

# Ruth 3

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Preacher: Joe Sutton

[ 0 : 00 ] All right, well we are going to pick up our study in the book of Ruth and we have come as far as chapter 3.!

Because a key theme in this book for a book of Ruth is that the peace and the security of Naomi has been shattered. And how and who is going to restore it?

And doesn't life have a way of shattering our peace? Naomi had two wonderful sons. She had a husband. And she had every reason, I suppose, to think that her future was secure.

In Bethlehem. But then the famine came and Elimelech made that decision to go and leave the land, go to Moab. And then her security in the form of her husband and sons died.

And so we saw how she came home bitter and empty. The Lord, the Almighty, has dealt very bitterly with me, she said. I was full and the Lord brought me back empty.

[ 1 : 22 ] And then last chapter, chapter 2, we saw the beginnings of how God is restoring Naomi. And we were introduced to this guy called Boaz, a mighty man of valour.

Which means that he's able to provide for them. He has the means, the ability. And he's a relative of Elimelech. Naomi's late husband. He is one of our redeemers.

And that's the key word that we see explored today. Redeemer. Goel. But is that going to translate? Is the favour that we've seen Boaz showing to Ruth and to Naomi going to translate into redemption?

After all, he's only one of their redeemers. Is he willing? So, these two questions are at stake. These two issues are at hand as we face into this chapter.

Which we need to talk a little bit about. One is, what is going to happen to the family line of Elimelech? It's not secure anymore. Since both of his sons are dead.

[ 2 : 27 ] And the second thing is, well, what will happen to the land? To whom is it going to be bequeathed? These are actually both connected. And we do need to understand this.

So, we're going to talk a little bit about the law of the land and how it was inherited. So, you might turn over to Numbers 33 verse 50. When Israel came into the promised land, we know they inherited the land of Canaan.

Well, from whom did they inherit the land? Well, the answer is they inherited it from God. God said there in Numbers 33 and verse 50.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan opposite Jericho, saying, Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from you and destroy all their idolatrous sculptures.

Destroy all their cast metal images and eliminate all their high places. And you shall take possession of the land and live in it. For I have given the land to you to possess it.

[ 3 : 37 ] You shall maintain the land as an inheritance by lot according to your families. To the larger you shall give more inheritance and to the smaller you shall give less inheritance.

Wherever the lot falls to anyone that shall be his. You shall pass on land as an inheritance according to the tribes of your fathers. So that's the command.

Numbers 33 and verse 50 to 54. But notice how God is being very deliberate. The casting of the lots was how the will of the Lord was determined.

It wasn't to say it's random. It was to say it is in providence. It is in God's providence and not man's decision. It's from God. The land is from God.

Clear out all the idolatrous rubbish and then possess it and then maintain it as an inheritance. And remember how I said, I think it was last week or whenever we last met, about how there was something peculiar about the land.

[ 4 : 34 ] God cares for the land. You know, he waters it. He watches over it to make sure that it's fruitful. Flowing with milk and honey is how it's been described. All the land on earth is God's ultimately.

But there's something special about this little parcel of land in the Middle East. Why is that? People love to speculate, of course. Maybe that's where the Garden of Eden was.

Maybe, but who cares? Who knows? There's no way to know. God never says why. He says simply, this is my special place. And obviously, ultimately, it will be where Jesus Christ comes and ultimately where he will return.

This is the place. So he gave it to the 12 tribes of Israel. And he charged them in that text we read to maintain it as an inheritance by family, by clan, by tribe.

And we could read further in Numbers where we read about how it was apportioned. There's a whole thing about these daughters of Zilpah. What do we do if there's no sons? And the answer is that the women can inherit it, but they need to marry within the tribe so as to maintain it within the tribe.

[ 5 : 45 ] Okay, cool. We get it. We get it. We get it. But what about buying and selling then? That's how the land is passed on. Can we not buy and sell? Yes. And the key text for that is Leviticus 25. I'll just read it for the interest of time.

Leviticus 25, verse 23 through 28. God says this. The land moreover shall not be sold permanently because the land is mine. For you are only strangers and residents with me.

So for every piece of your property you are to provide for the redemption of the land. If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor that he sells part of his property, then his closest redeemer, Goel, is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.

Or in case someone has no redeemer but recovers to find sufficient means for its redemption, then he shall calculate the years since its sale and refund the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and so return to his property.

But if he has not found sufficient means to get it back for himself, then what he has sold shall remain in the hands of its purchaser until the year of Jubilee. But at the Jubilee it shall revert so that he may return to his property.

[ 6 : 56 ] So that's the law. So there are three ways by which the land may be returned to the owner. And it can be bought back by a redeemer.

It can be bought back by the family themselves if they recover enough cash. Or it will revert back to the owner at the year of Jubilee, which is every 50 years.

So that's the law. Yes, you can sell your land if you need to, but it's kind of like a lease, I suppose. It's a leasehold. You never really sell it as a freehold.

It's still yours. And there are terms and conditions for how it would come back. So if you know, for example, that the year of Jubilee is next year, it's not worth very much because you can only lease it for a year.

Whereas if the year of Jubilee is 35, 40 years away, then it's worth a lot. It's worth 35 or 40 harvests. It's worth a lot. So that's the law.

[ 7 : 53 ] Now, what about Naomi? So she's come back to the land. And we've read the whole chapter, so we know the story. And we know that she's going to sell the land. That's what we're reading in chapter 4.

Naomi's going to sell her land. Which means that it remains in her possession. But I think the issue is, well, there's two issues here. One is, well, just because you own some land is no good if you haven't got any seeds.

You can't plant anything. She doesn't have the means to plant or harvest. And secondly, she has no heir to inherit the land after she's gone. And both of those issues can be resolved if it is sold to a redeemer, a close relative.

And as a bit of extracurricular reading, you might read Jeremiah 32, where there's a real example of this. Jeremiah buys a field from his uncle. But anyway, that's for your notes.

So that's the law of buying and selling land. Now, there's another issue that's at stake as well, which is that of the never-right marriage. And the background reading for that is in Deuteronomy 25, verses 5 to 10.

[ 8 : 58 ] But in the interest of time, I'll summarize it. And the principle is this. If a man dies without a son, without an heir, that is, then the man's brother should marry his wife and so raise another heir.

I think that's right. I should have read the text, shouldn't I? So the idea being that if a lion will not be cut off because the brother, a near relative, a redeemer, will produce an heir for him from his wife.

So that's the principle. Deuteronomy 25, if you want to read it. And it's written as a should rather than a must. It's not a legal requirement to do it.

But, however, it is a disgrace if he doesn't. It's socially a disgrace. And there's a very interesting detail there where the widow would remove his shoe and spit in his face if someone refused to do it.

Which, obviously, we see that in the next chapter. Where Ruth removes the shoe of someone who is unwilling. So these are the two laws that are in view as we go into the text.

[ 10 : 17 ] So we can go now to the text, Ruth chapter 3. And, again, we've seen Boaz show great favor to Ruth and to Naomi. He is favorable. He is a mighty man of valor.

He's rich. He can do it. He is a close redeemer, a goel, but he's not the closest. He doesn't carry the obligation. So is he going to do it? The drama. Right, Ruth 3, verse 1.

Then her mother-in-law Naomi said to her, to Ruth, that is, My daughter, shall I not seek security for you that it may go well for you? Now then, is Boaz not our relative with whose young women you were?

Behold, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight. Wash yourself, therefore, and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not reveal yourself to the man until he is finished eating and drinking.

And it shall be when he lies down that you shall take notice of the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down. Then he will tell you what you should do.

[ 11 : 20 ] And she said to her, All that you say, I will do. And one thing I've really come to appreciate in this story is the others' centeredness of everybody.

Ruth has been loving Naomi very sacrificially, obviously right at the beginning when she chose to stay with her and return to Bethlehem with her. But then subsequently when Ruth would, she said, Please may I go out to glean?

And Ruth took initiative, and she didn't just do that for herself. She was collecting food on behalf of Naomi too. Sharing with her. And then Naomi here, for her part, is seeking Ruth's security and long-term good.

Let me, let me seek security for you. And of course we see Boaz as well. And actually we'll read it in this chapter showing kindness or chesed.

And we'll see how he prioritizes Ruth and Naomi over everything. And he redeems at great cost. Spoiler alert. So there's a lot of others' centered behavior in this whole story, which I love.

[ 12 : 29 ] So Naomi says that she's seeking security or rest for her. And that word there, security, is based on the same word as Noah.

Noah, you remember from the book of Genesis. And Noah, of course, is a word meaning comfort, security, rest, peace. And in this sense, what she means is the rest and the comfort and the security that comes from being married to a husband.

Being in a good marriage. And as you picked up from the beginning, that's the key thing for this morning, is that security and rest.

And I do think it's worth saying here that God intends that our homes, that the family unit is intended as a place of peace and security and comfort and rest. And I pray and hope that that's true for us.

But that's something that I want to talk a little bit about at the end as we apply the text. Security for you, that it may go well. Well, where is Boaz? Boaz is winnowing barley.

[ 13 : 31 ] And we talked a bit about the process last week, the week before last. So I won't say any more on that, except that this part, this winnowing, is the climax.

It's a time of great joy. Yes, hard labor. But it's great joy as the food is finally made available to eat. The climax of an entire year of labor, planting and tending and then reaping.

And I do appreciate that Boaz is there. You know, he's got staff. He's got servants. And he is there doing it himself. And I love that he's not above labor and he's not above, he's not, he doesn't command anyone to do anything that he himself isn't already doing and prepared to do.

I love that. So Naomi urges Ruth to wash, get herself in her best clothes. Putting on best clothes is probably not the best translation.

It just says put on your clothes, if memory serves as a singular. And I think one thing that I read in the commentaries on that is that what's probably in view there is lay aside your widowhood garments.

[ 14 : 48 ] She's been living as a widow. That's been part of her identity, I guess. I am a widow of Mahlon. And Naomi is saying it's time to set that to one side now and put on your clothes.

Put on your normal dress and move on in the Lord. So what's the plan? What's the plan, Naomi? Well, the plan is to go in stealth mode, spy on Boaz, wait till he's asleep, and then go and, what?

Uncover his feet and lie down and wait for him to tell you what to do. What on earth does that mean? Well, as in all cases, there is much hearty debate and discussion on what exactly that means.

And I'm sure that there is some cultural or historic aspect to this that's completely lost on me. But I think it's clear from the way that Boaz will respond to this that the intention is straightforward enough.

So we'll get to that. But one thing I will add is that this lying down at his feet is to take a position of servant. It is to say, it is to take a servant's position by the master.

[ 16 : 01 ] And the scriptures urge us, likewise, to humble ourselves. It's a humble position. And the scriptures suggest and rather command us to humble ourselves so that the Lord will exalt us.

And that's what we'll see happen to Ruth. She humbles herself before Boaz and allows Boaz to raise her up. Anyway, reading on now, as far as verse 6.

All that you say, I will do, says Ruth. So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. So when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain.

And she came secretly and uncovered his feet and lay down. And it happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward. And behold, a woman was lying at his feet.

So he said, who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth, your slave. Now spread your garment over your slave, for you are a redeemer. So again we see that the joy of the time there is feasting.

[ 17 : 13 ] His heart was good. It doesn't necessarily mean to connote that Boaz was drunk. It means that he was in good spirits. The word actually that's there is exactly the same as the word that was translated to go well in the first verse.

And it only means to convey he's in a good mood, he is content, secure, at peace. It doesn't necessarily mean anything more than that. Now, is this the first harvest after the famine, I wonder?

I have no idea. I don't know. I get the sense that it's not been long. But I do think most certainly that those lean years and those years of hardship are still remembered.

And when you've suffered lack, how much greater is the joy in fullness. So Boaz is in a great mood. A barn full of food to keep him and his family good for the year to come.

Now, I want to draw your attention to verse 8 there, where it says, It happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward, and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.

[ 18 : 26 ] Why is it that they're suddenly unnamed? And I reminded myself that, and I haven't seen anyone else pick up on this detail, so I may be way off base here, but in Hebrew, the word for man is the same as husband, and the word for wife, ishti, is the same for woman and wife.

So there's a bit of a, I did wonder if there was a bit of a pun and a play on words here, because you could legitimately read it as, The husband was startled, and behold, a wife was lying at his feet.

And I just thought that was interesting and amusing, and I did wonder if that's what the author had in mind, to say, you know, for Boaz's perspective, the Lord is providing a wife for him. Amazing.

Anyway, I throw that in for free. So, who are you, says Boaz. And when asked, Ruth replies with a wonderful mix of both humility and forwardness.

I am Ruth, your slave, she says. And the word for slave is the Hebrew equivalent for a familiar word from the New Testament, which is doulos. It's a very humble word.

[ 19 : 36 ] Bond servant. I submit myself to you. I am yours. So very, very humble. But then she says this. Spread your garment over me.

Uncover feet, which he's done. And then please cover me, because you're a redeemer. Now, the word for garment is literally the word for wing.

Wing. And there's a poetic element to this. That word is used quite often in the Psalms as an idiom for God's protection.

So, as an example, Psalm 57, verse 1 says, Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me. For my soul takes refuge in you, and in the shadow of your wings, I will take refuge until destruction passes by.

And so the wing is a picture, an idiom for, please cover me and bring me into your protection. And I was also reminded of what Jesus said in Matthew 23, verse 37, of Jerusalem.

[ 20 : 47 ] Jesus said this. He said, And again, the same sense is there.

The Lord God wants to gather. He wanted to gather Jerusalem. He wanted to gather the people, the children of Israel, under his wings. To shelter them, to protect them, to provide for them.

But they were not willing. So that's the meaning of that. So to put it, to make sure we're completely clear on this, she's saying, Bring me under the cover of your marriage.

I want to be married to you. I want for you to protect me. Be my redeemer and provider. Yeah. Straightforward enough. And look, and Boaz got the message right.

He got it clearly enough. So let's read on and we'll see that. Verse 10, Boaz speaking. Then he says, May you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness, your last chesed, to be better than the first, by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.

[ 21 : 58 ] So now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you say. For all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. But now, although it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is also a redeemer more closely related than I.

Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good. Let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you as the Lord lives.

Lie down until morning. So in this response, Boaz does a few things. Observe how he calls her, my daughter.

And actually, Naomi did the same thing. Naomi called Ruth, my daughter. And I think that shows us that there is an age difference between Boaz and Ruth.

And I think that Boaz is, you know, quite stunned, to be honest, that Ruth, this incredible woman who's so well spoken of in the town, would come to him with this request, because Boaz is thinking, she could have anyone.

[ 23 : 04 ] You've not gone after anyone, poor or rich. Everyone knows you're an awesome lady. You're a woman of excellence. So he does that. And then he also shows he's understood the request for marriage, in case any of us should be in any doubt.

He's understood well enough the ask. And as I said, he draws out that she isn't under obligation to marry him.

So I mentioned the law of the Levirate marriage. He doesn't think that she's under any obligation to follow through with it. She, after all, is a Moabite. She's not technically under that same law.

But she has chosen to go ahead. And that is the kindness that she's showing, both to Naomi, but also to Elimelech and to her late husband, Nachlon.

So, Boaz commits to do as she has asked. He calls her a woman of excellence. And that's a phrase that reminded me of a couple of other times where it's used.

[ 24 : 10 ] And Proverbs 24, no, Proverbs 12, verse 4, says, An excellent wife, same phrase, is the crown of her husband. And Proverbs 31, 10, says, An excellent wife who can find her, for her worth is far above jewels.

Very commendable. A woman of excellence. And actually, what I did find interesting was that the adjective there is the same as the one that was applied to Boaz when he was described as a mighty man of valour.

Oh, actually, that's, I think it was, what it said in chapter 2, verse 1 was, A man of great wealth, was how Boaz was described.

But the phrase there is typically translated mighty man of valour. And the word for valour is the same word that is used for excellence here. So the author is saying that these are two people who are both very, very high in their standards of moral and goodness.

High reputation, excellent character. Everyone knows it. Interesting. Interesting pairing. But there's a snag. There's a snag.

[ 25 : 24 ] And the snag is that there is a closer redeemer who has the first refusal. So that means someone who is closer kin than Boaz is. Now, you probably have noticed that the book of Ruth never explains how Boaz is related to the family.

There is a rabbinic tradition that he is the nephew of Elimelech. There's no basis for that. No idea. All we know is that there is someone nearer, which would probably mean either potentially...

So if he was nephew, then it might mean there's a brother to Elimelech, which would then be the uncle, or indeed the father of Boaz. Or it could be an older brother of Boaz.

In either case, Boaz would have known the name of this guy. He knows his family, which makes it all the more remarkable that his name is completely edited out of the book of Ruth, and we have no idea who he is.

But there is someone, and he has the legal right. He has first refusal, which I suspect is why Boaz has gone through this whole season of harvesting with Ruth, and hasn't made the move, because it's not his place.

[ 26 : 40 ] So, we've got to verse 14. Verse 14. So she lay at his feet until morning, and got up before one person could recognize another, and he said, Do not let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor.

Again he said, Give me the shawl that is on you and hold it. So she held it, and he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her, and she went into the city. So the secrecy there is not because anything indecent was done, but because the discretion was essential.

It does seem, I did get the impression that Bethlehem is a bit of a gossip town. Right? They rock up from Moab, and everyone is talking. The whole city is in an uproar we read in chapter one.

So, people like to talk in Bethlehem. So, Boaz is keeping things discreet. Again, not because anything was amiss, but because he wants to avoid that gossip.

But of course, you and I are reading this story now. So how do the author know? Clearly, Boaz and Ruth, I can just imagine them relaying the story in their old age to Samuel, or whoever wrote it.

[ 27 : 56 ] Anyway. Six measures of barley. The measures are not specific. We don't know how much, but it was enough to be laid on her.

A big, big weight of barley is given for her to take home. So, verse 16. Let's finish our reading then. So, when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, How did it go, my daughter?

And she produces the barley. And she told her all that the man had done for her. She also said, These six measures of barley he gave to me. For he said, Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.

Then she said, Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest until he has settled it today. And with that scene, or with that phrase, the scene closes.

And there's that rural sense of anticipation. Naomi's thinking, This is happening today. Boaz is a man of action and not procrastination.

[ 29 : 01 ] So, that's the end of chapter three. And then, so if I can bring us back to our application. So, I asked you at the beginning, What is it that makes you feel secure? What is your peace and rest?

And, again, in marriage, in the home, God intends there to be stability and security and peace. And I think it should be our prayer and our aim that our homes are characterized by peace.

And there are many things in life that can be difficult and stressful, of course. But I find, you know, when things are well at home, they're all the more easier to bear when there's peace at home.

Well, we've seen Boaz cast as this man of valor in the last chapter. And we've seen him modeling for us the sacrificial love of Christ.

Boaz is a leader. Boaz is a laborer. He's a man who worships the Lord while he works. He gives and gives to Ruth. And ultimately, he will marry her at great cost.

[ 30 : 08 ] And so, we see models. How do we, how does the husband contribute to a secure home? That's the model. The model is Christ.

To give and to labor for and to bless. And then we saw in the chapter, Ruth, similarly labeled a woman or a wife of virtue. And I refer to you to Proverbs 31, where there's a whole exposition on the characteristics and the attributes of this wife.

And it's well worth a study through how those principles apply today. But the valor and the virtue that we speak of doesn't depend on the spouse.

It comes directly from a living relationship with the Lord. Because what I think is clear, what I see coming across very firmly is that both Boaz and Ruth are very firm in their commitment to God.

And they derive ultimately their security from God. Think back to what we saw when Boaz first came on the scene in chapter 2. You know, he's blessing his workers.

[ 31 : 16 ] And they are blessing him back. He's a man who is unashamedly worshipping the Lord. And Ruth, for her part, has shown her great love for the Lord by saying, I'm going to forsake everything else and come and live with your God.

Your God is going to be my God. They've both got security and peace in God. And that is the foundation for a wonderfully secure marriage. Well, so practically then, when it is a struggle to find peace at home, or if it's a place where it doesn't feel the rest, that Noah rest, then I think it's definitely something to prayerfully work on.

I mean, look, if that's because there's abuse of any kind, or you suspect there is, then that's the time when you seek help. Professional help. But if we're talking about something less extreme, if we're talking about the case where life is just tough, life gets on top, how does it come out?

It comes out in snappiness, it comes out in frustration. It's something to talk through with your spouse. How can we cultivate stability and peace in the home as God intends?

Maybe you're just trying to do too much. Maybe there are some habits that need to change. Or maybe it's just a season of life, because I think I know firsthand that when you've got a newborn and a toddler, you could really characterize your home as one of peace.



[ 32 : 51 ] So maybe it's just a season. But it's something to talk about, and it's something to pray through, and it's something that Ray and I would love to talk and pray through with you as well. Because that peaceful, secure, and restful home does bring glory to God.

And I also want to talk a little bit about what God intends for the church. Because God also intends the church to be a place of rest, stability, and peace.

And Colossians 3 shows this wonderfully. I just want to read a couple of verses from that, though, to show it. Where Paul says there in Colossians 3, verse 14 and 15, he says, In addition to all these things, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

Let the peace of Christ, to which you were indeed called, In one body, rule in your hearts, and be thankful. And plenty of other scriptures show that principle, that heart of God behind his church.

He calls us into the peace of Christ. Let it rule in our hearts and be thankful. And obviously I reflected on that while working hard on this sermon.

[ 34 : 03 ] And thinking, man, Sunday's often the busiest day of the week. Sunday can be busy. And should it be exhausting? And should it be characterized by work and labor?

And as I thought on this, I... I'm hair pulling. And I thought, should it be characterized by this? And I record Matthew 11, 29, where Jesus says, Take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. And that rest for your souls, exactly the same Greek word, as is found in the Septuagint version of Ruth 3, verse 1.

Let me find security for you. Rest for your soul, Ruth. And I read just a little pithy saying there in the commentary that helped me. It's just this.

Christ's rest is not a rest from work, but in work. I was like, yeah, that helps. That helps me. Because as Christians, we don't...

[ 35 : 09 ] We do not define... We do not derive our value from our productivity or how much we can do. That's not where our value comes from.

We serve others, and we do serve the Lord, because we are secure and we're confident in our salvation. Because we have rest in our souls, in our relationship with God. Hebrews 4, the writer builds this whole argument.

If you look at Hebrews 4, the title for the chapter there in your New American Standard Bible is, The Believer's Rest. And it's all about this. And in there, he makes this somewhat paradoxical remark.

Let us make every effort to enter that rest. And in fact, throughout that whole chapter, the writer's building this argument about how the rest of the promised land was only a prefigure of the gospel.

Yeah, it was rest. It was a great land. But there were giants in the land. And it was filled with labour. And actually, sin followed them in, because it was still in their hearts. And then eventually they got booted out.

[ 36 : 20 ] We know the story. So the writer says in verse 8, Okay, good.

Therefore, let's make every effort to enter that rest. So that no one will fall by following the same example of disobedience. Enter. Strive. Labour to enter the rest of God.

And that's the challenge that you and I have this morning. Jesus Christ was willing to bring Jerusalem under his wings.

He wanted to give them the rest of God. And they were not willing. And in many respects, we should be thankful for that. Because in their unwillingness, which God foreknew, their rejection paved the way for the crucifixion.

By which all the world, that's us Gentiles, are now welcomed under the shadow of God's wings. And into the rest and the comfort and security that he delights to make available to us.

[ 37 : 31 ] Peter preached in Acts 4. He said, Let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, but by the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by that name, this man stands here before you in good health, speaking of the healing of Christ.

He is the stone which was rejected by you, the builders, but which became the chief cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind, by which we must be saved.

That salvation is the security and the peace of our souls. So then to what extent are you and am I secure in that? That's my point to ponder.

And I pondered on that this morning. I believe the gospel. Sure, of course I do. I believe the gospel. I'm certain that on the final day, I will stand faultless before God's throne.

And there will be no trace of sin. Praise God for that hope. Because Jesus paid it all. So then why do I find myself stressing and laboring and exhausting myself today?

[ 38 : 42 ] Well, because I know I'm not finished yet. I'm working progress like the rest of us. We have mortal bodies. That was why I chose that first song, you know, about how the Lord lifts us up to renew our strength.

Because the Lord's work can be tiring as long as we are in these bodies. And I do draw a sense of comfort from the fact that Jesus himself went up on the mountain to lie down and rest and pray.

Because we do need it. And the promise that we will run and not get tired. And the promise that we will gain new strength and mount up with wings like eagles. It will happen, but it hasn't happened yet.

So there's that. And then the other aspect is because, quite frankly, partly I do lapse into thinking that there is some sense of my value and my nature and my significance is found in what I can do and what I can perform and produce.

And that's not good. That's something that I need to work on. Because all of my identity and all of your identities is found in Christ Jesus. If indeed you have believed in him and his gospel.

[ 39 : 53 ] And that's the message I want to close with today. God sees us as perfected and sin-free. If indeed we are believers in Christ. And if we've received that free gift of perfection, of freedom from sin that Christ offers, then we don't need to prove to God or to ourselves that God has made a good investment in saving us.

No, no, no. Jesus paid it all. He fulfilled the law. He lived the perfect life and he transfers the credit to us. So that is ultimately where our peace and security comes from.

And may that peace and security and rest translate into being able to love and serve our families, our spouses, and the Lord indeed, and one another in the church.

Amen. Amen. Thank you, Father, for these things. Lord, thank you for your word today. Thank you, Lord God, for the provision that you have made for us, which is far superior to the provision that Boaz made for Ruth and Naomi.

Lord, we see in him only a shadow of the glory of the gospel, of the glorious redemption that you have wrought for all of mankind.

[ 41 : 02 ] Hallelujah. Lord, indeed, may we derive our peace and our rest and our security in what you have done. And may you be glorified as we work out from that rest to serve one another, to serve our families.

And may you be glorified in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.