continues as Ruth remains under Boaz's protection throughout the entire harvest season, ensuring that she and Naomi will have enough food.

- **Hope in God's Provision:** As Ruth works through the harvest season, the safety and provision that Boaz offers foreshadow the deeper redemption that is still to come. God's plan for Ruth and Naomi extends far beyond their immediate need for food, offering hope for a future filled with grace and restoration.

Conclusion:

Ruth chapter 2 is a powerful testament to how God's provision and providence lay the foundation for a secure future, even when life feels uncertain. Ruth's story is not one of chance, but of God's sovereign hand guiding every step. What may have seemed like a random field, a small act of kindness, or an ordinary day, was God at work, providing for Ruth and Naomi in ways they couldn't foresee.

Through Ruth's faith and Boaz's kindness, we see that God not only meets physical needs but also lays the groundwork for His greater redemptive plan. Ruth wasn't waiting passively for a miracle; she stepped out in faith, trusting God's provision while taking action. And Boaz, moved by compassion, acted as a reflection of God's mercy and grace, showing that God uses ordinary people to accomplish His extraordinary purposes. This chapter reminds us that God's faithfulness is the firm foundation on which we stand. It's in His providence that we find security, and it's in His provision that we see His care for us—even in the smallest details of life.

Application:

Trusting God in the Process: Just as Ruth actively sought provision in Boaz's field, we, too, must step out in faith, trusting that God is at work in every season of life. His providence ensures that no moment is wasted. Whether you're facing uncertainty, loss, or need, know that God is laying the foundation for something greater, just as He did for Ruth and Naomi.

- Where in your life are you waiting for God's provision? Take heart—God is working, even when you can't see it. Trust that His timing is perfect, and His provision will come as part of His larger plan for your life. As Ruth's story shows, sometimes it's in the ordinary moments that God's extraordinary plan unfolds.

Being a Boaz: Boaz shows us what it means to be a vessel of God's provision to others. His kindness, generosity, and care for Ruth were practical expressions of God's mercy.

- Who in your life needs to experience God's kindness through you? As Boaz reflected God's heart, we are called to do the same. Perhaps someone in your community is struggling with loss, financial hardship, or loneliness. You can be the hands and feet of Jesus, offering support, encouragement, or practical help, becoming part of God's providential care for them.

The Firm Foundation of God's Faithfulness: Ultimately, this chapter teaches us that God's provision is both physical and spiritual. He provides for our daily needs, and He also works behind the scenes to bring about His redemptive purposes. Ruth's faith led her to trust in God's care and to act on that faith. Likewise, our faith rests on the firm foundation of God's unchanging faithfulness. He provides, He protects, and He redeems.

Stepping Out in Faith: As we close this chapter, let's remember that God's providence and provision are not just abstract ideas—they are the firm foundation on which we build our lives. Even when life seems unpredictable or difficult, we can stand secure, knowing that God is at work. Like Ruth, we are called to take bold steps of faith, trusting in the God who sees, who cares, and who always provides.

Anchor yourself in God, for no storm or uncertainty can shake His unbreakable foundation. In every season, He alone is the unchanging rock – the firm foundation – and he will never fail.

Discussion Questions

1. **How do you see God providing for Ruth and Naomi in seemingly ordinary ways?**
 - a. In what areas of your life might God be working behind the scenes, even when you don't realize it?

2. **Ruth didn't passively wait for provision but took action in faith.**
 - a. What is an area in your life where you need to step out in faith, trusting God while also taking practical steps forward?

3. **Boaz shows kindness and generosity, becoming a vessel of God's mercy.**
 - a. Who in your life might need to experience God's kindness through you? How can you practically meet their needs this week?

4. **God's providence and provision are part of His larger redemptive plan.**
 - a. How does trusting in God's faithfulness provide security in seasons of uncertainty or hardship? How can this perspective change the way you handle difficult circumstances?

Ruth 3 - Risk and Redemption

Session 3 of Firm Foundation Conference – November 2, 2024

In our first session, titled “**Loyalty and Loss,**” we entered the story of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah—a story framed by loss, but laced with loyalty. Ruth 1 opens during the time of the judges, a dark period marked by moral decay, when every person did what was right in their own eyes. Amid this chaos, famine strikes Bethlehem, forcing Naomi and her family to seek survival in Moab, a foreign land. It is in this foreign soil that Naomi’s greatest sorrows unfold. First, she loses her husband, and then, devastatingly, her two sons.

We see Naomi, bitter and broken, returning to Bethlehem, believing the hand of God has turned against her. Yet, amid Naomi's grief, Ruth shines. Her declaration to Naomi—“Where you go, I will go; your people will be my people, your God, my God”—is not just an act of human loyalty. It is an act of faith. Ruth, a Moabite widow with no obligation to stay, pledges herself to Naomi and, more importantly, to Naomi’s God. Her loyalty, even when the future seems bleak, becomes a beacon of faith.

This chapter speaks powerfully to the times when life feels like loss upon loss. It asks, “Where do we turn when the storms hit?” Even in Naomi's bitterness, even in her feeling that God has turned away, she still turns back to Him. She returns to Bethlehem—God’s place of provision. Ruth, in her steadfast loyalty, reflects the faith we are called to have when everything seems uncertain. In this first session, we are reminded that even when life is at its darkest, God is still working. We may not see it, but His plans are unfolding in ways we cannot yet understand. He is the firm foundation, even in the storm.

In our second session, titled “**Provision and Providence,**” we move from the rawness of grief to a glimpse of hope as God’s hand begins to reveal itself in quiet, yet profound, ways. Ruth and Naomi have returned to Bethlehem at the start of the barley harvest, but they are still vulnerable, widowed, and poor. It is here that Ruth steps out in faith once again. She humbly offers to glean in the fields, trusting in God's provision for her and Naomi.

And God provides.

By "chance," Ruth finds herself in the field of Boaz—a man of standing, who also happens to be a relative of Naomi's late husband. But this is no mere coincidence. This is providence. God’s unseen hand guides Ruth to a place of safety and favor. Boaz, a godly man, shows kindness beyond the requirements of the law. He ensures that Ruth is protected and provided for, seeing to it that she is given more than enough to sustain her and Naomi. Boaz’s actions are not just about meeting physical needs but reflect God’s heart of grace and provision for His people.

This chapter challenges us to trust in God’s providence, even when we are unaware of His plans. Ruth did not know the significance of the field she entered, but she trusted and

took action. Boaz did not have to show such generosity, but he became a vessel of God's kindness. God is always working, sometimes through the ordinary, sometimes through the unexpected. His provision is often woven through the details of life, unseen until we look back and recognize His faithfulness.

In Ruth 2, we learn that God's provision is more than just meeting our needs—it's about His character, His desire to bless, protect, and draw us closer to Him. As we reflect on this chapter, the call is clear: trust in God's providence. Step out in faith like Ruth. Be a vessel of His kindness like Boaz. And recognize that even when we cannot see the full picture, God is at work, moving behind the scenes, providing for His people.

Together, these first two chapters remind us that God is present in both the depths of loss and the heights of provision. In the loyalty of Ruth and the provision of Boaz, we see God's hand at work in the everyday moments of life, guiding, protecting, and providing. We are called to place our trust fully in Him—our firm foundation—confident that, even through the storm, He will never fail us.

We now enter the pivotal chapter of Ruth that beautifully illustrates the concepts of **Risk and Redemption**. In this chapter, we witness a bold move from Ruth, driven by her unwavering loyalty to Naomi and her faith in God's plan. Naomi, recognizing the need for security and rest for her daughter-in-law, encourages Ruth to take a significant step—a step that requires courage and vulnerability.

In the face of uncertainty, Ruth's willingness to act reflects a deep trust in both Naomi's wisdom and God's providential care. This moment marks a crucial turning point in their journey, demonstrating that sometimes, God calls us to take risks that may lead to profound redemptive moments—not only for ourselves but for others as well.

Let us now turn to Ruth 3:1, where Naomi initiates a plan that will set the stage for a dramatic encounter and reveal the heart of God's redemptive purpose in their lives.

Ruth 3:1 – Naomi's Plan for Ruth

- **Friendship:** Naomi demonstrates care for Ruth's well-being, highlighting the theme of looking out for the interests of others. This friendship is grounded in mutual care, not self-interest.
- **Seeking Rest for Ruth:** Naomi seeks to secure Ruth's future, showing love and responsibility. She has moved from a place of bitterness to a place of faith-filled action, actively seeking Ruth's well-being rather than resigning to passivity.

- **Acting with Faith, Not Self-Pity:** Naomi's approach reflects a shift from focusing on her own loss to helping Ruth. This is an example of faith-driven action, where Naomi places Ruth's needs above her own sorrow. At any age, selflessness and care for others remain central to godly character.
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Ruth 3:2-4 – Naomi's Bold Strategy

- **Common Sense:** Naomi's plan is carefully thought out. It reflects the wisdom of seizing the right moment, but it's also sensible and deliberate, not manipulative.
 - **Naomi's Gentle Guidance:** Naomi encourages Ruth to approach Boaz in a way that turns up the temperature on their relationship. Yet, this is not coercive—Naomi does not force Ruth, but rather guides her with gentle persuasion, showing that loving guidance, not compulsion, is the way of godly influence.
 - **Dressing Attractively, Not Seductively:** Naomi's instructions for Ruth to wash and dress are about being presentable, not seductive. The Hebrew word for Ruth's clothing indicates heavy, typical eastern coverings. This reinforces the notion that Ruth's actions are culturally appropriate and respectable.
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Kinsman Redeemer in the Law

- **Leviticus 25:25-28 – Redeeming property:** A kinsman redeemer was responsible for buying back family property sold due to financial difficulty, ensuring the property stayed within the family.

- **Deuteronomy 25:5-10** – *Levirate marriage*: A man was required to marry his brother's widow if she had no children, raising up offspring in his brother's name. Though Ruth isn't directly bound by this law as a daughter-in-law, the principle of preserving the family line is still relevant. The man's **firstborn son** would carry the name of the deceased family member.
 - **Numbers 27:8-11** – *Inheritance rules*: This law emphasized the importance of family property and heritage, ensuring that inheritance stayed within the tribe.
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Ruth 3:5-6 – Ruth's Trust and Obedience

⁵ So Ruth said to her, "I will do everything you say."⁶ She went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do. (CSB)

- **Not a Model to Copy**: Ruth's actions, though culturally appropriate, are not a prescriptive model for us. Behind these unusual actions is a sincere trust in God's plan.
 - **Trusting in God's Providence**: Both Naomi and Ruth are trusting God's plan, despite the risks. Often in life, we cannot see beyond the next step, but we are called to take that step in faith.
 - **Faith Over Fear**: Some people spend their lives waiting for all the details before trusting God, afraid of going in the wrong direction. This story shows the importance of faith, even when the outcome is uncertain. What in your Christian life speaks only of faith?
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Ruth 3:7-9 – Ruth's Bold Request for Redemption

⁷ After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, he went to lie down at the end of the pile of barley. And she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. ⁸ At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! ⁹ So he asked, "Who are you?" "I am Ruth, your servant," she replied. "Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer."

- **Ruth's Vulnerability**: Ruth places herself in a risky situation—a single woman in a barn full of men who have just finished a long day of work. Her vulnerability underscores her trust in both Boaz's character and God's protection.

- **Ruth Proposes:** Ruth's request to "take me under your wing" is essentially a marriage proposal, asking Boaz to redeem her and her family's legacy. This reflects humility and boldness. She seeks protection, not seduction.
 - **Challenge to Men:** Ruth's request for Boaz to care for her spiritually, emotionally, and physically challenges men to consider whether they are protecting and leading their families in the same way.
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Ruth 3:10 – Boaz's Response of Kindness

¹⁰ Then he said, "May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor." (CSB)

- **Boaz's Admiration:** Boaz praises Ruth for her kindness, not just in her care for Naomi, but in her willingness to seek a redeemer instead of pursuing younger men. This shows Ruth's selflessness and commitment to the family line.
 - **Power of Testimony:** Ruth's actions reveal her character and demonstrate the power of a godly testimony. Boaz is deeply moved by her kindness and integrity.
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Ruth 3:11-13 – Boaz's Integrity

¹¹ Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. ¹³ Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the Lord lives, I will. Now lie down until morning."

- **Boaz's Integrity:** Boaz praises Ruth's noble character and promises to take the necessary steps to redeem her. He carefully follows both cultural customs and God's law, reflecting his integrity.
 - **Protection:** Boaz ensures Ruth's safety by allowing her to stay the night on the threshing floor but protects her reputation by discreetly managing the situation.
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Ruth 3:14-15 – Boaz Protects and Provides

¹⁴ So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark. Then Boaz said, "Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵ And he told Ruth, "Bring

the shawl you're wearing and hold it out." When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she went into the town.

- **Protecting Reputation:** Boaz takes care to protect Ruth's and his own reputation by ensuring her presence remains discreet. Discretion and wisdom are essential in handling sensitive situations.
 - **Generosity in Provision:** Before resolving the legal issues, Boaz provides for Ruth and Naomi, sending her home with abundant barley. His provision is a reflection of his ongoing care and generosity.
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Ruth 3:16-18 – Naomi's Encouragement

- **Naomi and Ruth's Friendship:** Naomi and Ruth continue to look out for one another, reflecting true friendship and selflessness. Boaz also shows care by sending barley to Naomi, ensuring she is provided for.
 - **Trust in God's Timing:** Naomi encourages Ruth to wait and trust in God's timing. Though bold action was taken, the outcome now rests in God's hands. Boaz's response demonstrates that there are moments when we must act, but there are also moments when we must
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Conclusion:

In Ruth chapter 3, we witness the unfolding of God's redemptive plan through acts of courage, integrity, and trust. This chapter reminds us that God's work often takes place through everyday people who, despite facing uncertainties, step out in faith. Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz are not extraordinary heroes in the conventional sense. They are regular individuals navigating life's challenges, yet they trust in God's providence. This is what God's work looks like most of the time—not through miraculous interventions or spectacular signs but through people of godly character making faithful, though imperfect, choices.

Naomi, once bitter, acts in faith to secure Ruth's future, shifting her focus from her own loss to caring for others. Ruth steps into a vulnerable position, risking rejection but trusting God's provision. Boaz, a man of integrity, responds with kindness, protecting Ruth and her reputation while upholding God's law. Together, they demonstrate that God's plans are often carried out through the faithfulness and obedience of His people.

God is not distant, waiting to intervene in spectacular ways. He is at work in the ordinary, through the decisions we make every day, as we seek to live out His character in our relationships, our responsibilities, and our faith. This story illustrates that God's redemptive work is both deeply personal and profoundly communal. He is building His kingdom not only through grand miracles but through our trust, courage, and willingness to step into risk for the sake of redemption.

Application:

The story of Ruth 3 calls each of us to live out our faith with courage and trust, even when we cannot see the whole picture. Like Ruth, we are often called to take steps of faith, trusting that God will meet us where we are and work through our actions. The risk may seem great, and the outcome uncertain, but God is our firm foundation.

Here are three practical applications:

1. Step out in faith, even in uncertainty – Ruth's boldness in approaching Boaz and Naomi's plan for her future illustrate the need to trust God even when the risks are great. Is there an area in your life where God is calling you to step out in faith? Perhaps a relationship, a career decision, or a spiritual discipline—trust Him to be your firm foundation, even when the path ahead is unclear.
2. Act with integrity and kindness – Boaz's response to Ruth's request highlights the importance of godly character. Are you living with integrity, seeking to honor God and care for others, even when no one is watching? This story challenges us to be vessels of God's kindness in all our relationships, especially when others are vulnerable or in need.
3. Trust God's timing – Naomi's encouragement to Ruth to "wait" reflects a deeper trust in God's timing. We, too, are often called to take action, but we must also recognize when it is time to trust and wait for God's plan to unfold. What are you waiting for in your life? Let this story remind you that God is always at work, and His timing is perfect.

As we close this session, remember that God's foundation is firm, even when life calls us to take risks. He is faithful to redeem, to provide, and to guide us.

Anchor yourself in God, for no storm or uncertainty can shake His unbreakable foundation. In every season, He alone is the unchanging rock – the firm foundation – and he will never fail.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What does Ruth's willingness to risk vulnerability and rejection teach us about stepping out in faith?**
 - How do we discern when God is calling us to take such risks in our own lives, and how can we prepare ourselves to trust His provision in those moments of uncertainty?
- 2. Naomi shifted from bitterness to boldness in planning for Ruth's future. What does her example show about moving from self-pity to faith-driven action?**
 - In what areas of life are we tempted to remain passive, and how can we intentionally shift our focus to care for others, even amid personal struggles?
- 3. Boaz demonstrates integrity and kindness in his response to Ruth. What can we learn from his actions about living with integrity, especially when others are in vulnerable positions?**
 - How can we, like Boaz, reflect God's character in our daily interactions, ensuring that we protect and honor others, even when no one is watching?
- 4. Naomi encouraged Ruth to "wait" after taking bold action. How does this balance of action and patience apply to our faith journeys today?**
 - What situations in your life require both courageous steps of faith and a deep trust in God's timing? How can we grow in learning when to act and when to wait on the Lord?

Ruth 4 – Legacy and Lineage

Session 4 of Firm Foundation Conference – November 1, 2024

Over the course of our study in the first three sessions, we've embarked on a profound pilgrimage through the Book of Ruth, unveiling the layers of divine faithfulness, provision, and redemption.

In Ruth 1: Loss and Loyalty, we delved into the heart of despair, witnessing the excruciating loss that left Naomi hollow and embittered. Yet, amidst this backdrop of desolation, Ruth's decision to cling to Naomi and embrace the God of Israel shone as a beacon of hope. Her declaration, "Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay," wasn't merely an act of familial loyalty but a bold step of faith, laying the groundwork for a story where hope would rise from the ashes of devastation.

In Ruth 2: Provision and Providence, the narrative unfolds to reveal God's silent yet meticulous orchestration of events. Ruth, out of necessity, finds herself gleaning in the fields of Boaz, a man of noble character and a relative of Naomi's late husband. Here, we see the provision of God not in thunder and lightning but in the quiet, tender care of a man moved by compassion. Boaz becomes a tangible expression of divine providence, ensuring Ruth's protection and sustenance, reminding us that God's love often manifests in the ordinariness of life, in the small acts that sustain us when we least expect it.

In Ruth 3: Risk and Redemption, the story escalates into a narrative of bold faith and vulnerable hope. Ruth, guided by Naomi, takes a step fraught with risk by approaching Boaz on the threshing floor—an act not of desperation but of deep trust in both Naomi's wisdom and God's plan. Boaz's response, marked by integrity and a heart for justice, reflects the very essence of God's redemptive nature. His commitment to redeem Ruth illustrates how God seeks to restore what has been lost, heal what has been broken, and claim back what was once forsaken.

Each chapter of Ruth has not just told a story; it has revealed the character of God as our unwavering foundation, sovereignly navigating through the peaks and valleys of human experience to weave His eternal purposes. As we now approach **Ruth 4: Legacy and Lineage**, we stand on the brink of seeing this personal story expand into a legacy that impacts not only the immediate family but also foreshadows the redemptive plan for all humanity, culminating in the lineage that leads us to Christ. Here, the narrative will encapsulate how God's redemptive work transforms individuals into pillars of His eternal kingdom, turning ordinary lives into extraordinary testimonies of His grace and love.

Ruth 4:1-2 – The City Gate: Place of Legal Proceedings

“Boaz went to the gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the family redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, ‘Come over here, friend, and sit down.’ So he went over and sat down. Then Boaz took ten men of the town’s elders and said, ‘Sit here.’ And they sat down.”

- **The City Gate:** This was the center for legal and communal affairs, where disputes were settled and agreements made. Boaz’s choice to handle redemption here demonstrates his commitment to transparency and community involvement.
 - **Application:** Integrity and Responsibility in Leadership—Boaz exemplifies how godly leadership involves doing what is right, even when it may be inconvenient or costly. In our lives, this calls us to conduct our affairs with openness, ensuring our actions, especially those of leadership, are visible and accountable to others. Even if it is costly and inconvenient. Our commitments should be made in community with accountability.
 - Every decision we make should start with the question, "What is the right thing to do?" This encourages us to seek guidance from Scripture, family, and wise counsel, rather than being driven solely by emotion or personal gain. - Begg
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Ruth 4:3-4 – Boaz's Proposal to the Closer Redeemer

“Then Boaz said to the redeemer, ‘Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab, is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. I thought I should inform you: Buy it back in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do so. But if you do not want to redeem it, tell me, so that I will know, because there isn’t anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you.’ ‘I want to redeem it,’ he answered.”

- **Boaz's Offer:** Boaz respects the legal hierarchy, allowing the closer redeemer first refusal, which shows his honor and respect for others' rights.
 - **Application:** Boaz's humility and adherence to the law teach us about the importance of honoring others' rights before our own desires. Godly leadership prioritizes doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord and others.
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Ruth 4:5-6 – The Closer Redeemer Declines

“Then Boaz said, ‘On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will acquire Ruth the Moabite, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man’s name on his property.’ The redeemer replied, ‘I can’t redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can’t redeem it.’”

- **Cost of Redemption:** The closer redeemer declines once he realizes that redeeming the land comes with the responsibility to marry Ruth and perpetuate her family line. This would threaten his own inheritance.
- **Application:** True redemption often comes at a cost. Boaz's willingness to take on this cost contrasts with the nearer redeemer's reluctance, demonstrating Boaz's heart of selfless responsibility. This reflects God's own sacrificial love in redeeming His people.

Ruth 4:7-12 – The Sandal Covenant and Public Commitment

“At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel. So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, ‘Buy back the property yourself.’ Boaz said to the elders and all the people, ‘You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man’s name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today.’”

- **Public Declaration:** Boaz’s public declaration before the elders shows his intention to redeem both the land and Ruth, honoring the deceased’s family line.
- **Biblical View of Marriage:** Marriage is not just a private commitment but a public covenant with responsibilities towards society. It involves committed love, public witness, and physical union in the correct order, which is foundational to the biblical narrative of Ruth and Boaz.
- **Verses 11-12:** The elders bless Boaz and Ruth, comparing Ruth to Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel, and blessing Boaz with prosperity like Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah.
- **Application:** Legacy of Faithfulness. The blessing over Boaz and Ruth shows the power of living faithfully before God. Their obedience impacted not just their immediate family but generations to come. This teaches us that our faithful acts today can lay the groundwork for a lasting spiritual legacy.

5. Ruth 4:13-17 – The Birth of Obed

“Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he was intimate with her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.’ Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became his nanny. The neighbor women said, ‘A son has been born to Naomi,’ and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.”

- **New Life and Restoration:** God blesses Boaz and Ruth with a son, Obed, who becomes the grandfather of David. Naomi, who once called herself “Mara” due to her bitterness, now holds her grandson, restored and renewed.
- **Application:** *God's Restoration in Our Lives.* Naomi's journey from bitterness to blessing is complete. His redemption brings new life, purpose, and hope, even from the depths of despair.

Ruth 4:18-22 – The Lineage of David

“Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron. Hezron fathered Ram, who fathered Amminadab. Amminadab fathered Nahshon, who fathered Salmon. Salmon fathered Boaz, who fathered Obed. And Obed fathered Jesse, who fathered David.”

- **Genealogy of Perez to David:** The genealogy connects Ruth and Boaz's son Obed to King David, showing the providential role their faithfulness plays in the line leading to the future Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- **Application:** *God's Sovereign Plan.* God's redemptive plan includes all people, regardless of their background or nationality. Ruth's inclusion in the Messianic line reminds us that God's grace and redemption reach beyond any boundaries, working through the faithfulness of His people to fulfill His promises

Conclusion:

The narrative arc of Ruth culminates in Chapter 4, where we witness the birth of Obed, not just as a son to Ruth and Boaz, but as a beacon of hope and the dawn of a new beginning for Naomi. This chapter is a vivid illustration of how God's redemptive plan transcends individual lives, weaving them into His grand tapestry of salvation history. Ruth and Boaz's story, filled with loss, loyalty, providence, risk, and redemption, is not just about personal restoration but about establishing a legacy that echoes through the lineage of David to Christ.

Just as Ruth's story ended with her name etched into the genealogy of the Messiah, our lives, when built on the firm foundation of God's promises and faithfulness, become part of His eternal legacy. This story underscores that God's redemptive work is not static; it is dynamic, moving from one generation to the next, transforming despair into hope, emptiness into fulfillment, and ordinary lives into vessels of divine purpose.

Application:

1. **Embrace Your Role in God's Legacy:** Like Ruth, we are called to step out in faith, trusting that our lives, no matter how seemingly insignificant, are part of God's larger plan. Every act of loyalty, every step of faith, every moment of obedience contributes to the legacy we leave behind.
2. **Be a Boaz in Your Community:** Boaz demonstrated what it means to be a redeemer—willing to pay a price for the welfare of others. In our communities, we are to act with integrity, generosity, and a readiness to support and lift up those around us, especially those in need, reflecting Christ's love and sacrifice.
3. **Cultivate Transparency and Accountability:** Boaz's actions at the city gate remind us of the importance of living our lives openly before God and others. Let this inspire us to be transparent in our dealings, accountable to our community, and committed to doing what is right, even when it's costly.
4. **Seek God's Redemption in Your Despair:** Naomi's transformation from bitterness to joy teaches that no situation is too bleak for God's redemptive touch. Invite God into your places of loss or brokenness, trusting Him to turn your "Mara" into a moment of blessing and renewal.

5. **Live with an Awareness of Eternity:** The lineage from Ruth to David to Christ reminds us that our lives have eternal implications. Let this motivate us to live with an eternal perspective, making choices that align with God's kingdom purposes, knowing that our faithfulness today can impact generations for God's glory.

In essence, Ruth's story is our story—a narrative of redemption, where God, as our firm foundation, takes us from loss to legacy. It's a call to anchor ourselves in His unchanging nature, where every step of faith is a step towards becoming part of His redemptive history. As you leave this conference, remember that you are not just building your life; you are contributing to a legacy that will stand firm through the ages, rooted in the gospel, and radiates his glory.

Anchor yourself in God, for no storm or uncertainty can shake His unbreakable foundation. In every season, He alone is the unchanging rock – the firm foundation – and he will never fail.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways can we, like Boaz, demonstrate integrity and responsibility in our leadership, even when it comes at a personal cost?
 - a. Explore how Boaz's transparency and public accountability at the city gate applies to our lives today. How can we ensure that our decisions, especially in positions of influence, reflect God's standards rather than personal gain?

2. How does Ruth and Boaz's story challenge us to consider the legacy we are leaving?
 - a. Discuss the impact of their faithfulness, not just in their immediate family but across generations, leading to the Messiah. What small or significant choices can we make today to contribute to a lasting spiritual legacy?

3. Naomi's journey from bitterness to joy shows the power of God's redemption. How can we encourage one another to trust God's ability to bring restoration, even in our most painful circumstances?
 - a. Reflect on how God restored Naomi and transformed her despair into hope. How do we personally trust God to work in the broken areas of our lives, and how can we help others do the same?

4. How does the narrative of Ruth mirror the Gospel, and in what ways does it illustrate Christ as our firm foundation, especially through the themes of redemption, providence, and legacy?