

August 9th Session 3: God Will Provide

1. Welcome - written by Andrew

Good morning! Welcome to the 3rd service from our summer series. These services aim to be more interactive and there will be times in the service where we encourage people to speak if they wish.

Today the youth group will be continuing with Ruth, looking at “God will provide” from Ruth chapter 2. We will also be exploring the question ‘Have you ever had a time where you felt God left you?’ which we encourage you to think about before our time of reflection.

Let’s begin with a prayer from Kenneth.

2. Opening prayer - written by Kenneth George

Dear Lord

We thank you that we able to come here today and worship you and praise you.

Lord, as we continue in this service please guide us and help us to understand more and more about your word and put your knowledge in our hearts.

In Jesus’ name we pray,

Amen

Faith: We will now have a reading from Aunty Debs.

3. Reading - Aunty Debs

Psalm 36: 5-9 - Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, Lord, preserve both people and animals. How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

4. Worship song 1- I’ve Thrown it All Away

5. Video explaining the story - from Ruth 1 verse 19 to Ruth 2 verse 23

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h1eoBeR4Jk>

Please note: BibleProject are the author and owner of this Video Content – see their website at www.bibleproject.com

6. Context - written by Hannah

So, at this point in our series on Ruth's story we are looking at God's provision.

As we know, Ruth had suffered greatly, losing her husband and leaving her home; she is now poor and a foreigner. Ruth has to try and get some food by scavenging after the harvesters, in the Old Testament practice, gleaning. The practice of gleaning was enshrined in law to allow the poor and foreigner to share in the harvest so they would not starve.

Leviticus 19: 9-10 says: "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God."

God sets out in His law how we should care and provide for the poor and the foreigner; despite her difficult circumstance, God's law made provision for Ruth.

However, although Ruth was entitled to glean, not everyone was sympathetic to foreigners and a single woman without anyone to protect her did risk her safety. So, God provides again, as the landowner Boaz treats her well and is sympathetic to a foreign woman. From Boaz's words to Ruth we can see his reasons for generosity stem from an admiration of her devotion to Naomi and possibly also her trust in God. Another possibility can be considered. Boaz's mother was also a foreigner. She was Rahab from Jericho. In this case, God had these two foreign women in mind from before the people entered the Promised Land. Jenny mentioned last week, I think, that by law marrying foreign women was forbidden. This was to stop them leading their husbands to worship other Gods. However, God breaks His own rules when these two women both put their faith in Him. God's grace supersedes the law. Rahab and Ruth, foreigners, are to become part of the line that leads to Jesus.

Ruth's story shows that God will Provide. God provides for us all, and in ways we don't always realise. God makes provisions in His law to provide, and He also supersedes His own law to bless and provide. Now Faith is going to talk more about how God is sufficient for us.

7. Main sermon - El Shaddai by Faith, Concept of Trust by André and Concept of Refuge by Hannah

El Shaddai - God the all Sufficient One (Faith)

At the end of Chapter 1 of Ruth, Naomi returns home to Bethlehem with Ruth, who has committed herself fully to this new way of life and to her new God. However, Naomi brings home feelings of bitterness, as she speaks to her old neighbours and friends.

In verses 19-22, it reads:

¹⁹ *So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"*

²⁰ *"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."*

²² *So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.*

The name Naomi means pleasant, while the name Mara, which is what she asks her friends to call her, means bitter. Naomi believes that the Lord has abandoned her and brought misery into her life, instead of being sufficient. The word that Naomi uses in this verse when she says 'Lord' is 'El Shaddai', El Shaddai meaning 'God the all sufficient one'. Naomi uses this name to emphasise how God is meant to be all sufficient but has not looked after her up to this point in the story. She does not yet know that Ruth is to become part of the lineage that leads to Jesus.

There is quite a contrast here between Naomi and Ruth's attitudes. Naomi has known the Lord for a large part of her life and has therefore been taught that God is all sufficient - she knows He is all-sufficient. Ruth however, has not known God and yet she places her full trust into God and His promise of provision when she decides to move to Bethlehem with Naomi. She has not yet seen any proof of His provision and yet she has more trust than Naomi. While Naomi knows that God is all-sufficient, she does not trust in Him when times of hardship are put upon her family. This ultimately begs the question: is knowing that God will be sufficient for us enough, or do we often feel like we need Him to bless us in this world as well?

Naomi is devout in her religion but does not trust in the Lord, because He has not blessed her in a way that she can see. I think this question not only applies to the story of Ruth, but also to us today: many of us have been Christians for a large part of our lives, many of us learning about the power that God has from a young age - we call God 'El Shaddai' because we know that He is all-sufficient. And yet, when we are going through times of hardship, how many of us actually trust that He will provide for us?

We are often blinded by these difficulties that we face in the world and begin to reject God, simply because He has not shown us provision yet at that time. Should we strive instead to be more like a mixture of Naomi and Ruth, placing all our trust in Him alongside the knowledge that He is sufficient for us?

André is now going to expand on this idea of trust.

Trust (André)

What is trust? I think we all have more or less the same idea of what trust is in our heads. According to Google, trust is 'the firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something'. We usually find ourselves putting our trust in people that we are close with, like friends or family, people who we can depend on to keep secrets or to be there for us in a time of need. But for some, this is much easier said than done.

The concept of trust may seem simple enough, but to some, the act of wholly putting their trust in another person is difficult. I'm sure that we can all think of times where this has been an issue. As a Christian, trust in God is very important. Where trust in friends and family can be broken sometimes, trust in God can never be broken. It is up to us however to have faith that He will never leave us alone and that we can trust Him with anything. As with many relationships, it can be hard to trust God with some things, for example wholeheartedly following Him through whatever He asks you to. It may seem silly or challenging, but we have to trust Him in whatever He guides us to do.

Ruth's husband, father-in-law and brother-in-law all died, leaving her vulnerable and whilst Naomi encouraged her to return to her Moabite family, Ruth followed Naomi to Israel, facing uncertainty in a foreign land, but determining to trust God. Ruth worked hard in the fields of Boaz, and he took notice of her. Risking being ridiculed, she took a step of faith into the grain field, trusting God to help her. Ruth lay down at Boaz's feet, with knowledge that she could be rejected, but she trusted God and Boaz accepted her. If you trust God through your hardships, you will be rewarded.

Summary (Hannah)

So, God will provide, God is sufficient for us, we can trust God, and when we do, we find our refuge in Him.

2:12 "May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

We can throw ourselves under God's protection. Jenny will be expanding on this next week as she tackles the idea of the Guardian-Redeemer.

8. Time of reflection - Have you ever had a time where you felt God left you? - led by Faith

9. Time of open prayer + birthdays - led by Faith

10. Worship song 2 - We Bow Down

Faith: Kenneth will now close with a prayer written by Alexie.

11. Closing prayer - written by Alexie, spoken by Kenneth George

Dear Lord,

Thank you though we are under restrictions, that we are still able to meet up over the Internet.

Protect everyone here today, and their families, not just from Coronavirus, but keep them from all harm in the next week

Thank you for being present in all of our lives, even when we don't quite believe you are.

Please continue to help us learn to love you more and to spread the word to those around us.

Amen

Faith: Andrew will now lead us with the Grace

12. The Grace - read by Andrew

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,

Now and forever more.

Amen