

Tonight, Melissa will present a teaching on Ruth. She aims to show that God is always working in the background to rescue, redeem and bless his children. This promise is the greatest promise offered in all of creation; sadly, most people, and even Christians, do not trust the full scope of this promise. Do you trust that God has a plan of blessing for you?

You might recall, we studied Ruth for several weeks last Summer in our Wednesday Night Fellowship. We will not revisit the many themes today; they are still available if you want a copy. Instead, I want to focus on the conclusion and ask if you believe God will bless you the way He did Ruth. Do you live in eager expectation of God's promises?

Ruth took refuge under the wings of the Lord and found God to be the source of all blessings. Even though she was born a Moabite, sworn enemies of God, Ruth found grace, favor, and redemption by God. Will you? That's the crux of the matter!

God's favor changed Ruth's daily living **and** changed her eternal destiny. Ruth's physical and spiritual needs were all tended to by God. She also became a grandmother of Jesus Christ and remains an example of God's grace. Does God hold such blessings for you?

The Bible says Yes, God has eternal blessings for you that begin with simple faith.

When we trust God, we come under his wings for shelter. We can only do this when we believe God and turn to him for redemption based on his love and grace. Though these are God's promises, the question remains, "Do you believe this truth?"

AP1: There is a problem with our ability to believe "truth" and be changed by it:

Many of us do not *fully believe truth, because we have been messed over by general truths.* There are many general truths in this world. We all know that it's most likely to rain on cloudy days, or we know when you see smoke there's likely a fire. These general truths guide us. They help us determine when to take an umbrella or when NOT to wax the car, but they are weatherman guesses at best. We respond though not fully convinced of them.

Meteorologists provide best guesses based of general truth. We often look to a weatherman yet hold on to some doubt {with good reason}. Millions of viewers basically say, "I'll look and listen to you. You are an authority, but I'm not so sure I trust you". Many of us look to God this way. We believe his promises are general truths but not promises for us.

Trust in a person or "an absolute truth" is made more difficult because of past experiences. We all can think of people we opened up to, trusted, and then got burned. We can think of medicines our doctors prescribed to help us, which only hurt us. Diet plans, once recommended by doctors, get exposed as fraudulent or harmful contributors to other diseases. The weatherman promised sun, but it rained on our wedding! It seems there is nothing we can fully count on. *This creates a truth problem.* We have a difficult time fully trusting anything... everything! When we hear a truth, we often discount it or put an asterisk against how it applies to us. This often causes us to miss the truth of the message.

I can think of no better example than Pilate. He had an audience with the King of Kings, the creator of truth, the redeemer who came to set the world free. Jesus said to Pilate, “**For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.**” Sadly, Pilate discounted Jesus’ words and sarcastically replied, “*What is truth?*” {John 18:37–38}. Pilate did not know who to believe, even with the absolute truth teller speaking directly to him.

How often we are like Pilate, eager to hear from God yet unwilling to fully trust his message. **I’d like to help you enter into a deeper faith today based on truth.** Consider, before you can have faith in the message, *you must believe in the messenger*. You must believe he/she is trustworthy, the message is right, and is intended specifically for you. If any of those three are absent, you will have difficulties trusting what God says. For more on this see note ⁱ.

AP2: The Messenger is honest: God is calling you and desires to redeem you; do you believe him enough to respond? God has a prescribed highway of blessings for you. The question is, does your faith allow you to walk forward into these blessings?

We are promised God never lies and his word is a sure foundation; yet if you do not trust God, you will not trust his words enough to overcome your tendency to control the outcome of your life. If you do not trust God, his words will seem as weatherman suggestions at best, *the promises might happen, or they might not*. People who do not fully trust God tend to only apply those truths God speaks that agrees with their desires. The craziest part about it, we have proven to be untrustworthy to ourselves over and over and over again; and yet, if God’s spoken words do not agree with us, we tend to want to trust ourselves over him. O, how foolishly we trust ourselves!

Truth: God is the only one we can fully trust. He created us, demonstrated his love in Christ and continues to work to redeem us. Though He is the only one with cause to fully reject us, He invites us into the closest relationship possible, to be one with him, His Spirit and His Son. That is the relationship God invites us into. Yet we do not fully trust this even after God has proven to be our highest lover and the only one worthy of all trust.

Apply this: To trust God, you can study his characteristics, his historical actions, his ways, and words; but ultimately you have to take a small step of faith and enter a relationship with him. As you walk with God and see his ways, you will “taste and see that He is good”. Once you start experiencing God you will desire to understand and grow in your relationship with him. To that end, we study the Bible.

AP3: The Message is Truth: Yes, the Bible was written by man, but internally it says these men were led by God to deliver this message. The Bible says the words contained between its covers, were given by God to bring you to life, godliness, peace, contentment, and to equip you for living and making decisions. To apply them, we must believe in the messenger and the message, even when we do not fully understand it.

In 2nd Peter chapter 1, Peter says we would do well to pay attention to the Bible, *“knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”*. God wants to speak to you through the Bible!

AP4: The truths of the Bible apply to you: To fully apply the Bible and trust it, you must believe it was written down for your instruction, not just general truths but specific to you! Paul wrote, *“these things {lessons of the Bible} happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”* (1 Cor10:11–12)

In other words, the stories contained in the Bible were not just examples of God’s faithfulness to them, they were written to instruct us. Often, we go astray because we do not believe God’s word is provided for us. We miss out because we do not understand all of God’s promises are available even to Moabites, sinners, and the worst of the worst.

AP5: We must respond to truth by actions of Faith: We must believe the messenger, and the message and act on it, or we too will fall. We must believe that anyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, and we must trust this message enough to stand upon God’s grace and promises as we make real decisions for life.

The application Test. If you trusted a weatherman and felt she was speaking to you, but ignored the message, what good would it do you? Many people say they believe God and believe in the message but never apply it. Then when things go wrong, they blame God!

Here are some things to consider:

- ✓ God rewards applied faith
 - God doesn’t reward mental knowledge, well wishes, or “someday I will follow God” statements. Ruth had to follow God. Even though she did not know where she was going, she knew who was leading her! Do you?
 - God rewards all people who believe him and obey his message.
 - He sets before you the choice but cautions you to choose the blessing.
- ✓ God’s plans work out for our good
 - Ruth lost her husband, lost her land, followed a widow into a foreign country and only then saw the rewards of faith. The journey was rewarding but hard!
 - Sometimes we want instant gratification, but God takes us on a journey to verify {in us} that we believe his message
 - God’s message is not a gimmick for getting rich quick, but a pathway for a lifetime of increased blessings
- ✓ God’s ways do not keep us from storms—they bring us through them
 - Every chapter of life has storms. You will face them with God or without God—choose wisely
 - Consider that Ruth had a sister in law who didn’t trust God; On the journey to blessings she returned to the land of famine. So many of us do this!

- ✓ Some people walk away from God when a storm appears—to their detriment. It’s like blaming your meteorologist for a hurricane and then refusing to follow his/her instructions for safety.
 - If a storm pushes you away from God, your actions reveal the little faith you had in God. Go back to him. Learn from Him. Submit to him. Trust God.
- ✓ The end of our story is not yet written
 - Though we all were Moabites, at one time, we have been promised an eternal inheritance and adoption as Children of God

Here is a promise: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,” (Eph 2:13–19)

Apply this:

- ✓ If you believe you are in God’s family, do you walk like it?
- ✓ Do the decisions of your life reflect that you really trust God or trust yourself?
- ✓ Have you been living like God offers general truths or do you believe his promises are specific to you?
- ✓ Do God’s instructions seem like a meteorologist’s advice or do you believe they are true and spoken specifically to you?
- ✓ Your story can end like Ruth’s. She barely knew God but knew enough to follow him. As she obeyed, she inherited all the promises and found a lifetime of blessings based on God’s love for her.
- ✓ What would your life look like in 20 years, if you started devoting your life to walking with God today? The Bible says, you will be blessed by God, strengthened, and established in him! Do you believe this enough to apply it today? If not, you will still face trials, but will do so without a secure foundation.

It is my prayer you will learn to trust God more and more. I invite you to spend some time alone praying with God, listening, and applying the words of scripture, so you too may taste and see that He is good.

In His Grace—Pastor Todd

ⁱ Example: You may believe in God, you may believe his words are right, but if you do not think they apply to you, you will have a hard time counting on his words. Or if you think God is telling you something and you believe He is trustworthy; but if you do not trust the message, you will have a hard time surrendering to his promises.