

Holiness Unto The Lord

The Life Of Ruth

By Rev. George Leon Pike Sr.

Ministered at Love's Temple in Monroe, GA USA on September 17, 1978

EDITOR'S NOTE: We ask our readers to acknowledge that many illustrative statements within this discourse are not intended to represent verbatim quotations from the Holy Bible, but they are retained to preserve the anointing and originality of its delivery. Except for minor deletions, additions, and corrections, this is a transcription from an actual preaching service. These writings are published and distributed free of charge. For additional copies, write to the address below, stating how many copies you can wisely use.

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Introduction

Welcome, dear reader, to a magnificent milestone in your Christian walk on this earth! Although the vast libraries across this planet are overflowing with commentaries and treatises on the divinely inspired book of Ruth, this little book far excels them in both inspiration and spiritual understanding.

Yes, within these modest pages, the sincere soul will discover the very essence of true loyalty, perseverance, and self-denial, as our writer, George L. Pike, so skillfully ushers us into the reality and radiance of Almighty God's inspired account of "The Life Of Ruth".

Read on, dear friend, as Brother Pike taps his heavenly resources accumulated from nearly forty years of living and preaching The Revelation Of Jesus Christ, both nationally and internationally. Within these pages, God will open your understanding concerning the true spiritual significance of leaving the land of your kindred, or why Ruth's sojourning with Naomi transpired about the time of the barley harvest.

We can assure you beyond the shadow of a doubt that this discourse will leave a profound imprint on your present life, as the Holy Ghost proceeds to guide and direct you, enabling you to differentiate between a fleshly decision in your life as opposed to a spiritual one, where Christ has the preeminence in all that we do.

We trust that you will lay these sayings to heart, as you venture on into this little book, for we are truly confident that God's good will and pleasure is that you would incorporate in your own personal nature these admirable virtues so vividly revealed here in the loyal and steadfast life of Ruth, the beloved great grandmother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Life Of Ruth

Let's turn over to the fourth chapter of the book of Ruth. Now I want to say again: to me, the sweetest song that was ever sung was the Word of God. I started out many years ago being a song writer, and I loved to sing and play the guitar, and I did that in the early part of my life. I did that a lot. When I came into the ministry, I continued to do it. My wife Betty and I sang together, and I think it's wonderful. I love to hear people sing for the glory of God. But as the Word of God became more and more striking to me and as I began to bathe my very soul in it more and more, I lost all interest in everything, everything except the Word of God. And today, it is the most beautiful, the most fascinating thing that I have found, and the most profitable thing that I have ever found. I've never found anything that compares to it. It is the most profitable thing I have ever found. I love it with all my soul. I love it. That is why that I spend a lot of time talking about it. I spend a lot of time being concerned about it.

I have observed people very carefully in my lifetime. I am a great observer of people. Solomon said, "I went by the vineyard of the slothful and it was all broken down and overgrown with nettles. I considered the slothfulness of the slothful, and I decided that a little folding of the hands, a little unconcern, and their poverty would come. They would be stricken with poverty like a woman in travail." I've considered many things, and one thing that I diligently consider is people who call themselves Christians, those who come to the house of God. I've carefully watched, and I've noticed as a rule that if a person does not have a deep burning concern for the Word when it comes forth, then that person will fall away. That person will get into mischief. That person soon will find themselves entangled in the affairs of life; whereas, the Bible tells us not to entangle ourselves in the affairs of life. God has chosen us as a soldier to war a good warfare, that we are not to entangle ourselves in life out there in the world. We are not looking for careers and we are not looking for homes. There's no time to plant vineyards, the writer said. No time to lay up treasures, no time to build good reputations. There's no time to do that.

I know you need a good home and you should have a good reputation. I know that. Jesus grew in favor with man and God, but when you get your mind toward that you are disobedient to God and you're going to eventually lose out because you are not grounded and founded in the Word of God. Your interest is in another place. I've watched the man that comes to church or that lives for God, that has a deep burning desire and hunger and thirst for this Word. I've found him to be a strong person in God. I've found him to be a pillar in the church, whether man or woman, I've found them to be pillars in the church of the living God, and I've found them to be the ones that are able to overcome and help others when others have all kinds of problems. So it is in the governments of the world. A man won't make a very good statesman if he doesn't know the government, did you know that? And not only that, but he will not make a very good statesman if he does not know the law. One of the first things required is the practice of law; to study the law; to understand the law. That is the elementary approach to being a good statesman or coming up into the world of celebrities.

I have tried to understand during my life time. Solomon prayed, "Lord give me an understanding heart." I've tried to give Christ the preeminence in my heart. David said, "Whereby shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed to Thy Word. Thy Word, O Lord, have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." That's the secret of the whole thing. It all orbits around the Word, and if you can make the Word, Jesus Christ your chief desire and try to understand Him and His desire and His way, you will greatly prosper throughout your lifetime. God will add many years to your life and you will be healthy and strong and be able to help others and guide others into a safe place of refuge.

One of our sisters sent word back from North Carolina that she had had a vision, and in this vision she said she saw all the children gathered around where she was, and the Lord said, "I'm going to give just a little more time for your children, and then after that, I'm going to sweep the earth clean." So it really must have tore her up because she called to let us know down here. Let's just pray that those that are out of the ark of safety will get back in. You know, the wind has to blow away a few tares, and when it does you always get some wheat. But a lot of times we can recover those from the fall that they've had if we work with them. As a shepherd I pray and try to tell people the right way, and sometimes they do not listen and they fall away from God. If a man is a true shepherd of God's sheep, then listen to him, and if you don't have any confidence in him as being the shepherd then you need to find another shepherd or find you another place, because the shepherd is your lifeline. It's like a vision one of my brethren had here. He was not getting in and flowing with the brotherhood and he had a vision, and in the night vision, the Lord showed him that the shepherd was his strength and his life and that if he ever quit leaning on that staff, then he would be gone, and it made all the difference in the world.

Let's read just a little bit in the fourth chapter of Ruth in verse one. This is really something. We're talking about David's great grandfather, his great grand dad. I think the thing that thrills me the most is the fact that God always does something in a unique way. I come here to the house of God, and as a rule, I never know where I'm going to read. That's the truth so help me God. In years gone by, I used to always have it planned out. Sometimes I'd take a topic, sometimes I'd run the Scripture down a little bit. But I found out that didn't work for me. Now, it may work for you. I'm sure it does for many ministers because I've seen many ministers that do so wonderfully by doing that. But my ministry has been somewhat different. The Lord doesn't allow me to take personal offerings. Some ministers receive personal offerings. You come up and give them money and they receive the money, and certainly as far as I can tell there is nothing wrong with it. They that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar, and they're supposed to be taken care of. They're supposed to do that. But then again, my ministry has been somewhat different. The Lord spoke to me in my early ministry and said to me, "The priests love gifts and gifts pervert judgment." And so then, I didn't want to be a lover of gifts and the Lord impressed me not to mess with any gift from any individual, that He would meet my needs and He would set up a system and by that system my needs would be met and the money would come in and that He would abundantly bless me and my cup would overflow, and that I wasn't to pull for money anywhere at anytime, on the radio, or anywhere. I've tried my best to be as honest and sincere as I know how toward those things. And the Lord has abundantly blessed me and my cup runs over. He meets all of my needs according to His riches in glory. So it is, with the Scriptures, my ministry has

been a little different.

We come to the sacred desk and I open the Bible. I know that there are people that just flip the Bible and whatever the Bible says, they say that's it, but a lot of times when you do that you may run into trouble. It's like a fellow, he had a habit doing that and one day he flipped the Bible and it said, "Set your house in order, you shall surely die." After that, I think he changed his system. So you can't do that. It's easy to flip the Bible and if it says something good, you know, you'll say, "The Lord just spoke to me." But when it says to set your house in order because you are going to die, you don't want to feel like the Lord just spoke to you. You'd rather feel you made a mistake. That's not a good system and I don't follow that system, but I do ask God to help me and to work with me, and I come up here and this is the way He does it, and I open my Bible and He shows me right there what He wants me to preach on.

He makes it so exciting because it's God, it's reality. It's God and real life and everything is so real and so wonderful. Every day is a new experience, and God just blesses me so abundantly. I thought this morning, as I came up here, I didn't have any plans, any thoughts, not even any inclination toward the book of Ruth. But I felt that this weekend had to do with the book of Ruth. I didn't have it on my mind at all this morning, yet when I opened my Bible to see what God would say to me, there it was right before me. And that again shows this thing is a quickening, that it is alive, that Jesus is here even this morning. He is here in our meeting having His way and making everything shape up just the way He wants everything to shape up.

And so then, this morning we are again in the midst of an exciting episode of the life of Jesus Christ. I used to go to the movies when I was a boy. I used to like to see continuations, but I never did like to miss an episode. It would just tear me up if I'd miss an episode. I wanted to be right there for every one of them. I'm not pulling for the movies, I'm just trying to give you a thought. I'm against the movies. But anyhow, I want to say something good, but the Lone Ranger would jump off into the middle of the lake on his horse Silver, and then you'd miss the next episode, and it would just tear you up, because you didn't know what happened to them. That's the way it is with God and me. I just can't stand to miss one move, just one move of it. I see it just like it was in a movie and my life is in that way. I see that thing and it's so real and so exciting with its eternal benefits. It has to do with all of eternity. It just excites me in such a way I can't contain myself, and if I think I've just missed out on a little bit of it, it just tears me up. I say, "God, put that in there and let me see what's going on."

Jesus is my hero. You know, the Lone Ranger used to be my hero. But, do you remember that he got unveiled? Jesus is my hero. I just have to follow Him everywhere He goes. You know that the Lone Ranger was a westerner, but Jesus is an easterner and a southerner and a westerner and a northerner. He's all of them put together and that just fits me fine. That takes them all in. So then, He's my hero and I love to know just exactly what Jesus is doing. I don't like to miss a movie. I like to see every one of them just to know what Jesus is doing. So then, it's an exciting life to me. I tell you the truth, I lie not, Paul said, "My conscience bear me witness in the Holy Ghost." It is an exciting life to me, and I want to do something for Jesus in my life. A lifetime isn't long enough to get the job done. I wish I had a dozen lives even in this world, not to go through with all the heartaches and sorrows; I'm willing to for Christ, but to do something for God. I just wish I had more strength, more life. I wish there was half a dozen of me. I don't know how we'd get along, but if I could I would put one of them over here on the home front and one of them out there under the tent and one of them over in the mission field and one of them out here raising finance and one of them working out on the job with the brethren, and one down in the printing department getting everything going. That would just suit me fine. I'd just love to do every bit of it because my heart is just wrapped up in it. It's just so much, the only way that I can do that is to project my vision, my desire, my ambition, and my zeal into you, and see you as a membership go and do that.

I'm only a typical thing in the earth because Jesus longs to do the same thing. The Bible tells us that when He departed, when He went away as a human being, then the question arose, "Who will declare His generation?" His posterity was cut off. Who shall declare His generation, seeing that He was cut off from the earth? He was a young man, cut off from the earth at the age of thirty- three. I'm here to declare His generation and I'm here to declare His posterity. I want to tell you about Jesus and all of His followers and His little children and His wonderful wife. Hallelujah! How many of you know that Jesus has got a wife, a wonderful wife?

I like to talk about Jesus and the wonderful things of God. I guess that's why it relates back to the book of Ruth, because Ruth is such a great, beautiful, loving symbol of loyalty, honesty, sincerity, perseverance, and self-denial. She was willing to take the responsibility that really wasn't hers, in a sense. Not like Orpah who wanted to turn back and go back into the world, but like Christ, that was willing to leave her mother, willing to leave her father, leave the homeland, leave the land of her kindred and fasten herself hard to her mother-in-law and say, "Wherever you go I will go. Wherever you live I will live. Wherever you die I will die. Your people shall be my people and naught but death shall part us." You know, that's exactly the way that we've got to be with Jesus. I've got to tie myself to the Lord and say, "Lord, wherever You go I will go. Whatever You do I will do. Your people shall be my people. I'll leave the land of my kindred." You know, the land of your kindred is your flesh. "I'll leave my ambition, I'll leave the land of my kindred. I'll leave my money and my education. I'll leave whatever there is in this world that I could have and run away from it, God, and I'll go with You, wherever You go I'll go. If it's in poverty, I'll go with You, if it's to Calvary, I'll go with You, if it's on my knees at night, I'll go with You, if it's fasting, I'll go with You, Lord, wherever You go, I will go." The song said, "I'll go with Him through the garden. Where He leads me I will follow." I'll go with You, Jesus. It doesn't make any difference where You journey, I'll go with You.

I remember having the vision when I prayed for the little boy and the Lord straightened up his eyes in La Grange, Georgia. I was praying and asking God where I should go. As I sought the Lord, I looked in a vision and I saw Jesus walking, and I saw Him so very vividly, as He was walking, how that His feet would sink deep and leave such deep prints in the earth, and I saw myself coming along like a little fellow behind Him, and everywhere that He would set His foot, I would put my foot right in those prints. I could see His heel as it would lift up, and just as they would lift up my foot would go right in there behind Him, right in those prints. It seemed like they were way too big to fit mine, but nevertheless, like a little boy stepping in his daddy's tracks, I was right behind Him. I followed Him and God showed

me great things, and today I'm still doing my best to follow Him. Where He leads me I will follow.

I want to forsake the land of my kindred. God said to Abraham, "Get thee out of the land of thy kindred and I will make a great nation of you. I will multiply you, Abraham. I will bless you if you will get out of the land of your kindred." If we will turn away from the flesh, get away from the flesh and forget about mother, forget about father; and when I say that I don't mean to neglect them, I've never neglected Dad and Mom. I've tried to help carry the load for them, but just get away from brothers and sisters, get your mind off of your family. Your family will always be your downfall, did you know that? Every time it will be your family that will cause you problems. Jesus said, "And those that will be your enemies shall be those of your own household." Your wife will give you more trouble than anybody else. Your children will give you more trouble than anybody else. Your husband will give you more trouble than anybody else when it comes to living for God. Your sons, your daughters, your brothers, your sisters, and your relatives, will cause you more trouble than anybody else.

When Abraham left the land of his kindred, he had more problems with that nephew of his than anybody else. Did you know that? It was a continual problem. Somebody would say, "But Brother Pike, I believe Lot was a good man." The Bible said that he was a good man, that he was a just man and his righteous soul was vexed from day to day while he stayed down in Sodom and Gomorrah. But see, that doesn't have anything to do with it. The Bible said that Abraham would go out and find Lot's herdsmen striving with his herdsmen and it was just a riffraff all the time. Then Lot would go off somewhere, and Abraham, like a father trying to watch over him, would get all tore up and he would say, "What's going to happen to Lot?" It just kept him tore up all the time. Do you see what I'm saying? "Get thee out of the land of thy kindred and I'll make a great nation out of you," He said. If we can just get away from the land of our kindred and cut off everybody, get everything out of our mind, not love our kindred with part of our mind and God with part of our mind, but love the Lord with all of our mind, all of our heart, all of our substance, all of our strength, all of our plans.

Isn't it wonderful to think that I love Jesus with every thought? Casting down imagination and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Jesus Christ. God is with me and I'm making all of my plans for God. I wake up in the morning, and I love Mom, and I love Dad, and I love my family, my brothers and sisters, my children, they all are dear to me. I try never to keep them on my mind. I wake up in the night, and I think, "Glory to God, I've got to do something for Christ. I've got to do something for the Lord." Over in the evening when I'm weary and tired and worn from the day, I begin to think that this is an opportunity to do something for God. I can press against this body. I can press against it and be a testimony for Jesus Christ, and I feel such great exhilaration as the power of God comes into me and activates my soul, and illuminates me with His presence and I feel so alive. Hallelujah! I feel so strong. When John saw Him standing on the Isle of Patmos, the Bible said it was like the sun shining within His strength.

This is the life of Ruth, the beautiful life of Ruth: Ruth standing beside her responsibility, never forsaking her responsibility, leaving the land of her kindred. When Naomi said to her, "Ruth, Orpah has gone back to her people, you need to go back, too." Ruth wouldn't do that. When they started to leave the land of the kindred, she turned around and said, "Now look, daughters-in-law, your husbands, my sons, are dead. Now I'm old, and there's no more children in my womb, even if you should wait. Now, go back to the land of your kindred. Get on back down there and stay with your mother and father. I've been stripped of everything I have. I don't have anything dear to me anymore. My husband is gone, my children are gone, I don't have anything anymore. I'm going back to the land of my kindred." Now, the beauty is not Naomi, the beauty is Ruth. Naomi said, "I'm going back to the land of my kindred." It's so wonderful because just about that time, they could go out there and cross over the Jordan and the Bible teaches that it was the time of the barley harvest. When they got into that country, there was that beautiful barley harvest just waiting.

How many of you know what the barley harvest represented in the Old Testament? The barley harvest represented the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Isn't that right? Immediately after they crossed Jordan, they got their first harvest, and they took it in a bunch. It wasn't like the wheat harvest. It wasn't ground up and beaten up as fine flour, but it was just one stalk. They'd take that and wave it, and that was their barley harvest. That was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and here they came in the time of barley harvest. But before they started their journey, Orpah said, "Well, I guess you're right. I guess maybe I'll go back to the land of my kindred," and she began to weep and she reached out and she kissed Naomi and said, "I love you." I want you to get this now. She said, "I love you, you're dear to me. We've been together all these many years and you're so precious to me," and she smacked her no doubt on the cheek from what the Bible said, and she said, "Good-bye. I love you." You understand what I'm saying? That old flesh said, "Jesus, I love you. I just got to go down and I got to go shopping a little bit, and I need some new clothes and I'm going to put in a few extra hours because we've got to pay on this new car, and I'm so busy and I'm so important. Jesus I love you. I love you, Jesus." Isn't that right? That's just exactly the way that Orpah did. Finally, that old carnal mind goes back to its wallowing in the mire, it goes back to the land of its kindred. So busy out there in the fleshly world, though Christ has called it out of that, though God sent down into Egypt and took them out of Egypt and gave them the very best, but the Bible said that with many of them God wasn't well pleased because they turned back into Egypt in their heart. Isn't that right?

Orpah was standing here with Naomi, but her heart wasn't with Naomi. Now you say, "Brother Pike, I believe it was." If it was, why didn't she stay with her? If she ever needed her, she needed her then. She didn't have anybody to take care of her. She had grown old, nobody to look after her, and if she ever needed somebody to stand beside her, she needed her then. She said, "Bye, I love you, going to miss you. Bye." But see, when it came around to Ruth, I'm sure that Naomi must have stood there and cried. The tears must have run down her cheeks as she thought, "My, I would love to stay down here. I've been here for many years and there goes my daughter-in-law, and she's dear to me. I know that's my son's wife and that was his heart." No doubt the tears streamed down her cheeks, as she saw Orpah depart. But Orpah went back.

And then she turned around, and she said, "Ruth, Orpah has gone, now you go on back to the land of your kindred so you can enjoy

life. You're still a young woman and have your life ahead of you. Go on back." Ruth said, "No, no!" Hallelujah! Glory to God for Ruth, she said no! And Naomi said, "No, you must go back. You can't go with me!" She said that nothing will ever separate us. You know, I just say it in my own words like this. No doubt she said, "Naomi you are old, and if you ever needed a friend, you need one now. I loved your son and I love you, and you need a helping hand and I'm going to stay with you. I don't care how much it tears me up, how much I have to give up or whatever I have to surrender, I'm going to give it up!" Now, no doubt these girls were just poor girls, from all evidence. But see, God was looking down. God this morning is looking down. Who will forsake the world for Christ? Who will forsake the flesh for Christ? Who will give up the things out there for Christ? Who'll give them up? God has something great ahead for you.

Ruth couldn't see out front. She didn't know what was waiting on her. She didn't know one of the richest men in all the country was just waiting to embrace her, and to give her the very desires of her heart. She had no idea that that was waiting on her. She'd never have another heartache, never have another sorrow. She didn't visualize anything like that. All she had was Naomi and she saw that Naomi was stripped of everything. She couldn't give her anything. That's the beauty of it!

See, Jesus has been nailed to Calvary and stripped of everything. His crown gone, His robe gone, His life gone, His youth gone. Who will declare His generation? Who will tell about His posterity? Everything gone! He came as a babe in a manger. He came down into this world and had no friends. Nobody.

God cuddled Abraham. God loved Abraham so much, He said, "Abraham, thou art My friend." Oh, somebody would say, "Brother Pike, you are too dramatic. Do you mean to tell me that God would make a fuss over a man like that? Why, God who sits on the throne, and God in heaven, and God who has everything?" There is one thing that God doesn't have unless He gets it from you, and that's fellowship with you. Did you know that? He might have fellowship with me, but He doesn't have fellowship with you. What God wants is fellowship with you. That's what's so important. Somebody would say, "Well Brother Pike, He's got fellowship with you." But look, I've got fellowship with my little son Danny. I love Danny. He's precious to me. But I want fellowship with Joe, my other little twin son. I want fellowship with him, too. If I can't have fellowship with him, there's an empty place down in my heart. If something happens and you die and you don't come to God, there's an empty place. Forever and eternally God can never replace the loss. Never.

If we sit here at Bethlehem and we're careless and not concerned about winning souls and not holding up the hand of God, to declare His generation, then that means that some soul will sink into Hell. Somebody will be lost, and there is no way to ever replace it. You can never do it anymore because it's gone. It's gone. Once a soul sinks into the fire, it's gone. That's why it's so important to win a soul for God. Win a soul. Like the song says, "We shall come rejoicing bringing in the sheaves."

So then, Ruth said, "No, Naomi." Though she insisted, she still said no. "That settles it. Wherever you go, I'm going." So then they walked off together, leaving the land of their kindred and not looking back. They just walked off. They gave up everything and Ruth said, "I'm going to stand by you." And so then, off together they went.

A lot of times, a preacher might not have anything to offer you, seemingly. It might seem that he doesn't have anything because he has to leave off with the world and the attractions of the world, and it seems like all of the way of the ministry is a sacrifice. Paul said, "I feel that God has set forth the ministry, and that which is despised and rejected is the offscouring of the earth, while the church and the others abound and are blessed, to show forth the life of Christ." But see, it looks like they might not have anything. Like David, who was stripped of his glory and taken off of his throne. Everybody could have forsaken him. Even Ahithophel, one of the greatest counselors of all time, forsook him. Everybody forsook him and left him. Nobody stood with him. But there were those who were with him who knew there was something coming somewhere. They had confidence in David and they knew that David had done what was right. They knew that David was going through a trial and David had sinned against God, but down in his heart he loved God. They knew that heart and they knew that courage. They'd been with him and they'd seen the courage and the valor of that man. So they stood beside him like Ruth did Naomi, because out ahead there was something promising.

Abraham left the land of his kindred and turned away from everybody. Get thee out of the land of thy kindred, Abraham. He left the land of his kindred and journeyed to a strange land. You know, when you get out here, this is a strange place. You get out here and you don't know who's right and who's not right, and it's a strange place. But, the Bible said by faith Abraham journeyed. He just kept walking on by faith. When trouble came, he'd walk on and just about the time it looked like he had got his bearings, the greatest test of all came. It looked like he had just come to a place where he could begin to get a little insight and get a little rest in his soul, and then God said, "Abraham, take thy son Isaac, thine only son and offer him up here for a sacrifice. Offer him up". And the greatest trial of his life came. See, get thee out of the land of thy kindred, Abraham. Take even thine own son Isaac, who is so dear to you. He is the kindred of your heart. Lay him on the altar. Get thee out of the land of thy kindred, Abraham, even your own son. Depart from thy kindred, get him out of your heart. And I believe when Abraham laid that boy down up there on the mountain and that knife came flashing down and that angel as we suppose grabbed that hand, stopped that flashing death that was coming down, I believe Abraham had gotten out of the land of his kindred. I believe that with all of my heart. I believe that he was clear out of the land of his kindred. And God said, "Abraham! Abraham! Don't do that boy any harm. I know you fear God. I know, I've got the dearest thing to your heart, Abraham. All these many years you and Sarah wanted a son and he's the dearest thing to you, and you gave him up for God." He said, "Abraham, You don't have to bother with it." Glory to God! "Through thy seed, through that little boy whose life you were about to take, I'll make a prince out of him. I'll bless all nations through his seed. His seed will be a royal seed. Because you put nothing before Me, you're My friend, Abraham. You're My friend. I've got a friend in the earth." God, who has heaven and earth, God, who has all power, He longed to have just one friend down here in the earth, just one person.

Somebody said, "Well, I'm the friend of God. God's just got a lot of friends." Well listen, the Bible said that a friend loveth at all times.

Abraham loved God at that very critical, crucial moment. That was a friend. How could Abraham be a friend of God at a time like that? God said, "Abraham, you are My friend. You're My friend." After that, the Bible tells that instead of Abraham being cast off and being a nobody, the Bible said he was a great prince. They came to him and said, "Abraham thou art a great prince among us." Wealthy, exceedingly rich. Everything. Hallelujah!

Ruth said, "Naomi I'll go with you," and they started their pilgrimage. Off to the land of the kindred they went. And as they came they saw the lovely fields of barley. What a thrill that must have been to Naomi. What a thrill, having been out of the land of her kindred all those many years. And here she comes back and here's those beautiful fields of barley that can be produced only the way that Israel could produce them, with the blessings of God. Waving in the beautiful, hot, blistering sunlight, beautiful fields ripe unto harvest, and they got there just in time. I'm sure that when they did, being poor, Ruth's eyes must have sparkled. She knew that was her livelihood. Being poor and in poverty, she wasn't afraid to face life and work. She wasn't afraid of responsibility. She wasn't afraid to help. She wasn't afraid to stay up until five o'clock in the morning. Did you know I have some folks like that here at Bethlehem? I have some Orpahs, too. When bedtime comes, they'll kiss me on the cheek and say, "Brother Pike, there isn't anybody like you. I really love you, Brother Pike," and they'll shake hands and they'll say, "God bless you. I'm praying for you." Then after awhile I'll say, "Where is that brother?" Someone will answer back, "I don't know." Gone back to the land of their kindred. Isn't that right? But there are some Ruths.

I've turned around and I've said, "Look why don't you go on home and go to bed? Why don't you go get some sleep?" And I've had them to say, "No." I'd say, "But you need the rest." They'll say, "No. As long as you're out here I'm going to be out here." And there they are, and I mean they're not just out there, they're out there working. They're laboring with me. Laboring, not for my cause but for the cause of Christ. They know that it is not me out there, that it is Christ out there. If it's my project, you need to leave it. You need to get away from it. Somebody said, "This is your project, Brother Pike." It is my project for God. But if it is my project, you need to get away from it. This is for Christ.

I've got some Ruths here, and they stay right with me. There were some that came all the way from West Virginia and they slept out in a little old pup tent, and they slept in their cars. I could hear some of the others back at home saying, "Boy, I got more sense than that. I'm not going out there." They say, "Crazy Ruth! Going off and leaving everything." Somebody say I love Jesus! But they went, and they stayed and they saw the harvest as it ripened. They were able to work in the fields and help me gather a little bit of it.

See, Ruth stood by her side. But then, after awhile, as she began to glean, Boaz put his eyes on her. The great rich man saw her. He knew there was something different. No doubt he was acquainted with most all the maidens in the land, but he had never seen her before. She started to glean in the fields. Trying to do something. She started to glean, and Boaz kept watching her, watching her loyalty, watching her faithfulness, and he got curious. He said, "Who is this young maid? Where does she come from? What is she doing out here?" And then they began to tell him, and he became more interested as he heard them tell her story. Finally, he said to the young men or different ones, "Drop a little bit on purpose for her."

Somebody said, "Well, he was interested in her." No, he wasn't interested in her that way. You say he was interested in her flesh. No, he wasn't. The Bible bears out the fact he wasn't. It wasn't until he came to the threshing floor that he even considered her. But he saw the loyalty, the perseverance, the concern for the responsibility she had taken on. And he got concerned about her. He said, "Do something to help this woman. Help her with her responsibility." But, God had more plans than that. God's plans are greater than that.

You come out here and help Little Bethlehem or you help some preacher over yonder, or help feed somebody over in Africa or India or do something for God. After awhile, you need a little money and you go up to the bank, and that haughty old banker who never would let you have anything before, all of a sudden he says, "Well I think we can work it out." You think, "My! He's a much nicer fellow than I thought." He's a wretch and don't you ever believe he's anything else. God did that. The Bible teaches that if a man is not born again he is wretched and miserable and blind. He's a wretch! He's interested in money and the world, but the preparation of a man's heart is from God. God creates the good and evil and has His way in both. God looked down and saw you feeding that little baby that was hungry, its stomach all pushed out and the little bones protruding. God said to Gabriel and Michael, "Go down there and touch that banker's heart, and whatever My son wants You see he gets it." Somebody said, "I don't believe that Brother Pike." But, to prove it's true, the Bible said that Nehemiah, when he was the king's cupbearer, someone that the king wouldn't look at twice, began to brood and began to moan and began to cry and began to fast. The king thought, "I wonder what's wrong with that fellow?" Then finally he said, "Nehemiah, what's wrong with you?" He said, "Oh my heart's broken! I want to do something for God, and all of them that's my kindred." This is my kindred. Whoever is your kin folks will be my kin folks, whoever you fellowship I'll fellowship. It don't make any difference. And the king said, to the great men that were under his power, "You give him whatever he wants." Just think about that. You don't have to go over to the lumber yard to get anything, they'll haul it out there to you. He said, "You give him anything he wants from the king's forest and let him build, let him satisfy his heart." That's God. Because you are concerned, God's concerned about you.

Boaz looked and he saw Ruth and he became so concerned, and after awhile all of her needs were met. All of her needs. But Naomi said, "That isn't all, Ruth. That's just a starting point." Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I said, "What we're doing is just a starting point." God owns the universe and everything in it. Hallelujah! It's like John Paul Jones said to them on board, "I have not yet begun to fight." This is just the beginning. Hallelujah! We've got from now through eternity. This is just the starting point.

Naomi said, "That's all right, he won't rest, just keep your eyes open. Everything's going to be all right." I like the song that says everything is going to be all right. I just chuckle on the inside. It bubbles up like a stream down there. Hallelujah! How do you know it Brother Pike? Because I met Boaz. I'm laboring in his fields. He's got his eyes on me. He's watching everything I do. Praise God! The devil will come over and he'll cloud up my mind, and he'll cause oppression and he'll break up the church and do everything he can to bring accusation.

I'll go to moaning and praying and say, "Lord help me. I've got to win souls, Jesus. If you can't give me souls I'll just die. I just can't stand it," and I can hear Him speak from heaven and He'll say, "That's all right. Don't worry, son, My eyes are on you." They sing that song, "My eyes are on the sparrow." My eyes are on you, just be steady. Don't worry. Everything's going to be all right. And I say, "Oh God! Without that strength, without that encouragement, without that helping hand I couldn't make it, Jesus." But He said, "I'm your strength, hold on and everything will be all right. Jesus said so." Now you say, "How can you say that with the bills you have?" Jesus said so. Everything is going to be all right.

Folks, if you got trouble, take courage. If you are weak, say, "I'm strong in Christ." If you've got problems, if you've got sickness, if you've got cancer, no matter what it is, it's for your good. God's working out something in your life. And it'll work out to the best and some day you'll be glad. All things work together for good to them that love the Lord and those that are called according to His purpose. How wonderful, how beautiful, the strength of God.

The fields of Boaz. It wasn't long before Boaz finally got around to the major issue. Then he said, "Ruth, would you marry me?" It wasn't Naomi anymore. It wasn't poverty anymore. Can you imagine that? A Cinderella standing out in the fields, and here comes the great king, the Prince Charming of the entire area. Probably every woman in that area that was looking for a husband had their eyes on him. But the thing is, he didn't have his eyes on them. He knew that they were back in the land of their kindred. Their labor was for their flesh, but Ruth's labor was for Naomi. It was responsibility. It is a great thing to be admired. Finally he said, "Will you marry me?" And she said, "I will." And that's how David came along. That's how king David got here. See the great grandfather? Through the marriage of Ruth and Boaz came Obed. And from there came Jesse the father of David. And from there came the man after God's own heart. That was Ruth. Is that right? Ruth just projected, through the third and fourth generation, that same loving heart of Ruth came right on down and God said, "I want that heart of Ruth." He couldn't do all he wanted with a woman so he just put it in a man. Made a king out of him. Isn't that something?

I want you to think of that just for a minute now. Here is a woman that has everything that her heart could wish for. Everything. All because she was willing to forsake all and follow God. Not only that, but being the great grandmother of David, don't you know that she was David's prize? Don't you know that Ruth was the prize of David's heart? Don't you know that? He probably said, "There isn't another great grandmother in the world like mine." She had beauty and reverence and honor all the days of her life, with riches and splendor. I will make you to ride upon the high places of the earth where all the money and the power and the prestige is. I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob. I will make all of your beds in the time of your sickness. I'll add many years to your life. All because you were willing to labor in God's fields. How many of you would like to labor in God's fields? The harvest is ripe. The laborers are few. Pray ye therefore, that God or the Lord of the vineyard will send forth laborers into His harvest or into His vineyard. This little verse I read to you, I will establish My covenant: you see a marriage, and a lot of times they'll give them a diamond. The reason for that is the bow. It's in a circle. And it has the radiance and splendor as the light of the heavens hits that diamond and the fire of the rainbow colors come out. It's the covenant. Until death do we part. I establish My covenant with you for perpetual generations. God has made a covenant with us. I believe in it. Fear not for as I have a covenant with you, My Spirit remaineth among you.

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