

**INTERVIEW PATRICK** – international students for Thanksgiving. Pray.

## **WELCOME**

Good morning church! I'm Chris Martin, and I'm one of the pastors here, and it truly is my pleasure to open up God's Word with you this morning.

And that's what we're going to do, so, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Ruth chapter 4. That's where we're going to be. Ruth 4. We want every person to have a hand on their Bible, so if you don't have one, grab one of the hard-backed black one under every chair. You can open your phone or tablet. Ruth 4.

If you open a black one from under your chair, Ruth 4 is on **page 224**.

## **INTRODUCTION: DEER**

So, as you're turning there...do you know people who just always have extraordinary stories. It's like they live a life of legends?!? They just seem to have the most incredible stories!

Well, my brother, Matt, has one such story. We grew up in Colorado Springs, so, when my brother was 16 and he got his driver's license, he and some friends made a plan to come up to Denver to go to a concert.

- So, Matt is the driver of my mom's 95 Isuzu Trooper,
- and the car is filled with 4 other teens.
- 5 teens driving a couple hundred miles.
- Not a recipe for disaster in any way!

After the concert is over

- they are all tired and falling asleep,
- and Matt is now driving the hour-or-so back to the Springs.
- It's about midnight.
- On I-25.
- Going 75 miles-per-hour.

And Matt is somewhere between Castle Rock and Colorado Springs

- when out of nowhere, a deer bounds right across the highway.
- And it jumped at just the right moment
- where there was nothing Matt could do.
- He hit the deer on the front passenger side of the hood,
- the deer spun around and slammed into the side of the car,
- and tumbled off into the dark.

Obviously, Matt slammed on the brakes and came to a stop.

Now, Matt was freaked out, and he calls my Dad, and my Dad calls the police to get them out there.

- But, before any police or anyone else shows up,
- an old beater pickup truck pulls up to a stop behind them,
- and out comes a grizzly, lumberjack-looking guy.

Does this sound like the start to a horror movie? Right? Terrifying!

- Well, Michael Myers walks up to Matt's window,
- leans in and says, "*You hit a deer?*"
- And Matt's just freaked, so he's like, "*Uh huh..*"
- And truck man says, "Did you kill it?"
- And Matt just kinda shrugs. Cause he didn't know.

So, the dude says, "I'll go check."

- And then he reached into the bed of his truck,
- pulls out a full-size axe,
- and goes marching off into the dark to find the deer.
- It was dead!

## **APPLICATION: EXTRAORDINARY**

Church, I want a story like that! I want to have the cool hitting-a-deer story.

The best I got is once I hit a goose in a parking lot, and it just limped away! That's it. It was LAME. I want the deer story.

And I think that's a lot of us! You see I think we have an aversion to the ordinary.

- We want epic.
- We want ideal.
- We want extraordinary!

You've got people you know in your life who seem to be there, right? Just every time you see them, or follow them on social media, or whatever, you see this extraordinary world they inhabit.

- Like in the city with the best seats at the game,
- then flying in a private plane to the mountains
- for a guided fishing trip
- where they are reeling in fish on every cast?
- To back home surrounded by their beautiful family on the couch
- Reading the bible to their children.

And you're like, "Does a professional photographer just follow them? And then you look at you..."

- and you're just on the couch,
- with a pint of Blue Bell,
- in stretchy pants,
- binge watching Friends for the hundredth time!

And you're like,

- *"I don't want my ordinary life!*
- *I want their life.*
- *I want the good life.*
- *I want the epic, ideal, extraordinary life!"*

Like, no one sets out with a desire to be ordinary.

- We want to do something great with our lives.
- We want to leave our mark...
- make an impact...
- change the world...right?
- Leave a legacy.
- Be remembered.

But for many of us, life feels kinda like hitting a goose. It's just ordinary. It's just life.

## TRANSITION

Well, what we're going to see today is how all of these ordinary events in the lives of the people in the book of Ruth, fit together. And today we find out why this book is in here. Why this poor, pagan, widow makes it into the pages of the divinely inspired scriptures. Today it all comes together. And I was just struck by the sheer ordinary-ness of it all!

## RECAP

Now, let's remember the story, just for way of recap.

- There was a man and his wife, Naomi.
- They moved their two sons from Bethlehem to avoid a famine,
- but they ended up in a pagan place called Moab.
- While in Moab, the husband and both sons died,
- but not after taking Moabite wives.
- One wife goes back to her parent's home,
- and we are left with Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth.
- They go back to Bethlehem because God ended the famine,
- but they must live the life of poverty.
- While working in a field,
- Ruth meets a relative of her dead father-in-law named Boaz,
- and she desires to marry him,
- because he is a kinsman redeemer for their family.
- But there was another redeemer who had first right,
- and Boaz took the right legal course of action to redeem Ruth.

And now on to the end of Ruth 4, starting in verse 13.

## RUTH 4:13

[13] So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

### EXPLAIN: ANTI-CLIMACTIC

And this is it! The climax of the story! Literally, crammed into this one little verse is the wedding, conception, and birth of a baby boy. This verse is what we've all been waiting for.

And what's fascinating to me, is that this is all we're given!

- There were 22 verses dedicated to the family trip to Moab.
- 23 verses on how Ruth and Boaz just happened to meet one another.
- 18 verses covering the weird night-time escapade where Ruth uncovered the feet of a sleeping Boaz and let him tell her what to do.
- And, listen, even 12 verses about the legal proceedings for Boaz to redeem Ruth, which actually included a good deal about the exchange of a sandal.

And now, here we are, the moment we all have been waiting for:

- So, Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife.
  - THERE'S THE WEDDING.
- And he went in to her.
  - THAT'S HEBREW FOR THE WEDDING NIGHT.
- And she bore a son.
  - AND THERE'S THE BIRTH.

This is no less than 9 months in one verse. And these are major things!

Now, scholars really don't know who wrote this book, but I'm gonna say, most definitely a guy. Only a guy writes like this.

- No story about the ceremony.
- What did she wear?
- Did he tear up as he saw her walking down the aisle?
- None of that.
- Definitely a dude.

## **EXPLAIN: CONCEPTION**

But even more important are the words tucked in this verse: **and the Lord gave her conception**. This is only the second time in the entire book of Ruth where we find God explicitly at work as described by the writer. God has been playing way behind the scenes, except twice.

- In chapter 1 we are told
- that the Lord had visited his people
- and given them food.
- And now it is the Lord who gives conception.

Now, there's something significant happening here. Because think about the story up to this point. Remember,

- Ruth was married for 10 years
- to Mahlon before he died.

And now, today, in our Western culture, that is not at all out of the ordinary.  
Right?

- It's not uncommon for married people
- to wait to have kids
- for years and years.

Right? Maryse and I didn't have Harper until we had been married for 7 years.

But back then? This would have been totally out of the norm!

- So, we are to assume
- that the reason she was childless
- in her first marriage,
- was NOT because they DIDN'T want children,
- but because she COULDN'T have children.

Now, she is likely in her mid to late 20s, on her second marriage, and getting pregnant is no sure thing!

Now, consider Boaz.

- This guy is older than Ruth.
- We find this out in chapter three when he commends her for not going after a younger man.
- So, how old is he? It would have to be pure speculation.
- But I would guess he's old enough
- to think that Ruth is out of his league.
- So, what? 40? 50?
- Really, we don't know.

But what we do know is that he is unmarried.

- We don't know if he had previously been married,
- and maybe he too had lost a spouse.
- We don't know if he'd been single his whole life,
- but we do know that he had no heir,
- and that was unusual for a wealthy land-owner at that time.

So, imagine this scene. Ruth:

- Poor, lonely, in an unfamiliar world.
- Her first husband, died.
- The love of her life.
- Why she couldn't bear children for him,
- she doesn't know.
- Sure they tried.
- Maybe there were even miscarriages.
- But for whatever reason she had been unable to conceive.
- For 10 years.
- Oh, the shame.
- Oh, the embarrassment.
- And while everyone else was rearing children,
- lonely Ruth had no one.

And then Boaz.

- A farmer.
- A pillar in the community.
- Successful in business.
- Respected in town.

- But why couldn't he find the right woman?
- Why wouldn't anyone marry him?
- Why wouldn't God give him what he desired most:
- a woman to love
- and children
- to pass all that he worked for on to.

## APPLICATION

Do these sound like extraordinary stories? No! One author put it like this:

“When the judges publicly participated in substantial cultural change, a farmer named Boaz quietly walked the muddy fields, planted grain, fairly treated his workers, and sought the common good of his community with ordinary, daily, prayerfully, and hard work. This farmer loved a Gentile woman and her family. They made an ordinary life of real love together. They loved God. Those who know the story will argue that this ordinary love and life proved equal to if not greater than the mighty deeds of the judges in that generation.”<sup>1</sup>

The Lord gave her conception. This is the narrator's modest way of identifying a miracle; she who had been unable to bear a child for Mahlon has conceived for Boaz.<sup>2</sup>

Church, we live the ordinary, and leave the extraordinary to God.

Verse 14:

## RUTH 4:14-16

[14] Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! [15] He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” [16] Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

### EXPLAIN: NAOMI

So, we have seen the redemption of Ruth, and in some ways, of Boaz. But now the text turns back to Naomi. She has been, really, a tragic figure in this story.

- Followed her husband from her homeland
- to a foreign place where she knew no one,
- only to lose him tragically to death.
- Then her boys married,
- and likely there’s a decade of peace for her,
- but again, no grandchildren from either of her sons.

I remember when Maryse and I first got married, it was like every other conversation with my mom was, “Alright, when are you giving me grandbabies?” Right?

- Parents of adult children in here, isn’t this true?
- Having those grandbabies is a sweet delight.

But not for Naomi. Just imagine the heartache.

- *“Why are both my daughters-in-law unable to do this?”*
- *It can’t be a coincidence.*
- *Is this because we came to Moab?*
- *Is this my fault?*
- *Is God punishing me?”*

And then for her two sons to die. I mean, I don’t know that I can imagine anything harder in life than if I lost Maryse...only to then lose Harper.

I mean, are you kidding me? *“God!?! Where are you!”* I’d be bitter, too. Naomi’s life has been marked by tragedy. Things were not supposed to happen this way: as a wife, as a mother, or as a grandmother.

## **EXPLAIN: NAOMI’S REDEMPTION**

But now! The redemption of Naomi. She is essentially at a baby shower with all the women of the town,

- and they praise the Lord that Naomi has a redeemer as well.
- But notice who the women imply Naomi’s redeemer is.
- While Boaz had been Ruth’s redeemer,
- the women say of Naomi’s redeemer that
- **he shall be a restored of life and a nourisher of your old age, and Ruth has given birth to him.**

The child is Naomi’s redeemer!

- All her loss...
- all her grief...
- she had lost her husband and two sons,

- but she has gained a daughter-in-law and a grandson.

And they say that this is greater than “seven sons”.

- This is a Hebrew way of saying “an ideal family”.
- Like, seven is the number of completion,
- and so, seven sons would be the perfect family.
- And they say, “*your real life is better than if you had the ideal.*”
- The ordinary is better than the ideal.

I just love this. There is a recognition now that she whose life had been emptied by God has now experienced his filling.

- She was Mara, bitter...
- but now she has been restored to Naomi.
- And she gets to be a part of rearing and raising her grandson.

Verse 17:

### **RUTH 4:17-22**

[17] And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

[18] Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, [19] Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, [20] Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, [21] Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, [22] Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

## **EXPLAIN: LEGACY**

One verse on the wedding and birth. Five verses on the genealogy.  
What is going on here?

Well, the reason, I think, why the writer of Ruth spends so little time on the wedding and the birth is because he thinks there is something more important to point out in this story. And it's the legacy that is left by these people.

You see,

- the happily-ever-after
- that we are used to experiencing
- is the wedding, right?

Think of every romantic comedy you've ever seen.

- The plot is all over the place,
- but the climax is when the two finally get together,
- and then it fades from them kissing
  - on the top of the Empire State Building
- to them kissing at the altar.
- Right? The wedding is the climax.
- The birth of the child is the climax.
- But not so in this story.

The climax in Ruth is two generations later.

- Boaz fathered Obed,
- Obed fathered Jesse,
- and Jesse fathered David.

## EXPLAIN: KING DAVID

Now, we probably don't think that's as cool as the original readers would have. But imagine if you were reading this for the first time as a Hebrew.

You knew King David. Imagine all the very best people in American history all combined into one person.

- He was a great leader,
- and he was a great spiritual guide,
- and he was also pretty yoked up,
  - killing bears with his bare hands and such.
- Like, imagine Abraham Lincoln
- and Martin Luther King Jr.
- and I don't know, The Rock...
- all merged into one guy.

King David was the stuff of legends.

- And now, it has just been revealed to you
- that this whole story
- about loss and love and a pagan widow...
- it all played into the birth
- of one of the greatest men in Israel's history!
- This would have blown you up!

## EXPLAIN: JUDGES

Now, I want you to remember back to the very first verse of Ruth. Do you remember how this book started? It started with “In the days when the judges ruled.”

And I mentioned that the book of Ruth likely takes place during the time of Samson.

- Now, we can't get into Judges again,
- but this was NOT a good time in Israel's history.
- This is like the dark ages for Israel.

But this book and this genealogy demonstrate that in the dark days of the judges, the chosen line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is preserved not by heroic exploits by the judges. Right?

Like, if there was ever a guy to deliver Israel and provide for them to come out a stronger nation, it was Samson!

- I mean, he would have been an Instagram God!
- Sexy, long hair.
- He'd be selfie-ing all the time.
- Taking pics of himself with his supermodel girlfriends.
- Tying fox's tails together and lighting them on fire.
- Can you imagine his feed?
- I'd be following that thing.
- “He posted the picture of the donkey's jawbone?!?”
- Bro killed a thousand men with that thing
- and then tweeted about it!”

- But the chosen line is preserved
- by the good hand of God,
- through ordinary people
- with a legacy beyond all imagination.

I mean, Naomi and Ruth and Boaz could never have known the long-range fruit of their ordinary lives...

- but the writer knows.
- And we know.
- And frankly, we know more. Right?
- More than even the narrator knew.

Turn with me to Matthew chapter 1. Matthew 1 is on page 807 in the black bibles. But there's another genealogy, and I want to read a little bit to us this morning. These names should sound familiar.

### **MATTHEW 1:2-6**

[2] Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, [3] and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, [4] and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, [5] and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, [6] and Jesse the father of David the king.

You're like, "how does he know how to pronounce all those names." Secret: I don't. I just make it up.

Now, skip down a number of generations to verse 15:

### **MATTHEW 1:15-16**

[15] and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, [16] and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

Not even the writer of the book of Ruth could have known what implications would come from the faithfulness of these ordinary characters, living ordinary lives, practicing ordinary love.

- If only he could have known the glorious providence of God.
- For another young woman would come.
- Poor, uneducated, overlooked by the powerful.
- And she would have the love of a man of noble character
- who decided to trust God and marry her,
- even in the light of scandal.
- And they would be the parents to a son.

And echoing the women in Ruth chapter 4 who said, “A son has been born to Naomi.” Will come the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 9:6

### **SLIDE ISAIAH 9:6**

[6] For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder,

and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

And in two weeks we will begin our time in Advent, preparing for the arrival of this son, and it just so happens that this verse is what we'll be studying for the month of December.

This son, Jesus, born of Mary, from the line of David, who was the great-grandson of Ruth and Boaz.

## CONCLUSION

So, what does all this have to do with us? Well, I think the best way to sum it up is like this. **SLIDE**

- **IT IS IN THE ORDINARY LIVES**
- **OF ORDINARY PEOPLE**
- **THAT GOD IS WORKING OUT HIS PURPOSES.**

This means so much for you and me!

- This means that in your ordinary life,
- in my ordinary life:
- in your family,
- in your work,
- in your shopping,
- in your rest...
- in the very things that aren't Insta-worthy...

That's where God is at work.

- Redeeming. Restoring. Reconciling!

AND then, that good work goes on! It extends far beyond us, and actually, far beyond where we could hope or imagine.

## **EXPLAIN: CONTENTMENT**

But back to my introduction...we don't often want ordinary. Right?

- We want more.
- We want big.
- We want fast.
- We want famous.
- We want likes and comments.
- We want admiration and success.
- We don't want the hit a goose story...we want more!

And in a book I was reading, the author quoted Philippians 4:13, where Paul says:

### **SLIDE PHILIPPIANS 4:13**

[13] I can do all things through [Christ] who strengthens me.

Which is like every athlete's favorite verse, right?

- I can do it!
- I can!
- I can run faster.
- I can jump higher.

- The Broncos can make the playoffs...
- through Christ...
- who strengthens me!
- Yeah right! Not this year!

But they rip that thing out of context.

And it's not just athletes. It's people.

- I can get that promotion.
- I can beat that cancer.
- I can raise these kids.

And it's not just people. It's pastors.

- I can raise that money.
- I can preach that sermon.
- I can grow that church.

But do you know what Paul was writing that verse about in context?

Contentment. Here's what he says right before that famous phrase:

### **SLIDE PHILIPPIANS 4:11b-13**

[For] I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. [12] I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. [13] I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Paul isn't writing about some extraordinary circumstance to overcome...

- some Goliath to slay...
- some championship to win...
- some achievement to attain.

No, he's writing about one of the greatest enemies to the human soul: discontentment.

- This nagging feeling for more...for epic...
- for ideal...for extraordinary!<sup>3</sup>

But the truth Paul is teaching is that you can be happy right here, right now, through Christ who strengthens me. **SLIDE**

## APPLICATION

Just think of the story of Ruth, and then think about your life.

- Do you feel empty because of a loss?
- Do you feel lonely in a new place?
- Do you feel disappointed by unmet expectations?
- Do you feel anxious about your future?
- Do you feel worried you aren't making much of your life?
- Do you feel depressed because of your failure?

This story tells us that

- contentment can be found in the midst of those things.
- That God is in control of all those things.
- And contentment is found in faithfulness during all those things.

What if your ordinary life is enough?

What if your ordinary life is actually the best life God has for you?

- Can you accept that?
- It's actually when you accept that,
- that God starts to do extraordinary things through you.

Maybe you look at your life and you think, *"gosh, I'm not anything special."*

- It's not that you feel like you are
  - squandering your extraordinary potential.
- No, you know you're average.

The good news in this story is that you can be content there, because it is through the most ordinary of people, that God does his most extraordinary things!

### **ILLUSTRATION: ME**

Listen Church, I know this pressure all too well. Even as I wrote this sermon this week I felt the draw towards the extraordinary.

- I wanted this sermon to kill.
- Yo, I want this church to dominate.
- I want to be known.
- I want to be respected.
- I want more.
  
- And I have to lay those misplaced desires at the feet of Jesus.
- I have to pray like crazy for the Lord to change my impure motives.
- I want to take Philippians 4:13 out of context,
- and say, I CAN DO ALL THINGS!

But I am compelled by the Spirit towards contentment.

- And this story frees me.
- It frees me from the extraordinary.

And now, I get to be ordinary.

- An ordinary pastor.
- With ordinary gifts.
- An ordinary life.
- And an ordinary church.
- Just look at you, church.
- You are beautifully average.

And when I really get down to the root in my heart, that's what I want.

Contentment in my ordinary. Here's what I tell myself.

- "I am content.
- I am not Matt Chandler.
- I am not Tim Keller.
- I am not JD Greear.
- I'm Chris Martin (not of Coldplay, alright?).
- You get me. I get you.
- And it's a lie to think that I need to be more."
- That's true for me.
- And that's true for you.

So, Fathom, this is what's on the table for us.

- Contentment in the ordinary.
- Joy in the average.
- Happiness in the mundane.

- **IT IS IN THE ORDINARY LIVES** (that's ours)
- **OF ORDINARY PEOPLE** (that's us)
- **THAT GOD IS WORKING OUT HIS PURPOSES.**

And that's truly extraordinary!

Let's pray.

## **COMMUNION**

We respond in 4 ways:

- Communion
- Tithes & offerings
- Prayer
- Singing

## **1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

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<sup>1</sup> Zach Eswine, [The Imperfect Pastor](#).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Block, [The New American Commentary: Judges, Ruth](#).

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<sup>3</sup> John Mark Comer, The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry.