

The Revival of Hope

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[0 : 00] Have you ever experienced depression?

I don't mean, you know, a sad day or a sad season. I mean despair. I mean deep depression that leads to disillusionment, feeling defeated, beat down, a heaviness that seems to spiral into deeper heaviness.

What David called in Psalm 42, my soul being cast down, literally depressed.

Well, back in, I believe it was 2000, which would be about 20 years ago if my math is right. I was a new pastor in a little church in the Midwest.

I'd been there about seven months. And a number of things happened. Some conflicts with church leadership. I found what they had told me when I came was not what they really wanted and found basically that I could not trust some of the leadership.

[1 : 32] And as a result, I began to experience for the very first time an intense and prolonged struggle with depression. I didn't even know what it was at the time. I remember feeling like a funk and I was used to that, that you kind of just press through that walk, you know, just keep pushing and it'll get better.

And, well, it never got better. And, in fact, for 12 years it did not get better. But back then, at the beginning, the first time, you know, I didn't experience that before.

So I didn't know what it was. Finally realized it was depression. It looked like this for me. I loved ministry. I loved preaching. I loved diving into the Word. I loved being with people.

But at a point there, it became labor to do the things that I loved. Preaching was a burden instead of a joy.

Reading the Word became hard, difficult. Ministry became a chore, a burden. There was a loss of joy and a loss of passion that I had before.

[2 : 37] And I fought with discouragement, disillusionment, despair. My soul was truly cast down. And during this time, I had one lifeline.

One lifeline that enabled me to endure this time. One lifeline that brought me hope. I began to pray from Psalm 119, verses 25 through 40.

Because in that section of the psalm, three times the writer asked for revival. Revive me.

Revive me. Revive me. And even the words that he used talked about being cast down in the dust. My lips are in the dust of the earth.

And the words just portrayed what I felt. And the words gave me something to pray instead of just help. You know, come Lord, do something. It gave me actually an ability to articulate in a biblical way what I felt the need.

[3 : 48] And so every week, I would get away from the office and from the area. I would go drive if it was, you know, this is Midwest. So if it's winter, you know, you don't go walking.

You go driving. And I would pray these words. Or on nice days, there was just a beautiful park about 30 minutes from where I lived.

You know, Illinois is flat. Well, you drive up to this place called Starved Rock, and it was actually a canyon. And all of a sudden, it was like a whole other world. There's waterfalls and just beautiful hiking trails.

So I'd go there. I would go there, and I would just walk. And I'd have the verses, you know, on cards, and I'd be praying them. Eventually, I didn't so much, I had it all memorized. And that time where I would drive and pray or I'd walk and pray, it enabled me to pour out my soul with these great words of the psalmist.

It allowed me to pour out my pain, my frustration, to mourn. It allowed me to pray the truth as well. It would remind me of God's truth.

[5 : 01] It would remind me of God's promise of revival, of power, of hope. And so it enabled me, that lifeline of the word enabled me to keep going.

When you're in depression, especially after you're in years of it, months of it or years of it, you have thoughts like, why keep fighting?

It doesn't get better. Why? Why not just give up? I mean, you certainly have that issue. Where's the hope? And the reason you keep fighting and you don't give up is because there is some hope.

And it's hope in God's promise, hope of refuge, hope of revival, hope of renewal. You have moments as you walk with God that God does refresh you, remind you, enable you, certainly. And the scripture is full of people who struggled. People who were in much worse straits than I was. Joseph, 20 years, Joseph.

[6 : 25] Suffered. What kept him going? Job. Has anyone suffered more than Job? Losing everything? Losing everything? Your best friends?

It's you. Something wrong with you. God's getting you. What kept him going? How about David? David wrote Psalm 42.

What kept him going? How about Jeremiah? Have you ever read Jeremiah's writing called the Lamentations? I mean, that's just a journal of depression.

That's what that is. If you're a depressed person, actually read Lamentations. It's not a downer. It's a reality check. Because in the middle of it, he can say, I still can thank the Lord.

I mean, our song called, what is the song? His love, his mercies are new every morning. It comes from Lamentations 3. In the middle of God has done this, God has done this, God has done this, God has done this.

[7 : 29] And I am. But his mercies are new every morning. I'm like, what? Only a Jeremiah can come up with that. Only a believer under God's wings can come up with that.

Can see the hope. Can see the refuge. So it leads us to here, Ruth chapter 2.

Naomi, who would come back to Bethlehem and said, don't call me Naomi pleasant. Call me Marah bitter.

Because I am bitter. And God has made me bitter. God has made my life bitter. I went out full. I came back empty. I went out with a husband and two sons and dreams and hopes.

And I came back with no husband, no sons, no dreams, no hope. God did that to me. She's a believer in Yahweh, but she's an angry believer in Yahweh.

[8 : 41] So she had no hope. And as we begin chapter 2, did you notice how verbal Naomi is when Ruth wants to go out to glean? She says to her mother-in-law, I want to go out and glean.

I want to go find someone who will find favor. And Naomi, full of life, right, says, go, my daughter. That's it. Go, my daughter.

That's all she had. Three words. Go, my daughter. Not, oh, be careful. Be careful, my dear. There's people out there. She's going to say that later.

She's going to say, oh, yeah, yeah, stay in Boaz's field because there's people that can assault you. She doesn't say any of that before. Why? Because she's still depressed. She's still in despair.

She's so wrapped up in herself, she can't even see anybody else. You ever been like that? You ever been like that? It's not intentional. It's just, you're just, that's all you can see is your own misery, right?

[9 : 41] That's where Naomi is. And by the end of chapter two, notice, she not only can see, she can talk. Her words go from three words in the morning to 67 that evening.

She came alive. So what revived her? That's what I want to look at today. What brought her back? She saw two things.

Now, I want to remind you of the story here. As I said, the story of Ruth goes in four acts. So it's our four chapters, our four different kind of acts that happen as the story progresses.

It's a beautiful story. Each act, chapter one, has three different scenes. So we see in chapter one, her ruin. In the first five verses, it's just laid out, like just bared out.

There's a famine in the land. There's a forced move. Her husband dies. The children remarry after 10 years. Both sons die.

[10 : 45] So she's bereft twice of her husband and her sons. And of any hope, of any children. And then we know the impact of that is she's bitter.

And then we see in verses six in chapter one, verses six through 18, there's these dialogues. She's trying to convince her two daughter-in-laws to go back to Moab.

You got a better chance. Don't come with me. Return back to Moab. Go back to your mother's house where you can get remarried. You got a better chance. Don't come with me. Don't come with me.

Because look what God's done to me. Don't come with me. Go back home. I want you to be happy. I want you to have a life. Don't come with me. So that's the dialogue.

And one daughter-in-law is sensible. She's, yeah, yeah, you're right. Okay, I'm going back home. The other daughter-in-law is kind of, you know, irrational.

[11:46] I don't know. What is she? What is Ruth? She decides to go with this depressed, bitter woman. She clings to Naomi. She won't go.

And then Ruth makes these remarkable statements. No, where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Where your people will be my people. And your God will be my God.

And wherever you are buried, that's where I will be buried. This is a lifetime commitment. A radically extraordinary commitment. I mean, why would she choose that?

Why? Give up all security. Give up all security. Give up all past. Give up all relationships for Naomi, a bitter woman?

Really? You want to go live with that? And so we dug a little deeper. In fact, in chapter two, it's Boaz that tells us what Ruth's real motivation was.

[12:47] It wasn't that she's going with Naomi. She does love Naomi. But her real reason is she's seeking refuge under the wings of God. Because for 10 years, she's heard about this God of Israel.

This God of Israel. This God of Israel. This God of Israel who, you know, took care of the Egyptians. Going into the promised land. Takes care of all those other kind of gods. This is a God. Who is a real God.

Yeah, not everything's rosy under his wings. Sometimes there's hardship. But he always keeps his promise. And he's a God of power.

So she makes this. And so then we see the third scene in chapter one where they come back to Bethlehem. And Naomi states her case. She's bitter. God has done this to me.

She can't see any good. I'm empty. And yet the author gives us two hints that God's still involved in her life. One is she's not really alone. She's not really empty. Because with her is Ruth.

[13:45] And Ruth's going to be proved to be more than just two sons. She's going to be better than seven sons. God has given her an incredible gift of this extraordinary woman.

And then secondly, the timing. Oh, it just so happened that it was barley season. A time when widows can go out and glean for free. But Naomi can't see any of that.

She can't see any of that. So we come to chapter two. We have the ruin of Naomi. Now we have the refuge of Ruth. So in the first scene, she asks. We already saw that. Verses one to three. She asks, let me go glean where I can find favor.

She goes out into the field. The second scene is where she meets Boaz. Humility. Ruth meets grace. Boaz. This woman, Ruth, who is genuinely humble.

Oh, why would you favor me? I'm a nobody. I'm a foreigner. I'm not one of your. She's just overwhelmed by the grace of Boaz.

[14:49] And then we see this picture of Boaz, who's not just gracious, not just hospitable. He's like, oh, come have lunch. And let me serve you. Oh, did you get some of the roasted, you know?

And then when they go out to glean in the afternoon, he's like, just follow my women. Stay with my women. Stay with my women. And by the way, I've told the men. I've told the men.

They will not touch you. You're safe. And then he pulls the man aside and says, oh, by the way, pull out extra stuff for her. And at the end of the day, she comes up with an ephah.

Isn't that amazing? Right? You remember what an ephah is, right? It's like 10 omers. Which is like three sillas. About 22 liters.

Oh, you wanted an English. Oh, you wanted an American. Oh, about 29 liters. Or 22 liters. About 29 pounds. 29 pounds.

[15:56] That's a lot. That's a lot of barley that's beat out to weigh 29 pounds. Okay? That's going to feed them for weeks. One day.

For weeks. Oh, then there's the leftovers. You got two bags. She's got a doggy bag and then the barley bag. So here we are.

Ruth comes home. And Naomi sees. So let's look at this third scene here in chapter 2. Beginning in verse 17.

We have the report of how much Ruth had gleaned an ephah barley. And we see in verse 18. And Ruth took it up and went into the city, into Bethlehem.

Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. Ruth also brought out what she had, brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

[17:02] So here's what I want us to see. We're asking the question, what revives Naomi from her despair? She was bitter, angry, nonverbal, wrapped up in her despair.

And now she comes alive. What is it that revives her? We see the movement from her ruin to Ruth's refuge to Naomi's revival.

Or we might even say resurrection. How does God resurrect hope? In verse 20, Naomi makes two statements. Two statements of things that she recognized.

And in those two statements, there are two words that are the key to her revival. One is, verse 20, she says, Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, May he be blessed by the Lord.

Speaking of Boaz. May he be blessed by the Lord. The Lord who what? The Lord whose kindness was not forsaken, has not forsaken the living or the dead. So first word is kindness.

[18:06] She sees God's kindness. And it's actually a bigger word than that in Hebrew. It's the word, I'll cover the mic, chesed. It is a super significant word.

It means more than kindness. So that's one reason. She sees his kindness. And then she makes a second statement in verse 20. Naomi also said to her, The man is a close relative of ours.

Boaz is one of our redeemers. And so here we have another word, redeemer. Redeemer. There's two things there that bring her revival. One is the kindness of the Lord and the hope of redemption. The prospect of redemption.

That wakes her up. Two causes for revival. One is seeing the kindness of God. And two, having hope.

A prospect of future redemption. That revives the soul. So let's look at the first one. Recognizing the loving kindness of the Lord.

[19:12] The kindness or the chesed. So we see in verse 17, Ruth has brought home an ephah of barley. 29 pounds of barley.

She comes into the city and she shows Naomi the evidence of God's kindness. Naomi sees, verse 18, Ruth took it up and went into the city.

Her mother-in-law saw. She saw what Ruth had gleaned. She saw. How could she miss it? Right? It's like coming through the door. I can't get through the door.

It's such a big bag. Where did you clean? Where have you been? Right? Kind of thing.

An extraordinary amount. 29 pounds. Enough for 25 plus meals for two. According to 1 Samuel.

[20:09] An ephah of barley will serve 50 fighting men. So for two widows, that's at least 25 meals in one day.

Oh, plus the leftovers. Oh, plus the leftovers. All in just one day's work. It must have awakened Naomi because we see her excitement. What she sees sparks an excitement because now in verse 19, she speaks.

She speaks. She speaks. She doesn't just speak. She excitedly speaks. She reveals. She questions. She's full of questions. She's full of revelations.

She comes alive. We see she speaks in verse 19. Where, where, where? She speaks in verse 20 twice. Two revelations. And then again in verse 22, she speaks that it is good.

Stay with the young women. She speaks. She speaks. She speaks. She speaks. And what a contrast to earlier that day where she said, go my daughter. And now three words.

[21:17] Now it's 67 words. She says, which is just a summary of what she said. It's an excitement.

She comes alive. Where did you glean? Where did you work? It's kind of like, well, didn't she already ask where? She said, where did you glean? Where did you glean? Where did you glean? Why would she say the same question twice? Why, why, where, where? She's so excited. She says it twice. I think that's it. I think she's just so excited. Where?

This is poo. Where did you find such grace? Oh, Ruth. Certainly, I hoped you found someone where you'd find favor and you'd be able to get maybe enough for today to eat.

And you got, you got enough for two weeks. And at this rate, you're going to have enough for the year. Where? Where, where, where?

[22 : 24] This is a miracle. And then Ruth, the end of verse 19 reveals. So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, the man's name with whom I work today is.

And the way the Hebrew writer writes it, it's as if he's postponing the revelation of the name until the very last second. It's kind of like, you know, the shows, you know, and the winner is right after the commercial.

Right? It's kind of like, it's kind of like, it's kind of like, and the name, the name, who's the man? The name, the name? Boaz! Boaz! Now, Ruth doesn't know the significance of Boaz.

She's just revealing the name. She doesn't know him. She doesn't know he's a relative. Naomi's going to reveal that to him. Boaz, oh, Boaz is, oh, this is who he is.

So both know something the other doesn't. Ruth knows who. Naomi knows who. Okay?

[23 : 32] So once she hears the name Boaz, now comes the prayer. Now triggers an understanding. Now comes an evaluation.

She sees, she speaks, now she gets it. Because notice what she says in verse 20. Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Now may he, may Boaz be blessed by Yahweh.

Great. Bless. She'd already blessed him before. Remember, she said back in verse 19, Where did you glean? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. Again, that same word, who noticed the unnoticeable person, Who noticed the nobody.

Now she's saying, not just blessed be the man, But may he be blessed by Yahweh. Serious prayer. May he be blessed by Yahweh. May he be recognized by Yahweh. May he be rewarded by Yahweh. Who, now she's speaking about Yahweh, Whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.

[24 : 49] This is her first good comment about Yahweh in the story. All of her previous comments about Yahweh have been, He's made my life bitter.

He's brought me back empty. He's against me. And now she sees that bag full of barley, And she hears it's Boaz.

Now she's, God has not forsaken me. God has not stopped loving me. I thought God was against me. I thought God hated me.

I thought God was out to beat me up. Now she's, he's not, He's not withdrawn his love. He's not withdrawn his kindness.

This word, kindness, It's translated kindness. It's such a bigger word. It's the word chesed. It's the word when, when Moses says to God, Show me your glory.

[25 : 52] Right? So Moses goes, stands in the rock. God comes and reveals himself. And he sees, Moses sees his back. God describes himself. I am the Lord. I am Yahweh.

And two times in his description, He uses that word chesed. I abound in love. And I have steadfast love.

I keep my love to generation after generation. It's a word that means more than kindness. It means more than love. It means love, kindness, grace, faithfulness, promises.

Chesed. It's a big word. Chesed. It's the word that Jesus is going to use in the, in the New Testament. And he's going to make the word agape.

It's that higher love. It's not just love like culture loves comes and goes. It's not a feeling love. It's a steadfast love.

[26 : 55] The New American Standard made up a new word when they tried to translate this word. They couldn't, they couldn't find one word to capture it. So they made up the word loving kindness.

And so every time I print it out, my computer says, nah, that's not a word. Not a word. Got to pick another word. Loving kindness is not a word. They just made it. They got to make, it's like, they got to try to capture this word.

It's bigger than love. It's bigger than kindness. It's bigger than grace. Because it's all of that. So she's realizing God's not against me.

I'm not empty. It's not hopeless. He has not withdrawn his love. See, I thought God loved me and everything was going great. And I had dreams.

I had a husband. I had kids. Hope of grandchildren. Naomi didn't have big dreams. She just had, I just, I just want family. You know, I want grandkids on my knee.

[27 : 54] You know, that's what I just, that's good enough for me. And then husband does. And then both sons, both sons.

This is, this is Yahweh. God has done that. He's the one that makes those decisions. He's the one that decides when there's a famine. He's the one that forced us to move. I didn't want to leave Bethlehem. But God has removed the bread from the house of bread. So you got to go somewhere else to find bread. But now she sees, no, wow. Whatever God was doing for those 10 years plus, now he's proving, no, he hasn't removed his love. No, he hasn't removed his love. So let me ask you a question. In your despair, when you are low, when you are discouraged, can you recognize God's kindnesses?

[29 : 00] Can you see him? You can't always, because Naomi couldn't at first. This isn't about beating ourselves up question. This is just simply, can you do it? Because I've been there, I get it.

I can't see anything good. Because, you know, it's all about me anyway, right? Making fun here, but that's how you feel in those times. It's really hard to look outside yourself.

Can you see that God's faithful? In my journey of depression, it was years. So I came to Little Log Church.

I shared that story last week, which was kind of a just-so-happened story, right? And it was Little Log Church that expressed the kindness of God to me in my depression.

Not right away. It took a few years. Because the depression had to get worse before it started to change. But what I began to see was when I began to risk actually talking about my depression and revealing that, which I thought in the back of my mind that might get me out of the ministry, is people could say, okay, we don't want a broken pastor.

[30 : 23] But what I found was here, not only with the elders who said, no, we're not only not going to let you go, we want you to keep getting healed here.

And from the people, I felt that as well. I did not feel a, ew, a, more of a, oh, oh, an acceptance, a love, a kindness that I didn't expect.

And then the men, oh, for goodness sakes, the men, the men were huge at that time. Started to meet, just started to talk about that stuff and they were, I was sitting down with Randy on his porch the other day just talking about those times, like, brother, we're bonded because at that time you were one of the ones that, that walked with me.

so I saw kindness in the people. You know, God gave me a, a roof kind of person.

And in that time I began to see the kindness and that began to be a recovery for me. Oh, here we go again. Psalm 103, listen to these words.

[31 : 42] These are just, these sound like they come from the New Testament. these words. Psalm 103. The Lord, Psalm 103, 8, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in chesed, steadfast love.

He does not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. So he's slow to anger and then when he does have anger, not very long. Watch this word.

Watch this statement. He does not deal with us according to our sins. Wait a minute, this is the Old Testament. He does not deal with us according to our sins.

What? I thought he gets us back for our sins. No, here's the psalmist saying he does not deal with us according to our sins because if he did, we'd be toast.

we'd be gone. Nor repay us according to our iniquities. So not just our sins are falling shorts, but also our iniquities are twisted stuff.

[32 : 52] Are really bad stuff. The stuff we don't want anybody to see stuff. Stuff. Why? Why is God like that?

Why is he so gracious? With us. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great, so great is his chesed, his steadfast, gracious, kind love toward those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west. How far is that, by the way? Anybody measured that? We got any NASA people? We got some pilots.

How far is the east from the west, Mark? So, so far, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

Why? Why is he so compassionate to us? For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

[34 : 04] He knows we're not perfect. He knows we're weak. He knows we're just a flesh. He knows our frame. He knows who we are because he made us.

So, do you recognize God's kindnesses? Are you able to see his love, his mercy, his grace, his compassion? Naomi has recognized that. It's one of the reasons she comes alive.

She sees the kindness of the Lord. He has not withdrawn from her. And then she makes a second statement in verse 20 that brings in another reason. After hearing the name Boaz, she only recognizes that God hasn't removed his love, but something else.

Something else. She now recognizes a second truth, a second cause for revival. She sees the future prospect of redemption. She says at the end of verse 20, not only has God not removed his love, but she also said to Ruth, the man, Boaz, the man, he's a close relative of ours.

In fact, he's one of our redeemers. He's a redeemer. How can a relative be a redeemer? Well, I'll explain that in a minute. He's a redeemer. There's a future prospect of redemption.

[35 : 23] In Hebrew, the word is goel. Like hesed, it's a huge word in the Old Testament. It's redemption. God is our, God was Israel's goel.

God was Israel's redeemer out of Egypt. Because of his hesed for them, Exodus 15, he goeled them.

The two words go together. The love motivates the redemption. So notice, Naomi adds this second revelation, the end of verse 20. He's also a close relative.

He's a redeemer. He's a rescuer. He may be an answer for Naomi and Ruth, these poor widows who have no security. Could it be that Boaz will save them? Well, this is the end of act one.

We'll have to wait for act three. It's kind of like the author's writing, kind of writing stories, saying, ooh, could it be? I don't know. We'll have to read on. We'll have to hear the next chapter.

[36 : 31] After this message, we'll reveal the winner. how will he help? He's a redeemer. What does that mean?

How can a relative be a redeemer? Well, the Old Testament talks about, in terms of family law, the responsibility of relatives. If a relative is able, it is his responsibility, his obligation, to buy another relative out of slavery, or to seek justice for them when they're facing possible mistreatment, to pay their debt, or if because of poverty, they've had to sell off their land, it's the obligation of the Goel to rebuy that land for their relative.

That's their obligation. If they're able, if they're able, if they have the means, they need to do that, you do that for family, right?

You do that for family. And so there were actually laws for that. Here's the problem. That wasn't Ruth's or Naomi's need.

Naomi was not in slavery. She was not under a debt. She had land, we'll find out later, she had land in her husband's name. She had not lost it.

[38 : 04] So this wasn't her need. So what does Naomi mean when she says he's our redeemer? Redeemed from what? Boaz is not obliged.

Now if he's going to do anything, whatever he does must be freely, willingly, by grace alone. He does not have to do anything.

So if it's not his duty, how is it that he can be a redeemer? How can he rescue them? What is Naomi thinking? She's got something in mind.

Oh, he's one of our redeemers. Oh, there's a future prospect of redeeming. But what is it? What does Naomi have in mind?

She's come alive now, by the way. All she could think of was what had happened to her. And now she begins to say, oh, no, God's still here. Oh, oh, redeem, future, hope.

[39 : 07] Now she's not just thinking of herself, now she's going to start thinking about Ruth. Ruth. When we get to the next chapter, Naomi's coming up with a plan.

Oh, honey, honey, honey, honey, we're going to take care of you. I got an idea. We're going to get you all spiffed up, all prettied up, all, you know, then you're going to go down.

Well, we'll get into that next. The romance comes next chapter. That's her concern. That was her concern back when, go back to Moab. I pray, I hope God will give you another husband.

See, what Naomi's got in mind is, oh, the redeemer, Boaz, I know he's not married. And we know how good of a man he is.

Look at how he treated you. Oh, he might have other ideas in his mind. he's certainly taken with you.

[40 : 17] Maybe. So, for now, verses 21 to 23, Ruth the Moabite said, I don't know what that means to one of our redeemers, but here's what else he said.

He said to me, you shall keep close to my young men until they have finished all my harvest, harvest, harvest, harvest. harvest. In other words, it's not just a one-day thing.

It's not just a one-day thing. He's provided security for you. It's until the end of the harvest, which, by the way, is going from April into May, about seven weeks, seven weeks of harvest.

And at the rate that if he keeps pulling out extra for her and she's bringing home 29 pounds or so every day, they're set for the next year. For barley and wheat.

Because it says it's good, Naomi says 22, it is good my daughter that you go out with his young women. You stay with the young women less than another field you be assaulted.

[41 : 23] So, she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaned until the end of the barley and wheat harvest. and she lived with her mother-in-law.

Is that the end of the story? Wait, is there more? Wait, what happens with Boaz? Wait, you have to tune in next week. Don't read ahead, don't you dare read ahead.

Don't, don't, don't, don't, no, don't do that. You gotta wait. The turning point in the story of Ruth is this prospect of a redeemer.

here we come halfway through the story and this revelation of future hope, future redemption, prospect of a redeemer. How about for us? Is there a prospect of a savior for us?

Is there a prospect of a redeemer for us? Is there a prospect of someone who can take us from our despair, bring us into refuge, and out of that refuge, bring us into, may I say it, revival?

[42 : 28] I mean, from despair to revival, from dead, I'm as good as dead, to life again? Is there someone for us who can do that?

Is there a Boaz in the house? No, no Boaz. Is there a redeemer in the house? I'm preaching to the choir, aren't I?

You already know. I know the answer, I know the answer. here. Listen to how Peter says it. Peter says in 1 Peter 1, if you call on him as father, who judges impartially according to each man's deeds, if you call him father, who is impartial, here's what you do.

Conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. Interesting, Peter considers our living here on earth as an exile. We're strangers and aliens here.

This is not our home. We're just a passing through. Right? So conduct yourselves in fear. What an interesting way to put it. Conduct yourselves in fear.

[43 : 45] Why? Knowing, because you know something, knowing that you were redeemed, you were ransomed! from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers.

Another interesting way of putting it. Not just redeemed from your sins, but redeemed from the futile ways that you inherited. In other words, that sin nature that you inherited, that whole baggage you inherited, you're redeemed from that.

Not just what you did, but what you got. Ha-ha! See, it's more than just a band-aid. It goes deeper. It buys you out of the past stuff.

The past stuff. The stuff you didn't have any control over. From the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, how did he redeem you?

Not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. Christ was foreknown before the foundation of the world.

[44 : 53] In other words, he didn't come into existence when he came to earth. He was foreknown. He was known by the Father before the foundation of the world, but he was made manifest. He was revealed to us in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God.

Because of Jesus, you became a believer in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory. Why? Why give Jesus glory? So that your faith and hope are in God.

See, redemption gives us hope. The prospect of redemption brings us hope. Our redemption changes us.

Our redemption sets us free. It liberates us from the things that we've inherited from our forefathers. That's huge, by the way.

God is so why does Peter say, going back to what Peter said at first about this redemption, because we're redeemed, we ought to live, conduct ourselves with fear.

[45 : 59] Why fear? Isn't that going backwards? Why fear God? God's been gracious, God's been kind, God's been loving, God's been merciful. Why would we fear him?

He's our best friend. friend. Yes. But never forget who your best friend really is. The disciples got reminded of who Jesus really was when he calmed the storm.

Right? Oh, he's my best friend, oh, he's great. What are we going to do? Jesus is sleeping. What are we going to do? Hush, be still. Suddenly they go, oh, he's my best friend, but man, whoa, you see what he did?

See what he can do? See what he can do to me? Second time I got cancer, I said, okay, he can take me out whenever he wants. He can take me out whenever he wants.

That's up to him. I can have fullness, he can make me empty. Like Job said, we come in with nothing, go out with nothing.

[47 : 18] God's God. That doesn't mean fear like I'm scared of him, it means I take him seriously. I attend to all his words and his ways because they mean something.

Because I know, why do I fear God? Why do I take him so seriously? Why do I revere him and am in awe of him? in a way that I don't take him for granted, in a way that I don't just feel entitled, but I'm still humbled because I know he's redeemed me, he's bought me, he's paid for me with the precious blood of Jesus.

Not just with the lamb, but with his own son. Such thoughts. That fact sets us free. It gives us real life.

So when we talk about fearing God, and I bring it up because it was in our other scripture in Psalm 103 too, by the way, he has compassion on those who fear him. So it's a trans-testamental truth. I was just trying that one on. it's not a fear of punishment. I don't fear God for punishment because as Psalm 103 says, he doesn't treat us as we deserve.

[48 : 41] He doesn't treat us according to our sins. He doesn't treat us because of my iniquity. It's not that. It's not like he's going to get me back. No, it's fear that I do not truly value how great his love is for me.

It's fear. Fearing God means I never take him for granted. I never simply say, ah, see, I'm good. No, I say, I'm good.

You know why? There's a difference, see? There's a difference. I remember what it cost him to get me, to free me, and I never forget that.

well, let me be honest. Sometimes I forget that. But he's really good at reminding me. Sometimes he puts me in a hole to remind me if I forget too long.

You think you're okay? Yeah, okay. Hey, Peter, what? Never mind. I always picture Jesus up there sitting around with the disciples. Hey, Peter, watch what I'm going to do to James here.

[49 : 56] He's going to love me after this. He's not going to like it at first, but he's going to love me after this. Watch this. Sorry, that's my goofy way of thinking. It's no light thing that he has forgiven me.

It's no it's a weighty thing. It's a fearsome thing. It ought to make me fear God.

Whoa. Because I don't deserve it. It brings me into a humility like Ruth had. Why me? Why me? Why me? But it also brings us hope. Because not only are we redeemed as believers from our futile way of life inherited from our forefathers, but there's a future redemption coming.

There's a day beloved when we will be totally free. When we will be free of pain, when we will be free of suffering. We sang about it, a church at rest.

[51 : 02] There's a day when we'll be able to rest. There's a day when we will be able to, without the restraint of weakness, praise him.

there will be a day when we'll be able to sing all day long. I can only sing so long. It's just me. There will be a day when I won't get tired of singing.

I know some of you I don't think ever get tired of singing, but I look forward to that because I love to sing. I just, you know, I can only go so long. Even when I was a kid and I listened to music, I could only hear it for so long.

I don't understand kids with the earphones going on all day long. I don't get that. How'd I get in that? So, finally, are you in a dark trial?

Are you in a time where you feel despair, depression, overwhelm, disillusionment? There's probably a lot of people right now during our times.

[52 : 05] As you turn on the channel and you watch the news, oh, for, can we watch the news anymore? It's like it's so discouraging. And if I don't have personal things that get me down, that can get me down.

But if I do have personal things that get me down, and then I see that, oh my goodness, where's our hope? Where's our world going? My wife keeps saying to me, doesn't it sound like the last days?

Yeah, let's not talk about it. No, I actually say, well, if it is, our redemption's nigh. But it's scary nonetheless.

It's hard, hard, hard. So you're in a time of dark trial, you feel despair, discouragement. Here's what I call you to do. Begin to look for God's kindnesses.

Begin to look. Is there something I'm not seeing? Is there someone, or something, or some timing that I'm just not aware of? And now, because then I can see, oh, no, no, no.

[53 : 15] He has not withdrawn his kindness. I don't know, look at that. Look at that. I didn't appreciate that before, but now, I didn't appreciate how wonderful Ruth is, but now that I step back and see what she's doing, wow, how would I survive without her?

Right? So recognize that God loves you, he has forgiven you, he's adopted you, but he's not done. Remember, he still has a promise of future hope.

So remember these two things. God has not withdrawn his love from you, and there is a man, there is a man who is our redeemer.

And he will redeem. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. We thank you for this beautiful story that shows us hope.

It shows us with such power how horrible the ruined side of life can feel. We thank you for Naomi and her genuineness, her love.

[54 : 32] She's just raw. She's just real. We thank you, Lord, that we see from where she goes from that despair to her eyes being opened and her hope.

Father, I pray for those today who may be in that kind of situation, that, Lord, you would give them eyes to see, that you would begin to move in their lives so they can see your kindness, and the Lord, that you would reveal to them that there is a redeemer, someone who can bring them out, who is a prospect of hope.

It is Jesus. We thank you, Lord, for what you will do, in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.