SMALL GROUPS

Key Takeaways

Central Truth: The decisions you make today will determine the story you tell tomorrow.

Three Things You Need for a Better Chapter:

1. The Providence of God - God uses natural circumstances to bring about his supernatural will. His providence is best understood when read backwards, like Hebrew, from right to left.
2. Strategic Plans - Planning is a spiritual act. Proverbs 21:5 reminds us that good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, while hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.
3. Faith-Filled Prayers - Prayer does not have to be long or eloquent. Short, sincere prayers offered consistently throughout the day reflect a heart that stays connected to God.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Choose One)

- When you look at someone else's life and feel like you want what they have, what is usually the thing you are most drawn to? A career, a family, a ministry, a lifestyle?
- Has there ever been a chapter in your life you would never want to repeat, but looking back, you can see it shaped who you are today? Share as much as you are comfortable sharing.

Providence of God

- The sermon described God's providence as "whenever God uses natural circumstances to bring about his supernatural will." Can you think of a "just then" moment in your own life where something happened at exactly the right time in a way that felt too precise to be coincidence?
- Pastor Mack said that the providence of God is best understood when you read it backwards. What does your story look like when you read it backwards? What patterns of God's faithfulness do you notice?
- Ruth was a Moabite woman who, by cultural and religious standards, did not belong in the lineage of Israel. Yet she ended up in the direct family line of Jesus. What does that say to someone who feels like they are too far gone or too out of place for God to use?

Strategic Plans

- The sermon made the point that one of the most spiritual things you can do is make a plan. Does that challenge or encourage you? Why?
- Boaz had a clear plan. He went to the city gate, gathered witnesses, and worked through the legal process step by step. Where in your life do you currently have a plan, and where are you operating without one?
- Pastor Mack mentioned that many people abandon a good plan the moment they slip up, whether with finances, health, relationships, or spiritual disciplines. Have you experienced that pattern? What helps you get back on track rather than quitting altogether?
- Think about one specific area of your life right now, whether it is your marriage, finances, health, faith, or career. What would a realistic and God-honoring plan look like in that area?

Faith-Filled Prayers

- The book of Ruth is filled with short, simple prayers scattered throughout everyday moments. How does that compare to how you currently think about prayer? Does prayer feel like something that requires a certain setting or length of time?
- The elders prayed a blessing over Ruth that ultimately pointed toward Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus, without them knowing it.

How does that encourage you to pray bold blessings over the people in your life, even when you cannot see the full picture?

- The sermon closed with a challenge to let go of something you are still trying to control. Is there a person, situation, or outcome you are holding onto rather than releasing to God? What would it look like to genuinely surrender that this week?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to commit to before your next group meeting:

Look Backwards Set aside 20 to 30 minutes this week to write out a timeline of your life with God. Note the moments where you can now see his hand at work, even in painful seasons. Bring what you discover back to share with the group.

Build a Plan Identify one area of your life that needs a concrete plan. Write down three specific and measurable steps you will take in the next 30 days. Share your plan with a trusted person in the group who will follow up with you.

Pray Small Prayers Often For the next seven days, practice praying short, honest prayers throughout your day rather than saving all your prayer for one dedicated time. At your next group meeting, share what you noticed about your awareness of God during the week.

Identify Your "Just Then" Moment Spend time in prayer asking God to show you where he is working in your current chapter, even if you cannot fully see it yet. Write down what comes to mind and hold onto it as a reminder of his faithfulness.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying specifically for anyone who shared that they are in a difficult chapter right now. Pray that God would give them eyes to see his presence, courage to trust his plan, and the peace that comes from releasing control. You may also want to pray Proverbs 21:5

back to God as a declaration of your group's commitment to faithful planning and hard work.