

God Transcendent

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Well, it wasn't by design but it was certainly appropriate for us to sing that song leading into this concluding study on the book of Ruth. We come to the end of Ruth and Ruth is a book in some ways, I won't take time to develop this thought, but in some ways it's like the book of Jonah in that the final verse gives you the key to understanding the whole and you have to, as it were, read the book twice in order to read it once; you have to read through all of the circumstances and get to that climactic verse and then retroactively you understand the significance of everything that you were seeing beforehand. In the book of Jonah, you see it closing on the theme of God's compassion and that understanding helps us know why God sent Jonah to Nineveh in the first place. Well, in like manner, when we get to the end of the book of Ruth and we see it concluding with a climactic statement, David, you see the reason for all of the events in Ruth that we have been studying over the past many, many weeks. We see that God has directed all of these events in order to bring about the person of David into the world. It's astonishing. It's a transcendent statement about the power and purpose of God and that's what we're going to focus on here this evening is "God Transcendent." In these wonderful verses of Ruth, we see a transcendent God bringing about transcendent purposes that we still celebrate today 3,000 years later and which will echo throughout the halls of eternity for all the unfolding ages and eons to come.

Now, last time when we were here two weeks ago, we looked at the book of Ruth and we looked at chapter 4 and we saw that Boaz and Ruth became married; the culmination of the human narrative was brought to pass in verse 13. Chapter 4, verse 13, "Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.'" That prayer was answered, wasn't it? We're talking about it 3,000 years later. And in verse 15 they said to Naomi, "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law," that is, Ruth, "who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." That's what we looked at last time.

Now we come to this climactic portion and if you were just to read this the first time through and you see five verses, six verses dedicated to a genealogy, you would be shocked perhaps at the thought that there might even be 15 minutes worth of a sermon to be gleaned from what is said here and we'll see what we can do about that. This is the

concluding portion of Ruth and this is the climax. This is what everything has been pointing to and so rather than just diminishing it because the genealogy doesn't have the narrative kind of action that the earlier portion of the book did, let's just take our time, respect this passage as yet another inspired, inerrant portion of God's word and see what God would say, what God would teach us, through these things that are written here.

Let's read verses 16 through 22 together as we come into this time. Verse 16,

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. 17 The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. 18 Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, 19 and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, 20 and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, 21 and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, 22 and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

Now, this important genealogy, you can weigh the importance of this genealogy and understand that we're not dealing with a casual portion of Scripture, an incidental portion of Scripture, this same genealogy is recorded in 1 Chronicles 2, in Matthew 1, and in Luke 3, and so four times this genealogy appears in the course of the Bible. It must be important. God only needs to say something once for it to have infinite importance to us, the fact that this genealogy is recorded four times means that there is something very significant about it. This is not an anti-climactic end to a great story that just fizzles out on an anti-climactic note. No, this passage that we're looking at tonight is actually the point of the book of Ruth.

Now, what I want to do here is I want to walk quickly through the narrative that's here and then close our time in Ruth with some of the great truths that this passage teaches us about God. So let's go back to verse 16. We see after Ruth gave birth, Naomi participated in the care of the child. Verse 16, "Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse." Now, it's easy to lose sight of this when we've been a little bit broken up in our exposition of the book, but remember where Naomi came from in order to appreciate how sweet and how precious this situation is that is described in verse 16. She had been a widow; she was still a widow at this point. She had gone to a foreign land. She had buried her two sons. She was without a husband, without her sons, and she came back to Bethlehem destitute after being in a foreign land for 10 years. And during the time of transition as she was coming back, she told her daughter-in-laws, "Go away. Don't come with me. This is a bitter time. There's nothing for you here. God has dealt bitterly with me," and she was without hope as we concluded chapter 1. And yet as the events of all of this unfolded where she thought she had been abandoned by God there at the end of chapter 1, now here she is with a child who embodied the promise and faithfulness of God to her. This was more than just you and I holding one of our sons or daughters in our lap. Oh, that's sweet and precious enough as it is. Those are wonderful, miraculous, sweet moments to have an infant on your lap, but for Naomi who thought that her line had been extinguished, for Naomi who thought that her name and the name

of her husband was going to be erased from the annals of Israel, here was a child who showed that God had not forgotten her, that this child would carry on the line for her. So as she is cradling this child, she is seeing the fulfillment of the promise of God. It almost echoes a little bit of what it must have been like for Mary to hold the infant Jesus in her hands and to hold him in her lap, a child that embodied so much more than the mere physical life that he himself had in his own being. It's a precious scene. God had not abandoned her and here Naomi is experiencing the joy of a grandmother at the birth of a most special child.

Now, the word "son" here in verse 16 or in verse 17, they say, "A son has been born to Naomi," they're not referring to the fact that a father followed by his first male infant is son in that way, they are simply using the word "son" to mean descendent. The word is often used that way in the Hebrew and it's obviously the sense that it's used here. And the word "nurse," Naomi is described as his nurse, it's carrying the idea of a guardian; it's not saying that she was his nurse in the sense that she fed the child from her own body, rather it's simply saying that she took him and took care of him. The same word, a form of this word is used in the book of Esther to describe the man Mordecai in Esther 2:7, where Mordecai was a guardian who took care of Esther in the absence of her own parents. So we see here Naomi as the grandmother taking in this child, caring for him and loving him with a deep joy in her heart. Some have suggested that this is emblematic, verses 16 and 17 perhaps indicate an adoption ceremony where Naomi actually adopted the boy as her own but it seems to me that that's reading an awfully lot into the narrative. We'll just take it here this evening as a happy grandmother caring for this boy who represents more than the continuation of her physical life; it is a representation of the utter faithfulness of God when it seemed like all hope had been lost. That's what that child meant to her.

Now, somehow the text says, look at verse 17, somehow the women in the community participated in naming the child. Verse 17, "The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi!' So they named him Obed." Perhaps the women proposed this name and it was accepted by Boaz and Ruth. In any case, Obed comes from a word that means servant and it is a picture, it is an indication that in the future this child would help to take care of Naomi. As he grew older and as she advanced in years, he would act as a servant to Naomi in her later years. So there's a fulfillment of a great promise of God that transcends her prior sorrow, there's also this promise and this indication within her lifetime that this son would minister to her.

So it's a sweet picture that is given there even in a human sense, but to stop there would be a serious mistake because the narrative expands; the narrative expands, as it were, from the nursery into multiple generations going forward in the future. There is more to this son than just the fact that Naomi would not die a barren widow without any kind of progeny. There is more to this son than the fact that Boaz and Ruth had a wonderful romance, that God honored their godliness and a son was born and they would have a happy family. It's so much more than that. As it is with anything that happens in the course of humanity, there is so much more than what we see from our perspective and that is certainly the case here. In very understated terms, in a very simple, direct, clear manner, the narrative proceeds and as we see there in verse 17, we see that as God saw

fit, Obed became a man and married and Obed had a son and that son's name was Jesse. And as God saw fit, Jesse had a son, many sons in fact, but one of his sons was named David. This is incomprehensible. David. David who became God's anointed king; David, who is the primary subject of the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles in the Bible; who is the dominant author of the Psalms; David, who became God's chosen king and God promised him in 2 Samuel 7 to establish his throne forever; David, whose very throne is the throne to which our Lord Jesus is the ultimate King. That David proceeded from this wonderful narrative in Ruth that we have seen over the past several weeks.

Beloved, think about it, look back and do your best, I know it's hard as we're sitting here 3,000 years later, but do your best to force yourself back into the scene, back into the historical circumstances 3,000 years ago when Ruth is clinging to Naomi and says, "I won't leave you." Says, "Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people. Where you go, I will go." And in that moment where it's two lonely women clinging to each other, one a Jew, the other a Moabite, the Moabite daughter-in-law clinging to her mother-in-law and saying, "I won't leave you," picture it as if you were standing along the side of the road watching that episode take place. Who would have thought, who could have possibly conjured up in their wildest imagination that right there was a pivot point that would lead to the greatest king being born from a line that would proceed from those two women, that the greatest king in the history of Israel until our Lord Jesus Christ would come just a few short generations from that? This is incalculably transcendent, that from that moment of faithfulness, a foreign Moabite woman would become the great-grandmother of the future king of Israel. Let that sink in for a moment. It's clearly the point of why this book was written.

Now, in verses 18 to 22, the genealogy traces this back to show that David is in the Abrahamic line. Look at verses 18 through 22. It starts with Perez, Perez who was the son of Judah. Judah was one of the 12 sons of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. And there's a direct line then from Perez to David that is given here. "To Perez," verse 18, "was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David."

Now, I realize, and you know, there's something that just kind of bugs me sometimes and that is this: the biblical genealogies, it's not uncommon to hear speakers, Bible teachers, kind of diminish it and talk about the begats and the begats and kind of diminish that. That's no way to speak about God's word at all. If anything is in the Bible it's because God himself put it there and we should treat it with respect and reverence. Even if it's not immediately apparent to us why everything is there, we should at least love God and respect God enough that if he saw fit to record it in his word, that we defer to it, that we honor it, and we would never say anything to diminish any portion of God's word. The problem if we think a portion of the Bible is boring, the problem is in us, not in God's word.

Well, that's especially true right here as we go through this genealogy. Many commentators believe this is only a partial genealogy because they estimate that the

length of time between Perez and David was close to 800 years and there's only about 10 names that are given there. Whatever the case of that may be, beloved, here's the point for you tonight: do not miss the forest for those trees of interpretation about whether there may be other people in the genealogy that aren't listed there. The point of this genealogy is to show that David connects directly to Abraham. That is the point and David became God's anointed king.

So what we see here, having gone through, remember, you know, as we've walked through Ruth, we have walked through some of the most mundane aspects of human existence. We've walked through people working in the field. We've worked through a man and a woman meeting, getting married, and so on. Within the perspective of their lifetimes, if you think about it and you put yourself in their shoes, they're just doing what they did in the ordinary course of life, and from within their perspective, there was nothing spectacular about what was going on. We have the benefit on the other side of the generations of what followed with Ruth and Boaz, we have the perspective from this divinely inspired narrative to see its significance. And what do we see? What do we see from this Moabite woman named Ruth whose name titles the book? What do we see from the kindness that Boaz showed to this foreign woman? What do we see flowing from that emotional moment on the road between Moab and Bethlehem between Naomi and Ruth? What do we see? We see greatness and blessing exploding upon this humble woman from Moab and her widowed mother-in-law. David is not incidental to the book, he is the point of the book. You can see that as you continue reading on in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, but beloved, what I want to show you here tonight and I don't know how long this will take, but what I want you to see tonight is that David, the ending of David points to four even greater points about the transcendent nature of our God; that the fact that this union between Boaz and Ruth led to their great-grandson being the king of Israel says something really spectacular about God himself and his purposes.

Now, I can't talk about a great-grandmother without remembering my own great-grandmother, Mammie, who died when I was like a year old so I have no independent memory of her, but Mammie is like a hero in our family. She's a real, a genuine hero. She was a largely uneducated woman in the back hills of Kentucky and she raised her own family of whom my mother's mother was one of them. My mother was orphaned by the time she was, by the time my mom, I believe, was seven, perhaps five. My grandfather and my grandmother died by the time my mom was still a child and Mammie, having already raised a family of her own, took in after a lot of circumstances that I won't go into, took in these five children, her five grandchildren and raised them as her own. And thinking about Ruth as the great-grandmother of David, I'm not comparing myself to David, I'm comparing Mammie to Ruth, what she did, what she and her husband did in bringing in my mom and her four siblings together, established a course and a trajectory that had echoing effects throughout many generations to come. My mom and her siblings would have been scattered to the social services wind but this poverty stricken, uneducated woman took them in and raised them as her own even after she had already finished raising her own family. So I just wanted to honor her memory as I speak about this here today. I'm grateful for this woman who lived long before my memory kicks into gear, who kept a family together and who, at sacrifice to herself, gladly gave of herself in

order to be a blessing to those who followed after her and I'm here in part because of the faithfulness of that great-grandmother. Well, I'm grateful for that.

Here, as we come to Ruth, what I want you to see here as we close this book of Ruth, I want you to see four great points about the purpose of God and these are magnificent things that Ruth teaches us in a way that a little bit of understanding of the fullness of biblical revelation will make clear to you. Point 1 as we come together here, what does Ruth teach us about the purpose of God? 1. God's purpose transcends time. God's purpose transcends time itself. If you go back to Genesis 12, over a thousand years before David lived, God promised a great nation to Abraham. Let's go back to Genesis 12 for just a moment because you can only appreciate the book of Ruth and the outcome of the book of Ruth in the full flow of biblical revelation; you bring all of these things together and you see things that you would otherwise miss. This is part of the reason why a year or two ago we surveyed those Old Testament books was to introduce this; to set up a point where we could have a reference point to go back to as we continue teaching God's word and studying it together.

You remember Genesis 12:1, remember in very round terms, this is 2,000 years before the time of Christ, it's a thousand years before the time of David. A thousand years from our day would take us to A.D. 1016 which is just outside the realm of our comprehension, a thousand years ago, and yet this is the distance of time between David and Abraham when God is making these promises. Look at chapter 12 of Genesis, verses 1 through 3, "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.'" God promises to Abraham that a great nation would come from his loins and the Jews who became, who descended, I should say, from Abram, became a numerically great people in the land of Egypt. They became a politically great people under the kingship of David. Then after David, a thousand more years afterwards, David's greater son, Jesus Christ, would come from heaven as the Messiah and the ultimate fulfillment of these promises that God made to Abram, and now here we are 2,000 years after that, and David's son is building a church, not a local church, his universal church, building a church that includes Jews and Gentiles, and includes Jews and Gentiles, watch this, just like King David's own ancestry did. A Moabite woman for his great-grandmother marrying into the Jewish line and giving birth to that which would lead to David.

Do you see it, beloved? In the course of one generation living and dying, living and dying, going on ad infinitum? A thousand years go by, another thousand years go by, 2,000 more years go by and you and I don't even remember the names of anyone in our generation's more than three or four generations back, some of us not even that far back. And yet, here's the point: and yet if we step outside of our perspective and step into the perspective of God, what was God doing as these generations were unfolding? What was he accomplishing? What was he doing? What God was doing was infallibly, certainly, sovereignly, powerfully, inexorably, making sure, carrying forth the course of human

history in a way that would make certain that his promise to Abraham was fulfilled. All of those generations that we forget about, the generations of genealogy recorded in Scripture that some teachers make fun of, ha, not me; not you either, beloved. No, we see in those unfolding generations the certain unfolding of the purpose of God and we see that it transcends time; that God dwells outside of time and is able to work out his purposes through the generations and across the generations and above the generations in a way that cannot be thwarted. That's how great God is.

Think about it nationally. Think about it nationally, Egypt was the greatest nation in the world at the time that Jacob took his sons and 70 others into the nation and what happened? It's helpful for us to think about the broad purposes of the course of human history. Egypt rose and fell. Israel came up and fell. Assyria rose and fell. Babylon rose and fell. Persia rose and fell. Greece rose and fell. Rome rose and fell. All the way up to the time of Christ and then other nations have risen and fallen in the 2,000 years since then. Nations rising like the tide and receding back again. Another tide comes in and recedes back again. And through all of the rise and fall of nations, throughout the unfolding of genealogies and generations from one to the next, God transcends it all, sits above all of it from the throne room of heaven and orchestrates things to make sure that his purposes are accomplished to perfection. That's how great God is.

It utterly transcends time and, beloved, what I want you to see is that Ruth shows us that God certainly carries out his purpose with a timeless inevitability and it is never threatened by human contingency. When Naomi's husband took her into Moab and God purposed that through that line would come the Redeemer who would preserve them through Ruth and they are in Moab and people start dying off and Naomi's telling Ruth to go away, "Don't follow me"; as Ruth goes out to choose a field to glean in, she happens upon Boaz when humanly speaking she could've just as easily turned to the left and ended up someplace else; in all of that accumulated human contingency which from our circumstance looks unpredictable and uncertain, all of those incidental human choices that are made along the way, what from our perspective looks to be contingent, uncertain, fading away, God transcends time and is just powerfully working it out from his perspective in a way that make certain it will come to pass. His promises to Abraham were never in jeopardy, not once. So God's purpose transcends time. He worked this out over thousands of years. He's still working it out now. If Christ tarries, he'll be working it out generations after you and I are long forgotten.

Now, secondly. God's purpose transcends time, secondly, God's purpose transcends men. God's purpose transcends men. Remember how this book started out. Go back to the very start of Ruth which would be what? Ruth 1:1 and remember the context in which this story takes place. Ruth 1:1, "Now it came about in the days when the judges governed." The days when the judges governed? We looked at that a year ago. The days of judges were a time of spiritual collapse. There was nothing good going on nationally. Go back one verse to Judges 21:25, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." We surveyed, we studied the spiritual decline and the utter failure of the people again and again and again in an endless cycle of decline, judgment, repentance, restoration, and then decline, judgment and on it went, and it's all in a

downward spiral looking for all the world from today's perspective like a plane that's in a tailspin heading for the ground, doomed to crash with nothing to rescue it. That's what the nation looked like and yet in the midst of that spiritual ruin, in the midst of that circumstance where the best men in Israel were pathetic, in the midst of that situation, what was God doing? He was carrying out his purpose with a timeless inevitability. This narrative, this story, this history of Ruth, Boaz and Naomi took place in the context of a spiritual collapse amongst God's people and yet these isolated, seemingly insignificant people who were living in faithfulness to their God, God uses them and accomplishes his purposes. So we see that even in the midst of the collapse of the days of the judges, God had quietly embedded his people into the situation so that lasting good would still come to pass.

Now, incidental point of application here that I don't want to spend any time on. Will Christians today in the uncertainty of our political climate, will Christians today ever come back to this and grasp onto this and live in confidence and joy and serenity instead of acting like they were subject to the political whims and the fortunes of political uncertainty? I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. But you and I can. You and I will. We will see, we will look at the perspective of the fullness of biblical revelation and come to the certain conclusion that we are confident that God will work out his purposes despite any of the conspiracies of men, despite any of the turns of political fortune. Who cares when God reigns? Who cares when God is able to accomplish his purposes even in days like the days of judges? You see, we just have to identify with the sovereign God who transcends time and man and there we find our peace because God and his purpose transcends time, it transcends men, and he laughs at the nations, Psalm 2. So, beloved, don't you fall into fear and anxiety about what transpires over the next 12 months in the election cycle. Rest in your sovereign God.

Thirdly, relatedly, we've said that God's purpose transcends time as over thousands of years he is carrying out his promise to Abraham. We saw that it transcends men because it transcended the dark days of the judges. Thirdly, relatedly: God's purpose transcends circumstance. God's purpose transcends circumstance. So it transcends time, man and circumstance. Now, I alluded to this and, again, this is just kind of a final review of Ruth before we move on to other things, I guess. I've alluded to this already this evening. The events of Ruth were not unusual. Ruth describes common life and yet in the midst of what seemed to be ordinary, God was carrying out his extraordinary purpose. One writer said it this way, "The seemingly ordinary events in the book of Ruth, travels, marriages, deaths, harvesting, eating, sleeping, purchasing land, they all revealed the guiding activity of the sovereign God." Do you realize, think about that, and there are times where I just want to reject my incapable tongue because it runs out of the ability to be able to express the greatness of what needs to be said about this. God is great over time in a way that just transcends our understanding and our perspective. He works out his purposes through the millennia without fail.

That's beyond our comprehension and yet at a completely opposite end of the spectrum, in an equally great and stunning way, God is accomplishing his purposes through the most mundane ordinary circumstances of individual human lives. As a man and a woman

were talking about marriage and just looking at the harvest and carrying out things, totally oblivious to the fact that God was bringing about David through their circumstances, they are just going about daily life and what is God doing? On this horizontal level they are going through daily life planting and harvesting and so forth, and yet working through that, working through the ordinary is the great power of God to accomplish his purposes. We can only see it in retrospect with the benefit of full biblical revelation. Do you see it, beloved? Do you see how magnificent this is and how both ends of the spectrum display the transcendent greatness of God? He transcends time to accomplish his purposes. He works through ordinary details of ordinary people to accomplish those eternal purposes. There is no exhausting the greatness of God, a God who can do that. Still another writer says and I quote, he says, "God," and this is tied particularly to the genealogy leading up to the climactic final word of David and he says this, "God works out his purpose generation after generation." Listen to this beloved, "Limited as we are to one lifetime, each of us sees so little of what happens. A genealogy is a striking way to bring before us the continuity of God's purpose through the ages. The process of history is not haphazard, there is a purpose in it all and the purpose is the purpose of God."

So in other words, we read these 10 generations in a short paragraph in our English Bibles, what you and I are supposed to see is that through those generations, one human life linked to another, linked to another by biological generation, we see God working out his eternal purpose across those ages and you and I, when we are in the midst of it, we cannot, we just do not have the capacity to burst out of our bubble apart from Scripture and be able to see that perspective on it. You and I, and I'm not being critical here, I'm just stating a fact, you know, we get pretty consumed about our daily circumstances and our daily lives and we think that we're going to live forever even though that's obviously not true. We don't really contemplate death all that much and we just go about our lives and things happen and we just respond to daily life. We work, we eat, we sleep, we get up and start it again. Do you realize that as 7 billion people on earth are doing that ordinary stuff, that God is working out his eternal purpose through what they are doing? Do you realize, beloved, do you realize this, that even though Abraham lived 4,000 years ago and God made his promises to him at that time, that between then and now through those subsequent 4,000 years, God has been working out his purpose? Do you realize that you and I now stand in the flow of that purpose? We come onto the stage, we come onto the platform, as it were, for just a time, we play our part, we go away, we move on to our heavenly reward and yet God's purpose here continues on unabated. The greatness of God, the transcendence of God.

Over time, over men, and even in the midst of the most middling of circumstances as we go, you see, and what Scripture beckons us to, what Scripture enables us to do, you and I that no one else can do, no one else except a Bible believing Christian can have this kind of perspective on the true purpose of God and to, as it were, burst through our bubble and to step back and see the great perspective on things and see the greatness of God being worked out through all of the generations and realizing that what happens in our life, in one sense, don't misunderstand or over interpret what I'm about to say, but you and I in comparison to the great purpose of God over the ages, incidental in the process. Oh, he

has appointed us for our place, he has appointed our purpose and that gives eternal significance to it, but God's purpose is going to carry on long after you and I are gone. And yet at the same time, Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." That our ordinary circumstances are imbued with eternal significance and somehow through that God accomplishes his purposes through the lives of his people.

Fourthly, finally, as we come to the end of the book of Ruth. It's always bittersweet for me to come to the final point of the final message in a book. That's all right; I'm not going to get sentimental here. God's purpose transcends time, it transcends men, it transcends circumstance and, beloved, praise God for this final point: God's purpose transcends sin. God not only transcended the sin of Ruth's contemporary age in the days of the judges, we know now on this side of the cross that even David wasn't the end of the point; even David wasn't the culmination of the greatness of what God was doing there. The generations come, David bursts onto the scene and that's magnificent and people reading it in Old Testament times would have looked back and said, "Would you look at that! Boaz and Ruth gave birth to the line that led to our greatest king ever, David!" And they would have celebrated and rejoiced and been in awe of the greatness of God in that. You realize, don't you, that now that we look at it on the other side of the cross, on the other side of the New Testament, we read in Matthew and Luke these genealogies and we realize that David's line gave birth to Christ. Christ, the Messiah. Christ, the human incarnation of God. And so what we see coming out of the book of Ruth from the fullness of biblical revelation is not only God keeping his promise to bring a king to the descendants of Abraham, he's actually bringing a Savior for all of mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike, who can deliver them from sin. God transcended the sin of Ruth's contemporary age. Ruth's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, transcended sin eternally. That's what it means to be saved, that our sins have been wiped away; that our sins have been forgiven; that Christ has acted so they are no longer a barrier that creates separation between us and God. The full reconciliation to God is available for those who trust in Christ. And so God has not only transcended time and circumstance and men, he has transcended the sin that is the warp and woof of your very existence flowing from, in part, this great genealogy which proceeded from Boaz and Ruth.

Look at Acts 3, if you would. This isn't tied directly to the book of Ruth but it fits because it shows the transcendent purpose of God and ties it into our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 3:18, "The things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." Repent and return so that your sins might be washed away, that which was announced beforehand by the prophets centuries before. So Ruth and Boaz come together and David generations later comes; and then the prophets come and proclaim the coming Messiah; the Messiah comes, gives his life on Calvary, is buried in the grave, is raised and ascends to heaven on high; and now from that position of great transcendence we proclaim that the sins of men can be forgiven through faith in Christ; that God's purpose has transcended even our sin.

Think about it, beloved. Don't miss this point. Don't miss the greatness of the theme that we have in front of us here. Sin, which brought death into the world. Sin, which holds men in darkness and which used to have you in its chainful clutches as well. Sin, which leads to eternal judgment from a holy God. Sin, which you were under, enslaved to, and had no power over, and had no ability to release yourself from its clutches or its penalty. Sin. Even sin has been transcended by the purpose of God in Christ. How great is God? His purpose transcends time, it transcends men, it works through the most mundane of circumstances, and it can break the power of sin for those who believe in Christ. That's the purpose of God. That's the transcendent purpose of God. And do you know what God's transcendent purpose tells us? It tells us about our God, the God whose purpose is transcendent. This purpose of God points to who God is: the God who transcends time; the God who transcends men; the God who transcends circumstance; the God who transcends sin. He is God transcendent, eternal and sovereign over all. That's who God is.

You and I can't see it, can we? Not, certainly not without biblical revelation to inform our understanding. We certainly can't see it from within the perspective of our lifetimes. We don't know what the significance is of our ancestors and how their lines will play out in time. We have no idea what the significance of our own lifetime will be playing out in time. We cannot see it. We are bound, listen to me, we are bound by time, we are bound by circumstance, we are surrounded by men and we still have remnants of sin within us. How could we possibly think that you and I in our human condition are going to see the fullness of the transcendent purpose of God and understand it in this fallen sinful flesh? No, no, we come to Scripture and bow and understand, we recognize our limitation and we bow and worship and we give all of the glory and praise and our honor and our devotion to the God who is transcendent over all because we realize we can't see it all in our lifetime.

Beloved, you and I cannot interpret, listen to me, you and I cannot interpret the ultimate significance of either the ordinary or the extraordinary events in our lifetimes. We don't know how it's all going to play out. We don't know what providence is going to pivot on. Ruth and Boaz didn't. They didn't even try, they just went about their life living faithfully. And you and I must be like Boaz and Ruth, listen to me, content to fulfill the duty of godliness in our day in our realm of relationships, in our realm of responsibilities; to be godly in the midst of the ordinary circumstances of life so it seems; and then simply trust to God and commit to him that he would use it as he sees fit. We approach it with a mindset of glad surrender, of glad resignation that says, "Lord, as I go through this life, as I go through this time, as I go through this ordinary circumstance, as I see men all about me, O God, not my will but thine be done."

So, beloved, when your life and health inevitably begin to decline, look to God transcendent and know that his purpose is still at work. When your earthly plans fail, when our political leaders are corrupt or pass away, look to God transcendent and know that his purpose is still at work. When the wicked rise and oppress the righteous, look to God transcendent and know that his purpose is still at work. And beloved, when you are facing imminent death, when you know that your earthly life is drawing to a close, when you know that you're about to say goodbye to those nearest and dearest in your human

life, look to God transcendent and know that his purposes are still at work. When you face that imminent death, remember again your transcendent Savior who transcended sin on the cross and promises to bring you to glory. Yes, beloved, always remember God transcendent.

Let's bow together in prayer.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of your wisdom and your knowledge, our God. How unsearchable are your judgments and how unfathomable are your ways? Who has known your mind? Who became your counselor? Who gave to you that it might be paid back to him again? Oh God, the answer is no one. You are alone in your supremacy. You are alone in your transcendence. You are alone in your greatness. You are holy, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens and your purposes will certainly be accomplished because they depend not on men but on your own omnipotence, omniscience, and omni-presence which guarantees that they will come to pass. So we shake, as it were, Father, we tremble in awe at the majesty of the greatness of who you are, and from Scripture we affirm, from Scripture we gladly say, "For from him and through him and to him are all things." Yes, our Father, yes, our Lord Jesus, to you be the glory forever. Amen.

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