

# Appreciating God's Providence

**Jon Benzinger**  
**Ruth 4:1-17**  
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Well, good morning. Grab your Bibles and open to Ruth chapter four. Ruth chapter four, if you got a Bible from an usher, that is page 249. 249 Ruth chapter four. And as you're turning there, I have two quick things that I want to say. First of all, if you gave the card and the gifts to the pastors this past week that we received, I just want on behalf of all of us thank you for that kindness. We were absolutely blown away by your generosity. So if you did that, I want to say thank you to you. Also, if you were at all on social media this week, you may have heard about a group in California that was trying to raise a little girl from the dead. If you want to have some biblical theological insight into how to think through that, we shot a video on that this past week. So it's on our Facebook page. It's on our YouTube page. So if you want some insight on that, I would highly recommend you go there. All right, Ruth chapter four. Typically, I have you stand to read, but I'm going to go through the passage phrase by phrase and so we'll not do that today. However, I do want you to join me in prayer. All right. So let's pray.

God, I'm reminded of Jesus' words that apart from him we can do nothing. And that statement includes any good happening right now in this room. So I pray that you would do the work that only you can do. I ask you for that please. I pray that you would bless our time in your word. I pray that you would do good to us through your word. I pray that we would leave here a changed people, seeing the world through the lens of your word. We don't do that naturally. So we need you to do that. And I pray you would do the same thing at Without Walls Church. I pray you'd use pastor Ken to do the same exact thing that I'm praying for myself right now. Make your truth crystal clear so the people there know it, love it and live it as a result of their time there. Please do this I pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

So when I was a kid... I don't know what your favorite show was. Well, some of you are still kids. But when I was a kid, my favorite show that wasn't a cartoon was Batman. Remember that one Adam West, Burt Ward show from the '60s? I don't know, I can't tell you why I liked it. I don't like men running around in tights very much, but what I do remember most from those shows were the endings. Do you remember that? The episode, you're right in there, they're fighting and then they get captured and they're about to die and then the credits like, "What's going to happen, boys and girls? Tune in tomorrow same bat-time, same bat-channel." That's right. Those cliff hangers would drive me crazy as a kid.

I wanted resolution. I wanted to know it was going to happen. I didn't want to wait till tomorrow. I want to know now. Well, I've been leaving you with cliff hangers that you didn't have to wait tomorrow. You had to wait for a whole week to figure out what in the world's going to happen in the book of Ruth. But that was by design. Really, the book of Ruth is meant to be read in one sitting in about 10 to 15 minutes. So all the tension that's being built in chapters one, two and three, all of the release, all the resolution that happens in chapter four, all that happens in about 10 minutes. I've been stringing you along for four weeks on this. But it's good. And I'm going to do it again. I'm just going to tell you right now, I'm going to do it again, because I want you to come back on Christmas Eve.

See, we've been retelling this story of the book of Ruth, a 3000-year-old story that's been called the what the Venus is to sculpture, what the Mona Lisa is to paintings, many have said Ruth is to literature. And so we've been retelling the story, but what you need to know about stories in the Bible is that they teach theology through history. They're not just telling a story. They're telling us about God through the story. And what we see in this story, is this historical narrative is one family in one city, one tribe in one nation and how God takes their story, takes their lives and intersects that with the lives of every family in every city, in every tribe, in every nation on the face of the earth. But we'll talk about that on Christmas Eve.

Ruth actually hasn't been about Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. Ruth has been about God, how God works in the lives of ordinary people to produce extraordinary things. And he accomplishes the extraordinary through people as we saw last week, who are kind, kind people. People that take his kindness towards them and show that kindness to other people, he takes the decisions, takes the actions of their lives and uses that to accomplish his will.

Now, last week we focused on the people, this week we're going to focus on the God who worked through those people as we appreciate his Providence. So that's the big idea this morning. We're going to appreciate the Providence of God. Now, remember God's Providence is his control of everything, every event, every person, every cell, every gust of wind, every single turn of the steering wheel. The framers of our constitution talked about Providence all over that document in the founding of our nation, because they saw the hand of God working, moving to establish our nation.

Ephesians 1:11 has been a verse that I've mentioned almost every week because Ruth is really an illustration. Ruth is built on the foundation of the truth in Ephesians 1:11, which says, you can see it on the screen, that ***God works all things. He works everything according to the counsel of His will. God is constantly active in our world.*** He didn't wind up the clock, walk away and go on vacation. Notice, it doesn't say that God works in all things. It doesn't say that he works on all things. He works all things. He is working all things that happen. He has a part in all of it, every single thing that happens. In other words, there's nothing random, there's nothing accidental, there's no such thing as luck or chance. God is intimately involved in every single thing that happens.

And what is it that he's accomplishing? Look at the text. In everything that he's working, he is accomplishing his will, his purpose, his desires, what he wants. That's what he's working all things to do. And look again at the text, he's working all things, notice, according to the council of his will. The council is the standard. The decisions that God made, those are the standards. That's the pattern that everything is working to match. God is never surprised. He's never caught off guard. He never has a contingency plan. He's not playing catch up based on changes that he didn't see coming. Nobody can defeat him. Nobody overrules him. No one can reverse his decisions. Not you, not me, not Satan, no one can do anything that doesn't somehow fulfill his will. Every second of every day, he is implementing trillions of plans, all of which agree exactly with his will, his decisions that he made based on desires that he has.

This is God's Providence. This is the main theological message of the book of Ruth. Ruth is an illustration of this and it is an illustration of Romans 8:28 that God causes all things to work together for what? For good if you're a Christian. Not the good that you want, not the good that the culture thinks you should have, the good that God designed for your life, that is what he is constantly working. Now, each week I've mentioned Williams Cooper, William Cooper's hymn

God Moves in a Mysterious Way. And in line five it says this, he pictures God's will like a fruit. And he says his purposes will ripen fast. So you picture that fruit. It's ripening. You look at it one day it's not ripe. You come back to it one day a week later and it's suddenly ripe now. He says, that's how God's will works.

He's constantly working even though you don't see it, you're not seeing what he's doing or understanding what he's doing. He's constantly ripening his will. He says, his will is unfolding every hour. And then the song ends with this, because we don't see like, "How does this piece of fruit ripen? What's going on there?" Cooper ends this song by saying this, even though we don't understand what's going on in the moment, he says, "God will make his ways plain." He will show you. There will be a day when you look in the rear view and go, "That is what God was doing. I didn't see it in the moment. But now I understand."

Well, listen, that is the exact same thing that's going to happen in Ruth chapter four. So take a look at it, Ruth chapter four, he's going to make his ways what he's doing absolutely plain. So let's start in verse one. You can tell that I swallowed a frog recently, so he hasn't jumped out yet. So we're hoping that happens. Verse one. Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

So like last week, if you were here, I'm going to tell the story. I'm going to fill in details that the author assumes that we know in order to get a full picture of what exactly is taking place here. So at the end of chapter three, Boaz has made this decision with Ruth that he's going to marry her. But there is a redeemer that is closer to her than he is and so that guy has right of first refusal. I'll explain that in a moment. So he's got to find this guy as fast as he can. So he runs to the gate of Bethlehem. The gate is closed at night, it opens up with the sunrise and now people are leaving to go to their jobs.

So if you want to run into somebody, that's the first place people are going in, coming out at that early point in the morning. And so as you picture this scene, you've got to picture maybe dust flying, sounds and animals and people are walking through the gate, people are coming in from other cities. And I want you to look at verse one. He wants to run into this redeemer. Now a Redeemer is a family member who's able to help out with another family hits hard times. So in Leviticus, the third book of the Bible chapter 25 says that if an Israelite becomes destitute, if they're not able to pay their bills, if they go into a massive amount of debt, which that's where Ruth and Naomi are, they can sell some land, they can sell their property and then to get it back, a family member who has the means to do so can buy it for them so that land doesn't leave the family but stays within that family.

So in chapter three, Ruth proposes to Boaz because Boaz is a redeemer. He's a close family member who could fulfill this for her and Naomi. Both of them need protection. They need provision for the rest of their lives and they're saying, "You're the one who could do that." Well, there was a closer relative to them and he is the right of first refusal, which means that he's the one who's going to decide whether or not Boaz and Ruth are going to get married. Remember, last week if you were here, I pictured the other guy as Danny DeVito, and I've pictured Boaz as Kevin Costner. And so here's Ruth, they're a little older. And so Ruth is okay this is the plan to marry Boaz but there's this guy, it says there, who's making this difficult. Boaz is in second place so he just takes off and goes to the gate.

And I want you to see God's Providence in verse one. Notice it says and behold, that's like a... Would you look at that? Hey, the redeemer of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. Wow, surprise. That is theological sarcasm. That's what that is. This is not a coincidence, 21st century American reads that and goes coincidence. 11th century BC Israelite reads that and says Providence. Once Boaz has this guy in place, he goes and gets some more witnesses, verse two. And he took 10 men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. These are the leaders in the community. They're going to validate this transaction.

Now, this section is very difficult for us to understand because we're 3000 years removed from the customs, the backgrounds, the culture, what they're doing, and to this date there hasn't been any archeological finds that shed a light on this subject. And so scholars are confused as to what's really going on. So all I'm going to be able to do is make some general comments about this passage. The legal proceeding begins in verse three. Then he said to the redeemer, this is Boaz, "Naomi, who's come back from the country of Moab is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech."

She's destitute but she's most likely not selling her land. That wasn't allowed in Israel. But what was allowed? She could sell the use of the land. So she would sell the use of the land. Whoever bought the use of the land would get all the proceeds from all the harvest and all of that, but she would get some down payment that would allow her to live on that for a while and then she would be able to get it back if a redeemer said, "I'll buy that back for you." Or what happened, scholars don't know, Elimelech sold it when they left for Moab. And so now Naomi's like, "We need our land back and we need a redeemer to go get it for us."

Now, look at verse four, he continues. "So I thought I would tell you of this and just say, buy it in the presence of these sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it, but if you will not tell me that I may know for there is no one besides you to redeem it and I come after you." So he's the guy that puts the first down payment on the house he has right of first refusal and Boaz is second. He's like, "How do I get into first place?" Okay? That's what's happening here. So he says, "You get the use of the land or you get to get her land back for her." Now there's another passage that plays into this because we know what? We know because we read chapter three that with the land comes who? Ruth, right? So what's going on there? Well, at this moment Boaz is not telling him this, but he's going to, look at verse four. The tension is building, right? The tension through the whole book. What's going to happen? What's he going to decide? Verse four. And he said, "I will redeem it." Oh no. Right? If you're reading this for the first time, you're like, "Oh no, what happened? No, this is not supposed to happen. It's supposed to be Ruth and Boaz. No, not Danny DeVito, not that guy." But Danny DeVito sees this as a win-win think about it for him.

This is an honorable decision. He rescues a widow. He preserves the land of a close relative, and it's also a financial benefit to him. Because think about it, Naomi has no sons. So when she dies, what's going to happen to her land? It's going to come to him. He's going to get everything that she owns on top of everything he owns. So he's looking at this going, "This is fantastic. I love this." Now, if Ruth had been there, what do you think she would've done in that moment? "Oh no." Right? Her heart would've sunk and maybe Boaz's heart sank too, but he has a backup plan. He is shroud.

Verse five. Then Boaz said... Now, before I read this, let me just say this. This is not dishonest, what Boaz is doing. He's actually saying, "Hey, did you read that one line in the contract?" He's

making sure that this man has all the information in order to make the correct decision. Okay? That's what he's doing in verse five then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead. Now notice this, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.

Again, this is full disclosure. She comes with the land, family and land tied together. To make sure the land stays in the family Ruth is a part of this transaction. The land being sold, think about this, will be subject to any child she has, right? Because she's family. So redeeming the land and redeeming her makes sense to keep the land in the family, and notice what it said in verse five there and to keep Elimelech's line of descendants from not coming to an end. Now, I'm not sure if that matters to you, but that matters to me.

I knew as a kid, that I am the last of my line. So my dad had one son, which is me, my mom and dad. And then my uncle has one child, a daughter. And then my other uncle, my dad's other brother has no children. So from a very young age, I knew if I don't have a son, my branch in the family tree comes to an end. So having a son was very, very important to me. In ancient Israel this was massive, because they pictured not the spiritual afterlife, but they pictured the physical afterlife as you live on in your descendants. So the worst thing that you could say to somebody as an Israelite or one of the worst is I hope your family line goes extinct. I hope that you are never remembered. I hope that you just disappear from the face of history.

Notice, verse five, this is a big deal to not happen. And so now there's this added piece of information. So the tension just rose again. This is the last-ditch effort, what's going to happen? Verse six, then the redeemer said, and everybody's waiting with bated breath like, "What's going to happen?" "I cannot redeem it for myself." And everybody cheers, right? lest I impair my own inheritance, what does that mean? I'll come back to that in a second. Take my right of redemption yourself for I cannot redeem it."

Think about it. If he marries Ruth and they have a child, what happens to his inheritance? That child gets all of Naomi's land, right? But that child also gets what? Some of his land. So he is going, "I'm not willing to make that deal. I'm not willing to lose my inheritance by having a child, by bringing Ruth into my home. I'm not willing. I'm out. Too much, too costly for me to do this." And so he backs out.

And I want you to notice something, look back at verse one. What do we not know about this guy? What does this say? We don't know his name. Notice what it says in verse one, "Turn aside friend," you think Boaz knew his name? You bet he knew his name, they're family. So what is the author doing by calling him friend? That's not actually the Hebrew word right there. The Hebrew word right there is this word, that's only used three times and most scholars translate it Mr. so-and-so. It's just like you're a John Doe, you're nobody. "Hey, so and so come over here." Now, why would the author do that to this guy? Why don't we learn his name? I think we don't learn his name because he was not willing to show kindness to his family and therefore take that sacrifice to be a blessing to them on himself. So what are we supposed to do with this? Here we are 3000 years later, I think from this, we can learn point #1) ***to appreciate the costliness of redemption. Appreciate the costliness of redemption.*** Redemption is costly. Redeeming Naomi and Ruth would've cost Mr. so-and-so too much so he backed out. He wasn't willing to pay the costs.

Leviticus 25 gives us the general principles that we see worked out in Ruth chapter four. Redemption wasn't for small debts. You didn't go to a Redeemer and say, "Hey, I need you to

redeem me \$5 so I can pay that guy back for lunch." That's not what this was. This was for land property or even if someone sold themselves into slavery. This is a huge debt. Redemption was for debts that could not be repaid. It meant that someone had to pay the debt for you or you're not going to pay that debt. And then we learned there in Leviticus 25, that once the redemption is paid, the debt is lifted and the person goes free. Boaz is willing to take the costs of this redemption on himself. He's willing to take the massive financial hit. This shows his kindness, his generosity, his loyalty, his love. It shows that he's compassionate and merciful. Think about it, two destitute widows, nobody looks at that and goes, "That's a smoking deal."

But Boaz is kind. He didn't say to them, "Hey, you made that mess Naomi so you got to figure this out yourself. You clean it up." He said, "You made the mess and I'm going to clean it up for you." This is not an illustration of the ultimate redemption that Jesus accomplishes for his people. Family redemption in Leviticus 25 played out in Ruth chapter four, puts categories into the minds of Old Testament readers so that when we get to the New Testament, the light bulb goes on we go, "No, I see what's going on here." Think about it. We get that his redemption of us was not for a small debt, right? It was for a huge debt, namely our sins committed against God. We get the costliness of the debt to Jesus. So costly. It's not that no one would want to pay it like Mr. so-and-so, it's so costly nobody can pay it.

We get that Jesus redemption was as an expression of his kindness, his generosity, his mercy, love and loyalty, faithfulness. We get that his redemption meant he paid the debt for us. The cost for that payment, Ephesians 1:7 came 'through his blood.' And we get that with Jesus redemption, our debt is lifted, that we're we're free. Do you live in the freedom of that redemption? You will, as you appreciate it more and more in your life. The results of redemption are astounding. And they tell us that as we appreciate the redemption that Jesus accomplished for us what'll happen is that will have an effect on the actions of our lives.

Think about it, just stop and think, isn't it the costliness of the redemption let Jesus purchased for us? Doesn't that motivate why we love him? As we think about being in slavery to sin, which no way to possibly get out of that, he rescues us. Doesn't that cause our love for him to grow? You go, "Wow, he would do that for me?" Doesn't that create in us a profound sense of gratitude to him and worship for him?

Colossians 1:14 connects forgiveness with redemption so that when for those who've been forgiven, how are we supposed to respond? We forgive. So redemption not only leads to our forgiveness, but it leads to our forgiving others. Redemption achieved freedom from lawlessness, living like God's rules don't matter. So what he does and redemption tied is 2:14 is he makes people who are zealous for good works. He redeems us and we're like, "How can we please you? What do you want us to do? Whatever you want me to do I'm going to do, because I can't believe you would save me. So I'm going to be zealous to please you."

Hebrews 9:12 calls our redemption an eternal redemption. Meaning you can't go back into the cell. You can't be chained up again to your debt. You've been forever set free. Think about that. It blows your mind. And then add to that Galatians 4:5 which says when Jesus redeems us from slavery to sin, the father adopts us into his own family. Do you live in the gratitude, in the freedom, the joy of redemption? Whatever is drowning out the voice of redemption in your head, allow these truths to silence those voices and live in that freedom.

Now to ratify the transfer of redemption rights from Danny DeVito to Kevin Costner, this strange thing happens in verse seven. Now this was the custom in former times in Israel

concerning redeeming and exchanging. To confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other. That's disgusting. What? I want your shoe. And this was the manner of a testing in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, buy it for yourself. He drew off his sandal. What in the world's going on there. So he takes off his shoe and he gives it to Boaz. Okay? What is the shoe? The shoe is the contract. The shoe is the agreement. If Mr. so-and-so goes, "Hey, I didn't agree to that," Boaz does what? "Here's your stinky shoe." Right? Like, "Yes you did. Yes you did."

Now, this is an old custom. So verse seven, the author needs to explain this to the readers who are maybe 100 years or so after what took place here. But what's with the shoes? In the Old Testament feet and shoes symbolized power and possessions. So think about Moses goes to the burning bush and what does he do? Takes off his shoes. When he takes off his shoes, he's recognizing, "God you are the one with authority here. I'm bowing to it right now, taking off my shoes." So Mr. so-and-so was saying all the rights, all the authority to Elimelech's land, all the rights to provide him with an heir passed from me to Boaz with this shoe. And with that everybody would cheer, right? Anybody reading is like, "Yay. It happened."

The plan that we've been seeing from chapter one verse six where God causes the famine to end is now coming to pass. And so in this moment many Christians would be like, "Oh, I got to pray about this. It's probably fast for a little while. I really need to think about this. Is this really what God wants me to do?" Boaz is like, "Let's do this right now." Verse nine. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought the land from the hand of Naomi, all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belong to Chilion and Mahlon." Notice that in verse nine it's not just the elders, who else is there now? It says all the people. So the people have been going on their way out or into Bethlehem. People have been stopping and going, "Hey, what's going on here? Hey, you need to come see this. Look at what's happening right now." So now there's a crowd of people. The idea here is that this is not going to be some private sale. All of Bethlehem is going to know about this.

Now interestingly, this is the first time the four characters in the story who are named in chapter one verse two, Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion, this is the only other time where they're mentioned all again at the same time. It's like the author is tying a bow. He's saying all the tragedy that started this story has now come to an end. Everything has been reversed. And more than reversed, notice verse 10, their family line will continue. "Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon I've bought to be my wife." Notice, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. And the people accept this. Then all the people who are at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses." And then what starts to happen is they don't stop. They're, "Okay, done. Let's go home now." Notice what they start doing. They start pouring out blessing. Look it, first they bless Ruth, "May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel." And then they go to him, Boaz, "May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem." And then they go to their family, even to their dynasty. "And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

Now there's a lot going on here that the author assumes you know about the book of Genesis. Who are Rachel and Leah? They are the matriarchs of the nation of Israel. Remember there are 12 tribes of Israel, came from 12 sons of Jacob. Well, these two women had eight of the 12. So they are the major proponents that established this whole nation called Israel. So they're praying

for Ruth to be fertile. And think about it, why would they want to pray that? Chapter one, was she able to have any children with Mahlon? There were no kids there. The text doesn't say whether she had the problem or whether he had the problem, but this prayer is like, "Hey, if there were any problems beforehand, may all those problems be wiped out. May she be absolutely fertile and have lots of children to establish their family." And then it says in the middle of verse 11, they pray that Boaz will be successful. That's what act worthily means. And that he would have an honored name, which I don't know about you. But if they're talking about you 3000 years after you lived, your name's probably honored, and that's what's happening here. But notice what it says there, that you be renowned in Bethlehem and then verse 12, they go to his dynasty, says you may be like Perez. Well, Perez is the patriarch of everybody that lived in Bethlehem.

So all the people that lived there were able to trace their lineage back to Perez. He's the superstar in that whole city. He's the one that connects all of the families in the area. So they're saying, "May you have a dynasty like Perez, may your generations last for hundreds of years." And notice who's the one that's going to make this happen? Verse 12. All because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman. Notice, God's Providence again. These are incredible blessings, but are these just nice things to say to people when good things happen to them or is there more going on here? There is a lot more.

And I think for us to grasp this and embrace this, point #2) ***we need to appreciate the significance of prayer. Appreciate the significance of prayer.*** God's Providence is seen in extraordinary decisions. We've talked about that throughout, but it's also seen in the prayers of Ruth. Naomi praise in chapter one, Ruth nine, that Ruth would get married, and it happened. Ruth hopes to find favor in someone's field, chapter two verse 11, and it happened, oh, does she ever find favor? Right? Boaz prays that God would repay Ruth and reward her for her kindness to Naomi in chapter two verse 12 and his prayer for blessing is answered.

Naomi prays for God to bless whoever it was that was nice to Ruth and gave her all that barley, that's chapter two verse 20. And oh, that's Boaz who is clearly blessed by the end of this book. God is going to start making Ruth like Rachel and Leah in chapter four verse 13. She's going to build up, not just Boaz's dynasty, her child is going to build up all of Israel. Boaz is going to have a dynasty like Perez that spreads for dozens of generations.

The significance of prayer is a running theme throughout the entire book of Ruth. Prayers are prayed in Ruth and every prayer in Ruth is answered. Prayers are significant because here's God's Providence. And what happens is these people pray according to God's will and they connect to his Providence. So think about Naomi for a minute. If she were sitting there going, "Here's the wedding happening. Here's Boaz and Ruth, they're getting married." Do you think she sat there and thought, "When we were walking from Moab back to Bethlehem, do you remember that I prayed for you that you would get married?" It seems like their prayers act as foreshadowings of what God is actually going to accomplish in this book. And that's exactly what they are.

They're in line with his will and so he answers them. This is 1 John 5:14, where it says, "This is the confidence we have towards him." We have confidence before God in this, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And we know that if he hears us and whatever we ask, we know that we have the request that we have asked of him. Pretty significant in Ruth, massively significant. But I wonder if it is significant to us. I wonder, do we pray expecting God to accomplish his will through our prayers? Do we pray not my will but yours be done? I think



too many of us rob ourselves a blessing and joy and actual proof that God is at work in our lives because we just don't pray.

Not praying is like being infinitely rich, having a bank card to access an infinite amount of riches and yet living in poverty. For some appreciating the significance of prayer would be praying before you eat. It would just start there. Thanking God for the food that he provided for you to eat. For others it might be that and praying for your spouse and your kids for maybe their salvation or their growth in Christ or for God's will to be done in their lives, or for God to use you to accomplish his will in their lives. For others it might be that but it would include praying for lost people in your life, the family members, the friends, the neighbors, the coworkers.

Others it might be that and praying for your church. For others it might just be starting to pray again, because you prayed for something and God said, no and as a result of that you said, "Prayer is insignificant. It's a waste of time. I'm never going to do it again." No. Let the prayers in Ruth tell you prayer is incredibly significant. Listen, God doesn't work all things according to the council of our wills. Never forget that. Prayer is about asking for his will not ours, right? Jesus tells us to pray, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Well, verse 13, nine months just speed by, warp speed. Verse 13, so Boaz took Ruth, she became his wife. And he went into her and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son. Notice, they had a son because why? Because the Lord gave them one. This is God's Providence again. And this is also the last time we hear from Ruth and Boaz. The story does not end with Ruth and Boaz, the story ends where it began with Naomi. If you thought Ruth was a love story, think again, it is a story about how God used the kindness of Ruth and Boaz to reverse a tragedy in a desperate widow's life named Naomi.

It wasn't just her life in the balance though, as we've been seeing, it was her entire family line in the balance. Everything is reversed as a story of Naomi ends. And these chorus of women in Bethlehem don't want us to miss this. So look it, from tragedy to triumph verse 14, then the women said to Naomi, blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer. And may his name be renowned in Israel. He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons has given birth to him.

God never stopped caring for Naomi. Not once. Even in her darkest hours, he was there. Even when she was angry and saying, "God, you're the one who's causing all of this. Why are you doing this?" Even if she was questioning him, God didn't go, "Oh, that's how you're going to treat me? All right. I'm taking my good plan away from you. Go sit in that for a while." No, that is not the God of the Bible. He was always planning her good. He never stopped blessing her. The boy it says there in verse 14 is to Naomi a redeemer, and that he restores her life. He restores her family. Notice again, who did this with the boy? Notice it says there, blessed be the Lord who has not left you with this day without a redeemer. It's the Lord who has done this for you. He takes credit for everything that happens. To reverse Naomi's tragic life, this boy will care for her in her old age. And listen, that's what her sons were supposed to do but they died. And her sons were to ensure the family line would continue past her death but they were gone. But now this little boy would do that. He is truly a Redeemer. Notice the end of verse 14, may his name be famous. Again, notice what it says, not in Bethlehem but where? In Israel. May this little boy in this little town, in this little tribe in this little place, may his name be famous in all 12 tribes, all across the land.

This is not just a nicety between women. This is a prophetic prayer that comes true. And God did it all through Ruth it says, who loved Naomi. It says became better to her than seven sons. In Bible times you want sons, why? Two reasons, to work your land and two so your name will continue beyond your death. Seven is the number of completion so the perfect family wasn't like ours, a husband, wife, one boy, one girl, the perfect family in Israel was husband, wife, seven sons. And Ruth is better than that. She's way better. She surpasses them all.

All is well. So verse 16, then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. Here's a first-time grandma holding her first grandson. And you've got to think if she's holding this grandson, "All the tragedy of my life is now reversed. God, you did it all. You did it all." And it says there becomes his nurse. The word is guardian. Families are not like families today. Houses were compounds that housed multiple families with multiple generations. This verse simply describes Naomi as the first-time grandma enjoying her grandson.

Then there's this really strange verse, verse 17, and the women of the neighborhood gave him a name. A what? The community gives him a name? That's weird. Saying, a son has been born to Ruth. Is that what your Bible says? A son has been born to Naomi. What? No. A grandson has been born to Naomi, right? Remember this little boy replaces her two sons. Now he is going to take care of her when she gets old, and now he is going to continue on the family line. So in a sense he is a son to her. Again, you've also got mother-in-law, daughter-in-law who are very close. You've also got families, three, four generations in the same house. So there's a closeness and a connection here that we can't really relate to.

Now, the author adds this little, tiny detail that nobody in the story could have ever known, but the author knows and he shares it with us. Verse 17. They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. And now the whole story changes, right? The whole story is different now. This is not a nice little love story. It's not a story about God's kindness through Ruth and Boaz to help a desperate widow named Naomi. No, in this, we now see a much larger providential design. Ruth is about how God uses Ruth and Boaz to reverse Naomi's tragedy, which protects a family line. This is why all that was important. He kept repeating it. Here's why, because that family line will produce Israel's greatest king, king David.

Ruth is really about David, where he came from, who he came from. And in the words of four 11, Ruth does build up the house of Israel like Rachel and Leah, because she is the great grandmother of the king over 12 tribes of Israel. That prayer was answered, that was in 4:12, Boaz's dynasty is going to be like Perez's, it is going to last for generations. In fact, kings are going to go back and they're going to look back in their history and it's going to terminate at Boaz. He's the one. And the prayer in 4:14 is answered too, Obed did become famous in Israel. Why? Because he's the grandpa of king David.

God's Providence went beyond helping one widow. By helping this widow, God helps all of Israel out of the darkness of the judges period and he helps all the world out of the darkness from sin. That's Christmas Eve. For now, what are we supposed to do with that? Point #3) ***appreciate the design of Providence. Appreciate the design of Providence.*** Listen, there is no such thing as chance, luck or coincidence, nothing. Nothing that happens in your life is happenstance, is haphazard, is accidental or random, nothing. Nothing at all.

There's nothing haphazard in this book. Let me put it this way. No Moab, no Ruth, no Ruth, no Boaz, no Boaz, no Obed, no Obed, no Jesse, no Jesse, no David. Everything mattered in this book to bring us to David. And so I wondered, do you live in a world where you view the world

through the lens of there's just coincidence and accidents and random chance luck? Or do you live in a world where God is in control of everything that happens? Everything, every event on the macro, every event in the micro of your life, in my life, where every event in each of our lives is designed by the providential hand of God for our good just like Naomi. Without a God who is in control, your thoughts about life will be out of control. But a God who is in control will allow your thoughts to rest and God's Providence as I said a couple weeks ago will be a pillow that you rest your head on no matter what is happening in this life. If you look at the text, we haven't finished the book of Ruth. There's one more paragraph. That paragraph shows God's design in ways that are going to blow your mind on Christmas Eve. So let's pray.