

"Bringing Good from Bad"

The Prize of Redemption in Ruth 4:13-22

I. The Pursuit of Excellence

- A. *"I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city say that you are a woman of excellence."* **Ruth 3:11**
- B. *"There was a man named Boaz, a man of great valor and excellence."* **Ruth 2:1**
- C. *"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might."* **Ecclesiastes 9:10**

A Great Problem is Mediocrity

1. Jesus did all things well (**Matthew 12:18**).
2. Jesus is to be imitated (**Ephesians 5:1-2**).
3. We must do all things well (**1 Corinthians 10:31; Ezra 7:10**).
4. We must be people of excellence (**1 Timothy 4:15**)
5. We must intentionally plan to remove impediments to excellence. (**Hebrews 12:1; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**)

What impediments in your life need to be removed for you to be a person of excellence for Jesus Christ? List your top three with the greatest impediment as #1. Some common impediments include: laziness, lack of self-control/self-discipline, making excuses, worldly involvements, procrastination, love of comfort, blame-shifting, and dreaming too big.

What practical steps can you take to "put off" your greatest impediment and "put on" excellence? List those steps here:

II. Seeing God in the Book of Ruth

God is the main character in the Book of Ruth.

"We must always keep this in mind when we study the Bible. When God gave us the Bible He never intended for it to be merely a collection of inspirational stories filled with role models for living. The Bible is first and foremost His self-disclosure. That is, in giving us the Bible God is revealing Himself to us." Brandt & Kress, *God in Everyday Life*

A. We learn that God specializes in bringing _____ out of what appear to be _____.

B. God is at work in our lives even when it doesn't _____ to us like He is at work. (**Philippians 2:13; John 5:17**)

C. Lessons from the Book of Ruth

1. Learn to see God in the _____ events of life.
2. Learn to trust God in the _____ events of life.
3. Learn to magnify God in _____ the events of life.

"Many of us have a dwarfed view of God. We believe in a miniature, domesticated God. What we need is a big view of God." Brandt & Kress

- a. What are some evidences of a dwarfed view of God in your life?
- b. What are some practical things you can do to develop a big view of God in your life?
- c. How does the ending of the Book of Ruth give you hope?
- d. In your opinion, what is the theme verse in the Book of Ruth? Why? How does it encourage you?

III. **God's Specialty: Bringing Good Out of Bad**

A. God can bring good out of bad for a family (Ruth 4:13-17).

1. A family's move to Moab was a bad thing.
 - a. Naomi's family left the promised land.
 - b. Naomi's sons married unbelievers.
 - c. Naomi lost her husband and her sons.
2. A family's move to Moab became a good thing (4:13-17).
 - a. Ruth gained salvation.
 - b. Boaz gained a godly wife (13a).
 - c. Boaz and Ruth gained a special son (13b).
 - d. Naomi gained a special daughter-in-law, son-in-law, and grandson.
 - e. Israel gained a godly king (16-17).
 - f. The world gained a Savior.
 - g. The LORD gained praise (14a).

B. God can bring good out of bad for a nation (Ruth 4:18-22).

1. God works through undeserving people.
 - a. The mother of Perez had sex with her father-in-law.
 - b. The mother of Boaz was a prostitute.
 - c. The mother of Obed was from a pagan family.
2. God works through unlikely people.
 - a. David was from a common family.
 - b. David was the youngest of eight sons.
 - c. David was a sinner like us.
 - d. David was a great king because God was great to David.

IV. **A Fairy Tale Ending (which is really no fairy tale at all!)**

A. How does the ending of the Book of Ruth give you hope?

B. What are three good things God has done in your life?

C. What are three good things that God brought out of your most recent difficulty?

William Cowper was a friend of John Newton, the writer of *Amazing Grace*. Cowper too was a great hymn writer, but he suffered with severe bouts of depression throughout his life. At times he plummeted so low that he became suicidal. Is depression a good thing? Certainly it is far from pleasant, yet God worked through it in Cowper's life. He testified that he learned to meditate on the deep truths of God to sustain his soul. He wrote such famous hymns as *There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood*. Cowper also wrote the following poem-hymn filled with amazing insight into the nature and ways of God.

*“God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.
Deep in unfathomable mines of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will.
Ye fearful saints fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast, unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.
Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain.”*

Ruth 4:13-22

The Prize of Redemption
Bringing Good from Bad

God's Specialty

Bringing *good results* out of what appear to be *bad circumstances*

God is on the Move!

God is at work in our lives, even when it doesn't *feel* like He is.

John 5:17; Philippians 2:13

Lessons from Ruth

1. See God in the ordinary.
2. Trust God in the perplexing.
3. Magnify God in it all!