

Series: Ruth

Sermon Text: Ruth 4.18-22

Date: 6.6.2021

Title: Zoom out

MPT: Today God is working his beautiful plan of redemption for tomorrow

MPS: Zoom Out. Believe today in God's faithfulness tomorrow, and then walk faithfully with him.

Intro

We have reached the end of our series in the book of Ruth. And I want to take today to highlight what I think the author of Ruth is doing in this book. Ruth chapter 4. We are going all the way to the end. We will start in verse 18 and work our way to verse 22.

Remember we finished last week showing the conclusion of the narrative was that Ruth and Boaz had a son. If you are new with us this week, man here's the short story. Ruth is this awesome widow from Moab who moves to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi who is also a widow. Naomi is coming home bitter because her husband and two sons have died. But back home, things start looking up. Ruth meets the generous farmer Boaz. They fall in love. For a brief moment it looks like it's not going to work out but then it does. And they get married. And then they have a son which means the family line Naomi thought had come to a bitter end would actually be carried on. It's a really incredible story of God's faithfulness

to three people. And then this conclusion comes along. Ready?

18 Now these are the family records 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. -- Ruth 4:17-22

Now at first glance, a genealogy doesn't appear too riveting. Like there was not a lot of suspense in what I just read you. But I have found genealogies to actually be very FAITH ACTIVATING parts of scripture. That's because their purpose is to help us Zoom Out. to see that if you thought what God did in this one situation was cool, wait until you see how he used this situation over time.

And to do that the author gives us 10 generations (which was a typical number when crafting a genealogy) and makes Boaz the 7th generation because the 7th was a specific place of honor.

This passage is a genealogy that is put at the end of the book of Ruth as a way of helping the reader who has been immersed in this drama now zoom out and see the impact of these events on future generations. It also allows the reader

to see the providence of God over generations. Today we are going to look at this genealogy and, Lord willing, worship through it. We are going to see how it is actually a piece of an even larger genealogy. And then an even larger genealogy. We'll just keep zooming out.

Kind of like when you are playing around on google earth. You ever done that? You zoom all the way in to see your house. And you realize they took that picture while you were outside mowing and that unflattering picture of you is locked on the internet for the next 10 years until google car rides around and takes another one. You zoom all the way in to your house. Then you start zooming out and you zoom out until you see the whole earth. Well, that's kind of what the book of Ruth was like. It zoomed in on a specific time and place. And we saw the story of Naomi, Ruth, & Boaz. An awesome story of God's redeeming love. But the story doesn't end with happily ever after.

It seems like it should. But instead The story ends with a genealogy. It ends by zooming out. But it doesn't zoom out in geography. It zooms out in time. And instead of a seeing a large amount of land, we see a large amount of time.

And just like the purpose of google earth, or any globe, is to show you the bigger picture that you can't see with your eyes...so a genealogy in scripture is there to ZOOM OUT and show you God's bigger picture. How God works in many places at the same time AND how he works his plan OVER the course of generations.

As we look at this, my hope is to illuminate the faithfulness of God for you and in doing so I hope your head and heart are stirred to worship. We serve a God who, in his kindness, reveals through scripture how he has remained faithful to his purposes with his people over generations. And seeing THAT faithfulness stirs FAITH in us. It helps us ZOOM out from the situations and relationships that are consuming us RIGHT NOW. And by zooming out and seeing the big picture of what God has done...man it totally changes how you approach the RIGHT NOW.

I want to invite you today to Zoom Out and see the faithfulness of God. To do that I'm going to highlight 3 names in the genealogy and show you how they tell of God's faithfulness. THEN I'm going to show you how Zoom Out passages like these can change the way you handle whatever is coming at you tomorrow.

Perez and the faithfulness of God

18 Now these are the family records of Perez:

Perez was the son of a guy named Judah. Judah was one of the 12 sons of Jacob. These 12 sons each became a head of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. A big deal in Israel's history. But, and this is very important, only ONE of them would be the son that carried God's promise to bless the nations of the earth. God made a promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 that through Abraham's offspring God would bless the nations of the earth. That gets passed from Abraham to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, and in his old age in Genesis 49 Jacob says that this promise will continue on through JUDAH. Which is surprising because

genesis makes you think that young Joseph will be the one. But Jacob says no,
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him. -- Genesis 49:10

And this is surprising because Judah messed up in Genesis 38. Judah has 3 sons. The first one marries Tamar. But then he is evil and the Lord kills him before he has a son. The second one then marries Tamar but he is evil too so the Lord kills him before he has a son. Judah has a 3rd son he promises to Tamar but never gives him to her. So here is Tamar, an old widow really burned by this family. She disguises herself as a prostitute and Judah her father in law sleeps with her and she gets pregnant. That is some family dysfunction. And THAT child...is Perez. Our guy here. Who will carry on God's promise to bless all nations.

When you zoom out, you see GOD can bring future redemption to present dysfunction

And some of you need to receive that today. You are in a mess and for just these few moments here I want you to zoom out and find fresh hope. Hope that your present dysfunction does not have to be permanent dysfunction. God loves to redeem. And my encouragement to you is to trust him right now. Repent of your sin where you have sin. And come to Jesus. Lay your burden down at his feet. Take on his yoke. Follow him. His yoke is easy and his burden is light. Because he's with you. Pull in other believers here in the church and get their help.

We go a couple names down and we see Boaz. Now let me say here I'm skipping a couple of names. Our leading man from the story of Ruth. Here at the end of the story we are zoomed out and reminded of where he came from.

Boaz and the faithfulness of God
21 Salmon fathered Boaz,

Salmon. Not the fish but the guy. He fathered Boaz. And the thing I want to pick up on here is not Boaz's father...as much as his mother. Because very very few moms are recorded in biblical genealogies. And so we gotta pay attention. Well we don't see mention of Boaz's mom here. We actually don't see Boaz's mom mentioned until Matthew 1. Where it says

5 Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, -- Matthew 1:5

Rahab! Boaz's mom was RAHAB!? For those of you newer to the bible Rahab was a prostitute in a city called Jericho. She gave shelter to a couple of spies from Israel who were there to scout out her city before they attacked. And because she helped them, her family was the only one spared on the day Israel attacked. You remember the story? You remember shouting and the walls coming down. But before they march Joshua announces one exception...Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone in her house will live! And then it says she lived in Israel from that day on. God redeemed her past. Brought her into his people. And she met a guy named Salmon and had a son named Boaz. And it was through this woman...the

outsider brought in...that God preserved the promise he made to Abraham. HOW AWESOME IS THAT?

When you zoom out, you learn to trust God's provision for the future

Rahab left her people and her past. Something happened that made her betray the life she knew and choose God and his people. She did and while we don't know much. We know God provided to her and through her in the future. And I want to say that to you who have NEVER trusted God before. But something is stirring in you and God has brought you to a crossroads. The point of us being here now, gathered together looking at this genealogy is to encourage you that GOD will provide for you when you trust him. It may mean walking away from your old life. You will not be the first person to sacrifice everything to follow Jesus. And it will not always be easy. But I promise he will provide for you. Peace, the comfort of a heavenly father, community in the church, and security in his presence right now and forever more.

David and the Faithfulness of God
"and Jesse fathered David." -- Ruth 4:22

Ok if you remember last week I told you that the genealogy going all the way to David meant that this had to be written AFTER David was born and grown. Otherwise it would be like "Boaz fathered Obed and *I bet* he will have a son named Jesse and *I bet* he will have a son called David." the whole point of the genealogy is to verify who King David is. It's kind of like showing his credentials. Now David is the most well-known

Old Testament figure outside of Moses. And yet he comes from a line of farmers. Boaz and Obed and Jesse were all farmers. And David grows up out in the countryside. And while there are a number of things we could say about David, for the sake of Boaz let's just say this. When the prophet Samuel was sent by God to find the next king. To find God's man who would lead Israel...he was told to go to Jesse's house. And Jesse lined up ALLLLLLL those sons of his so that Samuel could assess them and then God would tell him which one was the future king of Israel. Well, Samuel gives one glance at Jesse's oldest son and is like...THIS IS THE GUY. and God says nope. And Samuel is like...Are you sure Lord? This first is awesome. And God says

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart." -- 1 Samuel 16:7

And David is going to be the one selected. He was the youngest. His own father didn't bring him in the initial line up because he didn't want to waste Samuel's time. But the Lord had other plans. And used unlikely youngest son musician sheep herder David to preserve his promise to his people. Samuel anoints David. And then the next chapter, David volunteers to face Goliath in combat. Speaking of Goliath. Remember Naomi's other daughter in law Orpah? How she went back to Moab instead of going with Naomi & Ruth? Well, according to the Babylonian Talmud she has 4 sons. One of whom was Goliath. From one decision on a road home comes two armies. The Lord's army and the Philistines. Anyways, David volunteers and zooms out saying

37 Then David said, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." -- 1 Samuel 17:37

Remembering the Lord's faithfulness to him before, gives him confidence the Lord will see him through the battle in front of him.

When you zoom out, you can see the Lord has always been faithful.

Jesus and the faithfulness of God

I will raise up after you your descendant... 2 Samuel 7:12-13

David later ascends the throne. But not all goes perfect. Because David is a human. He messes up a few times. And though the Lord remains faithful to David, he makes sure David knows that DAVID is not the messiah Israel needs. No, instead it would be one of his descendants.

16 and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Messiah. -- Matthew 1:16

Here's what I want you to see. God is FAITHFUL to his promise. And the promise he made to Abraham...he fulfilled. And He used dysfunctional unlikely, sometimes even disobedient people generation after generation. And if you read Matthew 1 you will see Judah & Tamar, Salmon & Rahab, Boaz & Ruth, David & Uriah's wife. All of this telling a big ZOOM OUT story to see God IS FAITHFUL to his promise to send a messiah to his

people, from David's lineage, who will save them from their sins & reign on the throne forever. Enter Jesus who is of the lineage of David. Yet is also born of God himself. Fully God and fully man. Who is without sin. Who dies for the sins of the world. Who rises from the dead so he can reign over God's kingdom FOREVER. **Jesus fulfilled God's promise to Abraham & to David JUST as God said he would.** He fulfills Isaiah's prophecy that by the wounds of the messiah you and I would be forgiven and healed. He fulfills hundreds of Old Testament prophecies.

THAT is our God.

When you zoom out, you see Jesus.

You zoom out all the way to the foundation of the earth...Jesus was there. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. Since before the dawn of time he was there. Then the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And when Peter was sinking into the water Jesus was there. When the boat was about to capsize in the storm, he was there. When they came for him in the night, he didn't run. He knew they were coming and he stayed there. And when humanity needed a worthy sacrifice for its sins...he was there. When humanity needed death to be defeated. He was not there. In fact, the only place in all of the cosmos you will NOT find Jesus – is in the grave. And at the end of days when Satan has been finally defeated and we are gathered around the throne we will look up and there sitting worthy of our worship, bringing joy to our hearts as we worship him...will be Jesus. The alpha and omega. The beginning and

the end. When you zoom out of your immediate moment you see Jesus. in his glory. And THAT Jesus says “I love you. And I will never leave you, never forsake you.” I’m here.

See he’s always been with his people. Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28 I am with you always to the end of the age. And over the course of the past 2000 years he has been there. Faithfully carrying out his purpose through messy dysfunctional people trying to follow him. I want to close by telling you Mercy’s genealogy. Not a genealogy of individuals, but of churches. The church that sent us out five years ago did most of this research and now we are building on that legacy and its pretty awesome. And the point of me sharing it today is so you can see the faithfulness of God to you and I. And as I go through our genealogy remember 2 things –

1. Just like God redeemed bad motives & bad actions to bring about his purposes in scripture, so he has done in church history. This is not me saying it’s all been great. It’s saying HE has always been faithful.
2. This is just ONE genealogy. Every church has one! I think of our student director Allan. Grew up in a church in Kenya. That church and this one have very different stories but I’ll show you where our genealogies converge. Same for the church in Korea and Iran and China. This is just our story.

Lastly I share this today for a particular reason. Starting this summer, we will be studying the book of Acts. And I will be calling you to consider how God is positioning you to carry his gospel to those who do not know it. And as you consider that...I want you to trust the faithfulness of God. And I want to

trust the faithfulness of God also. So consider this story of Mercy Church the closing of Ruth and the opening of our sermon series in Acts. This will take about 8 minutes to share. So hang in there.

FROM JERUSALEM TO CHARLOTTE

Acts 1:8, approximately 37 A.D. Jesus gives the Great Commission to take the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the uttermost parts of the earth.

- 42 A.D. Mark goes to Egypt
- In 49 A.D. Paul heads to Turkey and then in 51 A.D. to Greece
- 52 Thomas heads to India
- By 54 A.D. Paul is on his 3rd missionary journey in Gentile regions, reporting great success, saying that wherever he goes Gentiles believe. It seems, he says, that God has been preparing them.

By the end of the first century there were three great Gentile church planting centers: Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria. From these centers, churches are planted all over the Roman empire. At the end of the 3rd century it was estimated that nearly half of the Roman Empire is Christian.

- In 432 a guy named Patrick responds to a dream and carries the gospel to Ireland—which people commemorate every year by getting smashed and pinching people who don’t wear green.
- In 596 a church planter named Augustine ventures to what is now known as England. He settles in Canterbury, plants a church there and baptizes 10,000 people in the first two years

- In 650 a monk named Caedmon completes the first English translation of the Bible
- The next 500 or so years were a little sketchy in terms of Christian history (which is why we call them the Dark Ages), but one of the good things that came out of it was a conviction by many of the Christians that the most effective way to spread the gospel was to put the Bible in the language of the people. By 1200 A.D. the Bible was available in 22 different languages.
- In 1526 William Tyndale publishes the New Testament in every day English and attempts to get it into the hands of the people. The state church feels like this threatens their authority, so the King of England has Tyndale imprisoned, and on Oct. 6, 1536, has him strangled and then burned at the stake. Talk about overkill. Tyndale's last words were, "*Lord, open the king of England's eyes.*" 100 years later that prayer is answered when the King of England sponsors the publication of the largest Bible project ever commenced, the King James Version.
- In the 15th through the 18th centuries a wave of missions occurs.
 - Christians penetrate Central Africa, Inland China, and remote countries in Southeast Asia.
 - In 1587- we have the first two baptisms we know of in North America that took place right here in the state of North Carolina. Two Native American were baptized on Roanoke Island as part of what is now known as the "lost colony."
- 1609: A guy named John Smyth plants a church in England founded on the belief that that the Bible alone was the Christian's authority, that salvation is by faith alone and should be followed up by baptism. This was the first official "Baptist" Church.
- In 1611 Thomas Helwys is sent out by that church in Amsterdam and plants the first Baptist church in England. Over the next 30 years that church plants 50 others in London.
- 1638: Because of persecution, one of those pastors, named Roger Williams, leaves England comes to America and establishes the First Baptist Church in America in Providence, Rhode Island.
- 1727: That church helps plant the first Baptist church is planted in North Carolina, the Shiloh Baptist Church, in Chowan county.
- 1740: the famous evangelist George Whitfield takes a preaching tour through North Carolina, with great response—crowds of up to 35K come to hear him. He goes back to Massachusetts and tells the story and a guy there named Shubal Stearns gets inspired to go be a church planter in NC. In 1751 he moves to NC with just his family (he had one wife and 14 kids ... sort of like a small Mormon family) and they plant the Sandy Creek Baptist Church in Liberty, NC with 16 members. In just 2 years that church grows to over 600, and that church planted 42 others in North Carolina.
- Out of that movement 2 important churches were planted in the mid 1800s. One was planted in 1845 in Durham, NC. In the next 40 years that church moved locations twice and changed their name twice, from "Rose of Sharon Baptist" to "the Durham Baptist Church" (1877) to finally "The First Baptist Church of Durham (1878)."

- First Baptist Durham begin to plant several churches. They saw a real need in North Durham, so they planted one there in 1907 called “the North Durham Church.” That church changed its name to Grace Baptist Church in 1921. In 1961 that church established a mission up on Duke Street called “The Grace Baptist Mission.” Within a year, the mission had grown and relaunched itself as the Homestead Heights Baptist Church in 1962. In 2002 That church renamed itself The Summit Church and I walked in there as a sophomore attending UNC chapel hill. That church had a vision to plant 1000 churches and in 2015 a group of me and 60 others decided to plant a church in Charlotte NC. We called it Mercy Church
- Speaking of Charlotte...the second important church planted in the mid 1800s was First Baptist Charlotte planted in 1853. That church continued planting churches and in 1947 Billy Graham held his first crusade right here in town. In 1953 FBC saw a need in the rural south side of charlotte down in the providence Rd area so they planted Providence Baptist Church. In 1981 That church saw a need to go further south so they planted Candlewyck Baptist church further down providence Rd.
- In 2018 Candlewyck Baptist members felt a need to reach people through a new strategy so their members voted to Join Mercy Church and give the paid off building and all its assets to this 3-year-old church plant. That is the building I am standing in right now.
- In 2021 we launched Mercy Northeast because we want to see the gospel advance at the university and in the surrounding community there.

- Two weeks ago we announced we are sending out two of our own to plant another church in Charlotte and today I am trying to convince this generation to enthusiastically join God’s mission because he has always been and will always be faithful!

Close