

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

August 27 , 2023“How to survive a storm. Recover the valuables. And remove unnecessary. Doing personal inventory determining what you need to keep, and what you need to let go of.”

I Intro.

Well summer is unofficially over but we still have the heat...LOTS of it. Things are cranking back up and we want you to be a part of this great community. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

II Recap.

We're in our final Sunday of our “*How to survive a storm*” series. And just like when we have to recover from a major weather storm (like we're doing at NCC) when a storm of life rips through our world, there are some translatable truths that can help us both survive and recover from the storms of life. We're looking at the life of characters in the Old Testament to see how they handled their storms, and pulling truths that we can specifically apply to our lives. The first week we looked at the life of Elijah, a prophet of God, and how he had to weather his own storm. And in those first few days of the storm, it's finding a safe place to hunker down and take care of yourself. Time will come later to do the work that needs to be done, but when the storm hits, and in those early days, it's just taking care of yourself. The second week we dove into the really difficult story of Hagar. It's a tough story that really has no upside at the end. Hagar was hit with several storms, and she was already in a position of powerlessness and at the mercy of others. The one primary truth that came from that story is that even though Hagar's life went in a very difficult direction, she was not a chosen one, God heard her cries, saw her situation, and intervened on her behalf. God was with her. Last week we looked at the life of David and his process of beginning to intentionally move forward. And today we finish with the story of Ruth and some truths about rebuilding your life after the storm.

III Sunday.

Sunday was the final Sunday in our “*Surviving the storm*” series. And we wanted to make sure that we painted a picture of real hope on the other side of our storm. Each story that we've hit so far, no matter how difficult it was, showed us there is an 'other' side to whatever storm we may face. The story of Ruth really gives us that picture. But first, let's talk about recovering from storms.

Have you ever had any actual storm damage to your property? What did it take to repair it? What personal storms have you faced in your life? What did it take to get to the other side? Are there any lasting effects of those personal storms?

The story of Ruth. There's no way to just give you a short passage to understand the story of Ruth. If you're familiar with it, you may just want to give it a quick look over to familiarize yourself with it again. If you are unfamiliar with this story, you're just going to have to read the entire book. Now Ruth is only 4 short chapters, 85 verses. It really is a quick read. Go over the story and we'll chat.

What jumped out to you about this story?

What personality traits did Ruth possess that allowed her to keep going even after her storm?

What are one or two things you learned from the story of Ruth that could help you in your own personal storms?

Ruth is such a great story for so many reasons. One, it's such a moving account of the strength of relationships, the power of commitment and loyalty, the beauty of compassion and generosity and more. It's just such a compelling story. But it's also a story of radical resistance to rules and religion. There were laws against an Israelite marrying a Moabite. Even a tenth generation Moabite. It invalidated an Israelite's ability to enter the temple. Not only is this story casting Boaz as a hero, but also placing relationships above obeying The Law. Which is what we spent the entire summer talking about. Boaz sacrificed his beliefs on the altar of relationships. There's all sorts of good in this story.

So, as we wrap up this series about surviving a storm, here are some truths we've pulled that can help us begin the process (it takes lots of time) and work rebuilding our lives after a personal storm.

D. Stages of rebuilding.

Here are some things we can see in the story of Ruth.

1. Have the confidence that your first couple of decisions may involve moving out of what you're comfortable with. Going through a storm will force you into having to face new and unfamiliar challenges. Ruth attached herself to Naomi and it caused her to have to move outside of her comfort zone and things she was familiar with. Doing this requires doing new and unfamiliar things. Which is always difficult. Have wise people in your circle, (church) who will give you confidence.

2. Be patient and take small steps. After a storm, you will have to fight the inner urge to fix everything all at once. There will be a process of moving forward that will allow God to do the work within you to prepare you for the new reality. Ruth didn't get married right away, or try to make her life like it was before. She was willing and open to just do small things at first (trust Naomi, move) and those small steps led her to begin the process of rebuilding her life.

3. Don't be afraid to take appropriate risks. The key idea here is 'appropriate'. You'll be faced with a lot of options. Chances to 'fix' your situation. Be wise and prudent. But you will have to step out. This truth is just an extension of the previous two. Some of the small steps may feel really risky. That's okay. That's what it takes at times. Just know smaller steps mean more manageable risks.

4. Don't be locked in to 'shoulds and shouldn'ts. Rebuilding after a storm is really difficult. You will face unfamiliar places. Don't let anyone force you into; *"This is how you're supposed to do it"*. Always be guided by integrity and empathy and compassion.

5. Stay connected and thankful to God as you rebuild. God will be your anchor, your solid place. And continually sensing the presence of God, and nurturing and growing the ability to be grateful for the things you do have, will be key in moving forward. God does have your best interest at heart.

IV Challenge.

You've already heard all of the specifics about this story of Ruth, and the truths we can pull from it. One last truth. Ruth is in the lineage of Jesus. If you want to push that point even further, so was Rahab. Those are radical and just plain crazy truths about who God is, how God works, and what God thinks is important compared to what we think is important. Ruth is a great example of not only how to survive a storm, how to rebuild, but also reveals the nature of God. And when we're in our own storm, just trying to survive, figuring out how to move forward, we can fully trust in a God who cares more about us than the rules we want to follow. Let that truth just wash over you and fill you with hope. There is no storm too big. And you have a God who will break his own rules to be with you as you move forward. And THAT'S how you survive a storm.