

The Safest Place to Be | Ruth 2:17–23

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[0:00] Right. I'll put it in my pocket. Save it till later. There was a, there was, I don't know if you saw it. There's a WhatsApp message went out this week to say that the picnic open house would be at Simon's house.

And I want to just correct it. It's Laurie's house. And guys, you know what that means. Like, I don't like, it's not my house. I just live there and create a mess.

There won't be any mess at our house. But if there is any mess, I own that. That's my mess. But it's Laurie's house. And so when Laurie says the door is open, that's when the door is open.

Don't bother asking me when that is. So don't knock the door. When you come around, just walk in. Like, if we don't want you, we'll just lock the door and pull the curtains and pretend we're not in.

But that's not going to happen this afternoon. Right. So please do just come around. Some of you don't know where I live. Ask Laurie. I could give you directions, but you may end up anywhere.

[1:02] So just see Laurie afterwards or see Chris. Chris will tell you where we live. And by all means, park on the drive if you can find a space. She can. But it won't make any difference because she's not in the room.

So you can come and see me. You can see me. I do know where I live. But I have been known to go the wrong way a number of times.

So Laurie tells me. Otherwise, if I didn't have Laurie, I wouldn't know I was going the wrong way. She doesn't need help.

Anyway, so the other thing. Young love. The other thing I wanted to say was looking forward to next week and the week after. We're back in the book of Philippians.

So Joseph and Joe are teaching next week and the week after. Don't look at me with a frown.

Good. So come out for that. It's going to be great. Paul's letter to the Church of Philippi.

[2:03] Such a great book, isn't it? And Andy opened last week, two weeks ago, three weeks ago. So come out for the second and third series of that. That's next week and the week after. And as Chris says, we're going to be in the sports hall.

So hopefully everyone's back from dropping the children off. So I'm going to pray and we're going to get into Ruth chapter two this morning. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord. Lord, your word, we believe, has something to say to us today, Lord, by your spirit.

And we ask, Lord, that you'd give us ears to hear. Lord, that our spirit would call out deep onto deep, Lord. Lord, that we would resonate with these things that we hear, Lord.

And help us, Lord, to not just, you know, take these things on board or make notes or, you know, close our Bibles at the end of the day. Lord, we pray that you'd help us to really learn from these things and learn more about you.

And Lord, really help us, we pray this morning, to walk with you more closely. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. All right. So we're in Ruth chapter two and we're beginning at verse 17. So we're finishing Ruth chapter two this morning.

[3:08] And just by way of an introduction, I wanted to just remind you, if you didn't know, that one of the defining characteristics of our Western culture at the moment is that we're always looking for what's next, aren't we?

Like if you have ever ventured into the world of box sets. I know we don't have box sets anymore. What do we call them now? Box sets on stream, right?

And we always want to know when the next episode is coming out. Or, you know, I have been thinking about football this week. And of course, I've been plotting when Leeds are going to next play.

We lost this week. Don't rub it in. But when does this premiership start? For some of you, you'll be glad to know that Harrods has just opened its Christmas store.

So you're welcome. So we're always obsessed with kind of what's next. What's the next big thing? Or what's just the next thing? And we've really become experts at kind of moving on to the next thing.

[4:15] We're told that if it no longer excites us or it no longer challenges us or it doesn't meet our need anymore, then perhaps it's time to leave and find something better. But the Bible often, and I think this chapter speaks into this, often asks a different question.

It's not what is next, but will you stay? I was at a wedding yesterday and I was reminded again of the vows of the bride and groom.

The vows to do what? Well, to stay. And that's kind of the Christian life, isn't it? If you think about it, if you boil it down, what is the Christian life about?

Well, it's to come and then stay. And the greatest danger to our spiritual lives may not be like one catastrophic failure or one catastrophic mistake.

It's standing in one field and looking over the fence at another field that seems greener than yours and wishing to be there.

[5:17] It's standing in one field, looking over the fence at a field that looks greener and desiring to be in that field. And I think as we come to the closing verses of this chapter, of Ruth chapter 2, that's exactly the challenge that Ruth faces.

Boaz has already shown Ruth some extraordinary kindness. And you remember in verse 8, if you just track back there in verse 8 of chapter 2, he gave her a surprisingly simple instruction.

It says there that Boaz said to Ruth, now listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this field, but keep close to my young women.

And at first glance, those words might sound restrictive, almost a little bit disappointing. But Ruth is about to discover something that every Christian eventually has to discover.

And that is that the safest, richest, most fruitful place for us to be is wherever the Redeemer has told us to be. Right? And so his commands are not prison bars.

[6:29] His commands are paths to joy. And so what God does next is extraordinary in the ordinary. And we've discovered that, haven't we?

There is that ordinary life coming back time and time again through this book. And so, look, the first thing that we learn comes in verse 17. And if you're making notes or you've got the follow along notes on your phone, you'll notice that the first thing we see is to stay close.

And so verse 17, it says that she gleaned in the field until evening. And so again, verse 8 says, Boaz says, stay in the field.

So what does Ruth do? Stays in the field. And that's kind of, again, just like a wonderful picture of the Christian life. I love that one phrase that John highlights or he writes down in his gospel.

The other gospel writers don't. John's talking about what Jesus says to his disciples. There in John chapter 1. Jesus turned and saw them following after them.

[7:42] And he says, what are you seeking? They say, Rabbi, which means teacher. He says, where are you staying? And he says, come and you will see. And they came and they saw where he was staying. And they stayed with him that day. Right?

And that's kind of like the Christian life. Come and you will see. They came and they saw and they stayed. Like if you want to boil down what the Christian life is about, come and see. Stay. That's it. I mean, obviously things get more complicated than that, don't they? But the bottom line is, come to Jesus. Stay with Jesus. Later, Jesus records how Jesus says that joy and real joy comes in restricting ourselves to him.

Right? In John chapter 15, he says, abide in me and I in you. And then in verse 10 of the same chapter, he says, if you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love. These things I've spoken, that your joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

What's the message from Jesus? Come abide, come remain, come stay. Paul wrote to the church of Colossians. He says this in Colossians chapter 1. He says, continue in the faith, stable, steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard.

[8:58] Right? And that's our problem, isn't it? Like the stability, the steadfastness to keep going, stay in your field is actually a real challenge.

Paul wrote to the church, Paul wrote to Timothy. And he said this in 2 Timothy. He says, as for you, continue in what you've learned. And in Hebrews, we get a similar instruction.

He says, for you have need of what? Endurance. And it seems to me that the great summary of what it means to be a Christian is simply coming to Christ and staying with Christ.

Like, can we do that? Can we come to Christ and can we stay with Christ? It's a call to stay in the field. And then look at the rest of verse 17. It says, and I love this.

I absolutely love this. And I can't tell you, I was almost tempted to make this a whole sermon, but I thought I'd save you. Verse 17. She beat out what she had gleaned.

[9:58] Do you get that? She beat out what she had gleaned. So Ruth here, she's separating the grain from the husks. And don't miss that detail.

It's easy just to read over. This is what she was doing, right? But Ruth simply didn't gather the grain. She had to beat it out. Look, the harvest wasn't ready the moment she picked it up.

Right? It had to be worked for. The grain had to be separated from the husks before it became useful. And I hope that's what you're going to be doing this afternoon and this week.

Like, I hope you don't go home and you don't simply leave Ruth 2 in your notebook or in your Bible. I hope you beat out what you have gleaned. Right? Like, talk about it over lunch.

Ask your spouse. What stood out today? Ask your children. What do you learn about Jesus? If you're on your own, sit with your Bible and ask, Lord, what is it you're saying to me through this passage? Reflect on it. Pray through it.

[10:59] Journal about it. Beat it out. Because God's Word is only the beginning, right? Hearing God's Word is only the beginning. The real fruit comes as we meditate on it, as we wrestle with it, as we pray through it, as we allow the Holy Spirit to separate what is useful than what is not useful.

So don't rush to the next thing. Right? Stay. Beat it out. And then he says, it was about an ephah of barley.

And all of these kind of little details, it's like, oh, so what? Well, how much is an ephah? Well, it's about 10 days worth of food.

Okay? So, and you follow along notes, there's some justification on that. It comes from Exodus. But suffice to say, it's about 10 days worth of food, which means this isn't normal gleaning.

Right? You remember, gleaning was kind of going around looking for the scraps. It was not necessarily what was left over, but it was going through the margins of the field. And look, God is never stingy, is he?

[12:12] You know, Ephesians 1 tells us about how God is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine. And here's Ruth. She goes out into the field and she's gleaning all day.

And Ruth had said, or excuse me, Boaz had said to his workers, hey, you know, the sheath that falls off the back of the combine harvester, I'm assuming they had those in those days. Don't bother picking them up.

Just leave them for Ruth. And his generosity meant that she was able to take home 10 days worth of food. And so in verse 18, it says that she took it up and she went into the city.

That's Bethlehem. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. And she also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

And I love that detail because you remember earlier in the chapter, I think it's verse 14. And Boaz invited Ruth to lunch, right?

[13:11] And she's there and she's eating the bread and wine, right? We talked about this last week. And she goes away satisfied. She goes away completely full.

There's roasted grain there. And she's kicking back. She's like, I can't eat another colonel, right? And it's not colonel Sanders. It's colonel, colonel. And she's like, I'm done.

And so she takes these leftovers. It says she kept some back for Naomi, which means that Ruth in this moment doesn't just bring back the 10 days worth of grain.

She also brings back the leftovers from lunch. Like, I love that. And I love it because the kindness of Ruth, the kindness that Ruth received is now the kindness that Ruth extends.

Like, she doesn't keep it all for herself. The generosity she experienced becomes the generosity she now shares. And that's what the gospel does. The gospel should turn us into kind people and generous people.

[14:12] Why? Because God has been kind and generous to us. And so, in the last two verses, or the first two verses, verses 17 and 18, I read this strong instruction to stay close.

Stay close to our Redeemer. And then in the next verse, we get another instruction. And the instruction is not just to stay close, but to stay under.

So, verse 19, her mother-in-law said to her, where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you.

Now, look, this is, I think, probably the first glimpse that we get the old Naomi back. Right? Do you remember chapter one? Every sentence about Naomi and from Naomi was one of being downcast. Right? So, she says, don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara. Call me bitter. Right? Why? Because the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.

[15 : 23] The Lord has brought me back empty, she says. Right? And like everything Naomi saw was filtered through her pain. She had lost her husband. She had lost her two sons.

She was experiencing famine. And in this sentence, hope begins to break through. Right?

So, Ruth walks through the door, carrying enough barley for days and days and days. And what does she say? She says, blessed be the man who took notice of you.

And what is she saying? She is standing in Bethlehem and she is saying, someone has intervened. Do you get that?

She's standing in Bethlehem saying, someone has come to our rescue. She's standing in Bethlehem saying, our Messiah has come. That's a great text for Christmas, isn't it?

[16 : 28] And so, she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, this man's name with whom I worked is. And you can imagine there's a little bit of like a pregnant pause at this point.

Right? I'm going to tell you the name of the man. And like Naomi kind of leans in. Right? And she says, the name's man is Boaz. And at this point, the scoring for the film, the orchestra would be like, you know, heavy.

And it would cut to silence as the magnitude of that rings true. Now, for most of us, we're like, so what? But this is not just a generous farmer, is it?

This Boaz. I mean, just look at verse 20 as Naomi explains it to Ruth. Like, why the importance on this name? Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, may he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.

And Naomi said to her, the man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers. And so in ancient times, there was this law of kinsmen.

[17 : 41] It's mainly from Leviticus chapter 25. You can go and read that in your own time. Under God's law, there was a person called a goel. That's the Hebrew word, goel.

It's a kinsman redeemer. A kinsman, someone who is closely related and a redeemer. So someone who was a close family member, who had both the right and the responsibility to restore to someone what had been lost.

That's a goel. And so in Leviticus 25 and in Deuteronomy 25, there's a couple of examples of what the kinsman would do, right?

So for example, if a relative fell into poverty and sold their land, a kinsman redeemer had the right and the responsibility to buy that back and gift it back to that family.

Again, in Leviticus 25, if someone sold themselves into slavery to pay off a debt, a kinsman redeemer could purchase them back out of slavery and make them free. In Deuteronomy 25, if a man died without an heir, without children, a kinsman redeemer could marry the widow to preserve the family line.

[19 : 00] And Boaz is a goel. He is a kinsman redeemer. He is a close relative of Naomi. And so that's why Naomi says, may he be blessed of the Lord, right?

It's an exclamation of joy coming from the most miserable person in the story. And of course, Boaz beautifully fulfills this role for Ruth and Naomi, but he's only a shadow of the greater redeemer who is Jesus, right?

Jesus became our kinsman by taking on our humanity. Romans chapter, excuse me, Hebrews chapter 2 says, since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, flesh and blood.

Jesus became our close relative, our kinsman. Hebrews chapter 2 says that he's not ashamed to call us brothers, making him a true near relative.

Peter tells us that actually like Boaz, Jesus was both willing and able to redeem, but he didn't redeem using silver and gold. He didn't purchase us in that way, but he did purchase us with the precious blood of Christ.

[20:19] Jesus is our kinsman redeemer. He paid the price that we could never pay, not simply to rescue us from spiritual poverty, but to restore our inheritance as sons and daughters of God.

That's what Jesus has done. And so that's why Naomi makes this exclamation of joy. May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness, that word kindness is the Hebrew word *chesed*, which is God's covenant love, God's never failing love, his loyal love, his steadfast love, his faithful love, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.

And so look, the remarkable thing is that all of a sudden, Naomi stops looking at God's character through our own circumstances. Like, God must be mad at me because of my suffering.

But instead, interprets her circumstances through God's character. And that's important for us to remember.

Like, nothing in this story has really changed so far yet, right? Life hasn't all of a sudden become wonderful. Her husband is still dead. Her two sons are still dead.

[21:46] They are still living in poverty, and life is still very, very difficult. But Naomi is learning to stop measuring God by her circumstances, and start measuring her circumstances by God.

When she returned to Bethlehem, all she could see was emptiness, loss, and disappointment. Her circumstances had become the lens through which she viewed God.

And because life was still bitter, she assumed God must be still bitter. But when we allow the character of God to become the lens through which we view our circumstances, we start to grow up spiritually.

And so, this is what is happening slowly but surely to Naomi. And we're told in verse 21, that Ruth the Moabite said, besides, he said to me, you shall keep close by my young men.

Now, previously, it was close by who? The young women, right? And so, there'd been another conversation, a second conversation, that Ruth had had with Boaz. And Boaz had said, look, I want you to stay with my young women, but also stay with my young men.

[22:56] Come under their protection, if you like, right? You shall keep close to my young men until they have finished all my harvest. And Naomi said to Ruth, my daughter-in-law, excuse me, her daughter-in-law, it is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.

And so, Naomi immediately understands the wisdom of Boaz's words. Naomi knows the dangers. Outside of Boaz's field is danger.

And she is vulnerable. And inside Boaz's field, she is protected. And notice something important, that Boaz doesn't remove Ruth from work. Like, he doesn't come along and go, oh, Ruth, you can just sit there.

Someone will bring you everything you need. He doesn't do that. He doesn't wrap her up in cotton wool. He doesn't tell her to stay home. Instead, he creates an environment in which she can begin to flourish.

And that's really what biblical boundaries do. Like, we may say, well, you know, I kind of like that field. That other field does look greener than the field that I'm currently working in.

[24:08] And surely that would be okay for me to go into that other field. And sometimes we can see that as a restriction, as a boundary that is unnecessary. But actually, biblical boundaries are there not to stop life, but to protect life.

And our culture often tells us that freedom means having no boundaries at all. You can just live however you want to live and follow your heart. Live outside the field. But the Bible paints a very different picture.

Like, a river bank that doesn't, the river that does, without banks, doesn't become free. It becomes a flood, right? A fire without a fireplace doesn't become more powerful.

It becomes destructive. A train without tracks doesn't become more liberated. It becomes off the rails. A fish out of the confines of water doesn't become more alive.

It becomes dead. Boundaries don't destroy life. They protect life. And that's what Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount, right? Like, he begins each of those phrases, if you're familiar with Matthew chapter 5 and 6 and 7, he begins each of those phrases with blessed.

[25:18] Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, right? He's saying, look, the person is blessed. The same person is blessed who is living within the boundaries of the field.

God has always given boundaries. Not because he delights in restriction, but because he delights in life. Like, if you think of all the way back to the Garden of Eden, right?

God gave Adam and Eve almost unlimited freedom. Right? He said, you can do whatever you like. Any of these trees, any of those trees, any tree that you come up with, but actually there's just one tree that you can't.

Right? So, it's important to see that God's original command and mandate begins with abundance, not restriction.

Right? That's where he begins. And then comes the boundary. So he says, eat every tree in the garden. Boundary, but not from this one.

[26 : 23] And the boundary wasn't evidence that God was mean. The boundary was evidence that God was good. Right? He was protecting life. Once again, John 15, abide in me, I in you, that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full.

He's saying, don't go out of this field. If you go out of this field, you'll have less joy. You want joy? Stay close. That's it. You want a summary of the Christian life?

Come to Jesus. Stay with Jesus. Your life will be full. Right? And so Boaz reflects something of the fatherly heart when he says, and creates this safe space for Ruth to flourish.

He doesn't do it for her. He doesn't just bring gifts and say, just have it. He creates an environment where Ruth can really flourish herself and be blessed, be that blessed person.

And so look, now as we come to the last verse, I want us to see the third thing. And I absolutely love this last verse. Have I said that before? I love this verse.

[27 : 30] Right? Because it is not about really staying close or staying under, but now it's stay until. Right?

Stay close, stay under, stay until. Here's what he says. And look, before we get there, look, just as we read it, this feels like a very ordinary ending to a chapter.

There are no wedding bells. Ruth and Boaz aren't skipping down the aisle. There's no wedding proposal. We're not told about any sunset picture, Instagram moment.

There's none of that. There's no miraculous intervention. There's no great speeches to finish the chapter off. There is just one quiet sentence.

Read with me. Verse 23. So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvest, and she lived with her mother-in-law. And that's it.

[28 : 33] And that is unremarkable. But listen, I've come to learn that the Holy Spirit never wastes words. And the whole chapter ends with an extraordinary sentence about ordinary discipleship.

Let me give you the three phrases that jump out at me from this verse. First phrase, she kept close. Second phrase, until the end. Third phrase, she went home.

Isn't that ordinary? She kept close. She stayed till the end. And she went home. That first phrase, she kept close. Again, isn't that the essence of the Christian life?

Isn't that the thing that we struggle with actually mostly every single day? Is staying close to the Lord? Making those decisions to rise early, have our quiet time, do our journaling, have our prayer time, whatever it might be.

Those things. The Christian life is not simply coming to Christ. It's continuing with Christ, isn't it?

And whilst we might love those, you know, those conversion stories, and we do, rightly so, right?

[29 : 42] The New Testament actually places its emphasis on not coming to, but staying with, on endurance, on keeping going, on that word that none of us like, patience.

Jesus doesn't simply say, come to me. He says, follow me. Paul doesn't merely celebrate people who start the race. He celebrates those who are finished. And the writer of the Hebrew says, let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

And then look at the second phrase. It tells us how long Ruth stayed for until the, the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And you know how long that is? No? I'll tell you. That's two months in one sentence.

Two months, just gone. One sentence. Why? Well, simply because not every single day looked like the first. Right? Not every day is, is going to look like your first day when you're walking with the Lord.

And I've spoken to so many new Christians who after a while, they go, it just doesn't feel like, it felt like when I got saved. And I'm like, haha, there's a reason for that. Because God delights in the ordinary.

[31:00] Not every day is going to contain a miracle. Do you know that? Like, you're going to wake up, you're going to walk to the field, you're going to gather grain, and you're going to come home, and then you're going to repeat it.

And some of you don't go out into the field. Some of you go to the office. Some of you go to the school. Some of you stay at home with the little ones. And look, that's exactly how spiritual growth usually happens.

Even, even when you look at the, the quickest and most dramatic church growth periods of all time in the last 2,000 years, like the book of Acts.

How did the book of Acts pan out? Well, whilst it's true to say that Acts records miracles regularly throughout the expansion of the early church, listen, the ordinary pattern of the church was teaching, fellowship, food, prayer, repeat.

They continued steadfastly. And you might say, well, what about the miracles? You might say, well, yeah, let's talk about the miracles. There was one miracle recorded every year of the early church.

[32:14] Now, I know that's an argument from silence, right? But, but, Luke paints this picture of the early church as continuing steadfastly in the, just the ordinary stuff, teaching, fellowship, so glad that food is in there and prayer, right?

Because that's where the challenge comes for most of us. Repeating that and carrying on. But notice also something else there that she lived with her mother-in-law.

And I could make a countless number of jokes about the struggle and the strife and the challenge that comes with the Christian life. But my mother-in-law is wonderful, so I'm not going to do that. And look, it is being recorded. And look, at first, that sounds like another throwaway detail, doesn't it? Like, she just went home to her mother-in-law.

But it isn't a throwaway detail. Where does Ruth go each day? Simply, she just goes home. The same Naomi who a few months earlier had said, call me bitter.

[33:24] Now, every evening, Ruth walks through the door carrying evidence of God's kindness. That's what our families need, isn't it? That's what our mother-in-laws need.

Evidence of God's kindness and our ability to show evidence of God's kindness and His faithfulness to us. Every evening, they would, I don't know, gather around whatever they gathered around.

The candle. And there was another opportunity to rehearse God's faithfulness. Look, Bali. Where has this come from? God.

And look, I would say that we desperately need people like Ruth and Naomi who are reminding each other on a daily basis of God's faithfulness. People who ask, where did you see God today? What has He been teaching you? What has He been showing you? And so this is an extraordinary verse to finish the chapter. She stayed. She gleaned.

[34:27] She went home. And tomorrow, she's just going to do that again. And she's going to trust God with whatever He is going to do. And of course, for us looking back, and we'll see this over the next couple of chapters, for us looking back, nobody in Bethlehem realized history was changing.

And that's the beauty of this. Ruth is just getting up, gleaning, going home. Getting up, gleaning, going home. Repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat. And nobody in Bethlehem realizes and knows that David, King David's family tree was being written.

And nobody imagined that Messiah's story was quietly unfolding in an ordinary field. As hundreds of years later, Matthew would write, Luke would write, that the relative of Jesus was Ruth.

And that's how God usually works. He changes the world through people who keep showing up.

People who stay close to their Redeemer. They trust Him for His provision and they refuse to leave before the harvest is finished.

Let's ask God to help us do that, shall we? Father, thank You for Your Word. Lord, we recognize this morning, Lord, the challenge of the ordinary. Lord, we believe You for miracles.

[35:52] Lord, we believe You for moves of the Spirit even in these days. Lord, much harder sometimes to believe that You work in the ordinary. Much harder to believe that You work in the struggle and the challenge.

And so, Lord, again, afresh this morning, we commit those to You. Whether it is the Monday morning office or the early morning rises on shifts or the struggle in our workplace or in the home, Lord, the ordinary can sometimes feel the most challenging thing that we do.

And so, Lord, we pray that in those ordinary times, in those ordinary days, Lord, we would learn to stay close to You. Lord, to believe that as we do, we are in the blessed place that we can be.

Lord, and as we stay close to You and stay under You, Lord, we pray that You would give us the power, the ability to stay until. To stay until that You change us. To stay until You change where we are.

And Lord, then for the next step, we trust You for that too. Lord, help us to not so much take our eyes off of, or help us not to take our eyes off of what You're doing in the field that we're standing in. [37 : 14] Lord, we thank You for the fields next to us. Lord, we praise You, Lord, for the works that You're doing in other fields, in other places. And Lord, we trust You. Lord, that even in the simple ways of life, Lord, that You would be using them to Your greater glory.

Lord, we trust You for that. Lord, we ask, Lord, You would help us to put our faith in that and commit those things to You each and every day. believing that You will take those small gifts of bread and fish and multiply them out to thousands.

Lord, we thank You for this time. Lord, we want to just commit our hearts again to You today. And as we rise to sing, Lord, we pray that Your Spirit, Lord, would just again call out deep to deep. Lord, that we would feel and know and hear Lord, Your Spirit speaking to us today, encouraging us, exhorting us, equipping us, we pray. Lord, and as we leave this place, Lord, we pray that we would learn to beat out the grain.

Lord, that this would be rich food to us. Lord, it would be Ephas of Barley to sustain us and keep us going. Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

[38 : 29] Amen. Thank you.