

# Real Love Commits

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 21 November 2021

Preacher: Jesse Kincer

[ 0 : 0 0 ] I love you guys too. Cool, man. My name is Jesse. Those of you who don't know me and are here for the first time, yeah, just we really love each other, and we are a church that like dig hanging out. We dig community. That's who we are, and hopefully that is something that you begin to experience. You can get plugged in. You can find friendships. You can dig down deep in this family of faith that we call Winter Harbor Church Havelock. We are continuing on in our Ruth series. Those of you who are listening online, I want to say what up to you. We're kind of towards the end, including this one. We've got altogether three left, which is both exciting and a bit of a bummer. I hope you've enjoyed it as much as I have. The Ruth, the book of Ruth and how we've been going through it, we've been seeing and unpacking what real love looks like, and it has been an amazing thing.

I think what we are learning, because real love, what we're talking about is this concept of what a Hebrew word that is has said, how it points to God's love. That is a word that we see in the book of Ruth, and it's a better understanding. It's a richer understanding. It's a nobler love. It's God-like love. It's what one guy, Dave Harvey, calls a rugged love. It's a love that is deep, and it's a love that is powerful. It is committed faithfulness that is loyal and full of sacrifice as well. If you're just here for the first time, man, we're so glad you're here, but we are going to be jumping in kind of towards the end of this story, and Ruth is this story. If you want to go and listen to some previous sermons on Ruth, they're available online and also in our app, and I would encourage you to do that, because, man, it's hard to give you the elevator pitch of here's everything that's happened so far. I just can't do that, and so hopefully you don't feel too lost, but we are in the climactic part of the story, finally. Everything has been leading up to this point, and so just by way of the highlights and the headlines of the story, like Naomi and Ruth, they are in a faraway land. They are widows suddenly, and they come back to this town called

Bethlehem in Judah, which is in Israel, and they have nothing, absolutely nothing. They are as poor and powerless as you could be, but we see through loving kindness and this has said love shown to them in various ways, and particularly this man Boaz, Ruth finds herself in his field, and she's able to get food for them so they don't starve to death, but he also isn't just like letting her work in his field. He is like lavishly being generous towards her and giving her really more than she deserves, and such is his kindness towards Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, and so now we're in a part of the story where, if you hear last week, Naomi comes up with this plan because Boaz is a relative, and she says, oh, you know what? I know something that you don't know. Naomi tells Ruth this, and so she comes up with this scheme, and so this is Ruth executing this scheme, and she's going to Boaz in a way that could either end very well or end very poorly, and let's read what happens. We're in Ruth chapter 3, verse 7, and it says this, and when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, so he's feeling good, right? He went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain, then she, Ruth, came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight, the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet. He said, who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer. And he said, may you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether rich or poor. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. Ruth's built a good reputation for herself. And now it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you good, let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning. So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor. And he said, bring the

garment you are wearing and hold it out. So she held it out, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, how did you fare, my daughter?

When she told her that all that the man had done for her, saying, these six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, you must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law. She replied, wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today. This is God's word. And so we see, like, the episode play out, right? And it's a man, it's a woman, alone at night, stars, night breeze, Boaz is feeling merry, it says. Like, this is like, can you feel the love tonight playing softly in the background? Like, we're familiar, all too familiar with this setup, right? We think we know where this is heading. But while this scene does have some erotic tension and some romantic overtures, it never goes any further. They don't do anything they're not supposed to do, because they aren't controlled by their desires. They are controlled by real love, which places commitment before desire. And today's sermon is titled, Real Love

Commits. Real Love Never Leads Us Into Shallow Relationships, because Real Love's Goal is always deep intimacy, right? The goal of love, the goal of God's love, because of who He is, is oneness. It's a deep, intimate oneness. It's knowing one another. It is a deep fellowship with one another. But in order to have deep intimacy, you must also have deep commitment. You don't get one without the other.

[ 6 : 27 ] And when you follow the path of real love, you become both deeply intimate or deeply interconnected with people, but also deeply committed. And commitment is absolutely imperative to have, because that is the environment where intimacy is safely experienced and cultivated. And I just want to say, before we move on, it's kind of worth pointing out that real love, this kind of intimacy, goes beyond the romantic and sexual, which is why you can be single and have a meaningful, fulfilling life, which is not the story that we're being told out in the world. We're to say, like, in our day and age, sex has been elevated to everything. It is elevated as the most important core thing of who you are. And therefore, to be denied that, and the people that abstain from that are told, like, man, you are only half a person. The Bible doesn't have that category. The Bible says, I mean, Jesus was single. Was he less of a person? Did he not lead a fulfilling and wonderful life?

You have the Apostle Paul, the same thing. Man, he lived single his whole life, and yet, you couldn't look at his life and say, like, man, he didn't experience it all. No, man, there is something to intimacy and being committed and experiencing life in its fullness that it takes, that doesn't require the sexual and the romantic. Intimacy isn't an act of intertwined bodies. Real love's intimacy is an intertwining of souls. When we look at the story of David and Jonathan and the relationship they had, man, it says that the love that they shared was better than that of a woman. And it's not talking about some erotic thing that was happening between them.

When they met and their friendship began, it says their hearts were knitted together. There was a knitting of hearts, and that's what covenant relationship looks like. That's where deep intimacy happens. It can be fostered. And that's actually what the church is meant to be. It's meant to be this place, this safe, beautiful place where you can be fully known and fully appreciated and accepted, right? And that's where, because it's an environment of mercy and grace where we live in that environment, and that's where intimacy, that's where that fellowship can grow. And it's a beautiful thing.

But here is the problem. We face in this fallen world with our sinful nature. We desire intimacy, right? But you know what? We are deathly afraid of it at the same time. We both deeply desire it, and we are so afraid of it. And this fear, it drives us to create illusions of intimacy. We try to get it without the risk that comes with vulnerability and commitment. And so we end up with counterfeit love versions of what intimacy is. And so our hookup culture and our social media culture offer counterfeit intimacy and counterfeit friendship without any type of commitment. Our culture has so normalized it in the way we relate to one another. And what it does, it takes out the commitment and it takes out the vulnerability and says, hey, you could have all these things without any of that. And it's no wonder that we are like so depressed and feel so alone and suffer with loneliness and depression and anxiety because we bought into that. We bought into that. And our souls, what they're deeply longing for and what they deeply desire is that real intimacy that we were created for. Our culture is constantly pulling us away from environments of real commitment. But there is no commitment. Our counterfeit love says that there is no commitment that you really need except to

yourself. And that type of commitment is shallow and it's small. It is no bigger than the little space that you occupy. But real love calls us into something greater and to a greater type of commitment. Real love commits to something greater than ourselves. It's hard to see that in this passage at first because it seems like Ruth is really about herself, right? She's kind of creeping around, looks like she's trying to land a husband to fix all her problems. She goes there smelling good, looking good. She's got her target on Boaz, right? Laying for him to like get tired. He's merry now and a feeling good. He's lying down. He's asleep. Man, we look at that and we think, man, Ruth's actually, it seems like she's taking advantage of this situation, right? Maybe she's just another gold digger going after the rich old guy. I know what she's committed to, living in a big house, getting lots of jewelry, driving a nice camel. That's what Ruth's about. But this isn't her plan.

[11:09] Remember, this isn't her plan. She's not going to Boaz because she thought of this. This is Naomi's plan and it's risky business. Still, Ruth submits and obeys her mother-in-law. So she's there at night.

Boaz is out like a light snoring. She pulls the blanket or sleeping garment over his feet, lays down. Probably, you know, Boaz is laying down this way. Here's his feet and she's laying down like this, perpendicular to him. And she waits and waits. We don't know how long it was till Boaz woke up. She could have been waiting in the dark like, man, what do I got to do to like wake this guy up, you know? I'm sure for her, time was crawling by slowly because it's like if somebody walks in and sees me here, I am done. And so far up to this point, she has followed Naomi's instruction to the letter. But then she calls an audible, which is actually fascinating. In verse eight, at midnight, the man was startled and turned over and behold, a woman lay at his feet. He said, who are you? And she answered, I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant for you are a redeemer. Naomi said, listen and let Boaz tell you what to do. That was her instruction to Ruth. But we see Ruth change the game here. She's bold and she's brave. So when Boaz stirs from like his little tootsies or got cold or something, right? He suddenly wakes up and he was like, why in the world like is this cold air like crept in and chilled my body? He wakes up and he's feeling around and all of a sudden he sees like something that like, well, this was different than when I went to bed. There's a woman laying at my feet. He can't recognize who she is. It's obviously that dark. And so he asked the obvious question, who are you? I would like to know what is going on here. And Ruth doesn't say, I'm Ruth, tell me what to do. She doesn't say, I'm Ruth the Moabitess, which is like up to this point is how she's often referred to. She's either Ruth or Ruth the Moabitess. She says, I am Ruth, your servant.

And actually that word servant really means made servant, which is a hint of her saying to Boaz, I'm eligible for marriage here. That's what she's doing. So it's a subtle hint towards that. And if that wasn't suggestive enough, she eliminates all pretext, which she says, spread your wings over your servant for you are a redeemer. So this sentence or that phrase, spread your wings, it's a, it's a double entendre. It can mean two things because the Hebrew phrase also, uh, that, that spread your wings also implies and can be interpreted as the idiom, spread your garment.

[13:50] And everywhere else in scripture, spread your garment meant to marry. It basically said, marry me. And that's what Ruth is saying to Boaz. She is proposing marriage to this guy. And that was pretty unusual in that day and age. However, she is also implying something else because that phrase is spread your wings as well. And I don't think she's meaning one versus the other. I think she's taking advantage that it is meaning both of these things and spread your wings is actually her referring to Boaz's own words from a previous conversation. When she first met him, Boaz said this to her, Ruth two verse 12, it says, the Lord repay you for what you have done and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

Right? This is their first conversation. Boaz is praising Ruth. And at the same time, praying that God would reward her for her has said love, her loving kindness that she has shown to Naomi up to this point. But now Ruth is saying the same thing back to Boaz. And what she's implying is that Boaz, you know what? You are God's answer to your own prayer. Ruth sees this greater purpose going on here. She is seeing like, man, God is working out this purpose and this plan. Like I'm here because of this. I landed in your field because God has been at work behind the scenes, leading us on this whole time. She is recognizing that they are caught up in something greater than themselves. They're caught up in a bigger story by a bigger God who is leading and working in their lives in ways that is like indistinguishable in very natural means and natural ways.

And at the end of verse nine, she gives the reason for her marriage proposal. And it isn't like, is it June Carter that's saying like, you've got lips, I got lips. Like, let's use those lips, times of wasting. Like that's not her, that's not her MO, right? She's not, I'm lonely, you're lonely, let's make this happen. Now she says this, this is, this is what she proposes. You are, for you are a redeemer. What is she getting at? Well, next week we're going to unpack all that the redeemer does. We're going to look at how real love redeems. But for now, it's sufficient to say that this is another significant proof of Ruth's commitment to Naomi. Hubbard's commentary on Ruth puts it this way, Naomi's instructions intended simply to obtain a husband for Ruth, a concern of the older widow throughout this book. But by invoking the goel or kinsman redeemer custom on her own initiative, however, Ruth subordinated her own happiness to the family duty of providing Naomi an heir. In demonstrating remarkable initiative and defiance of custom, she not only embodied the Israelite ideal of chesed or real love, unconditional love, godlike love, but also, if successful, she set herself up to be the true bringer of salvation in this story. Invoking the kinsman redeemer custom was meant to be the redeemer's initiative. It was the redeemer who was the one who was to make the first move. It was the redeemer's job to recognize, hey, that is my relative in need.

[17:17] I can step in and help them. But here we see something different. Ruth defies that part of the custom. She steps in and says, you know what, Boaz? I'm not waiting for you. I'm saying, marry me and marry me because you are our redeemer. Not my redeemer, our redeemer. She's thinking about Naomi in all of this, right? And what Hubbard is saying here and what he's getting at is that Ruth is, again, doubling down on this chesed love, this real love yet again. She is committing herself to Boaz and she's committing herself to Naomi. Ruth isn't just looking out for her own happiness here.

And that is why real love is so counterculture to counterfeit love. Counterfeit love always is going to have you put yourself first, right? But real love is different. Real love is committed to benefiting others. And that's how it works. And it's a beautiful thing. And this is like so counter, just the way we live. I remember like growing up, I was in, during high school, during basketball season, our coach was like, I don't know, man. He, first of all, our coach was a Marine. And so he really believed in drilling us a lot. And he loved to see us run. And we were always like the team that was in the best shape, right? And so during basketball season, we'd have to run two miles before we actually did our practice. And then after our practice, we'd have to run another two miles, right?

And this was before like we understood that you should bring water bottles with you. You know, it was just like, you would hope there was a drinking fountain wherever you were going so you could get a little bit of a drink. And then, so on the way home, and he would run us outside. This is Southern California, 100 degree heat, right? And so like on the way back, like you were just, you wanted to beat everybody to get back to school so you could be the first person at that drinking fountain, right? And so we would get there. I mean, we were exhausted. Throats so dry. I mean, you could taste your tongue. It was so swollen on the roof of your mouth. All you wanted was that drinking fountain all to yourself. And we would queue up and nobody was thinking about anybody else. No one was like, hey man, you look a little bit more thirsty than me. Why don't you cut in line and go ahead of me?

This is like, this is the natural way of the world. It's like, I am going to get mine. I am going to get my turn at the drinking fountain. I'm going to fully indulge that. And I don't care about anybody else. And if I could, I would shove them out of my way to get there first. But Ruth isn't doing that. She's putting Naomi in front of her in the drinking fountain. And Ruth is thirsty too. It's not like Naomi has it worse than Ruth, but still she's committed to Naomi. And Boaz recognizes this, and he calls it out for what it is in verse 10. He said, may you be blessed by the Lord. Man, he's blessing her again. My daughter, you have made this last kindness greater than the first.

[20:10] And that you have not gone after young men, whether rich or poor. Here he is praising Ruth again. He's saying, your first kindness to come and live with Naomi and sacrifice your future for her here in Bethlehem. And that was, that was amazing. That was amazing. That was amazing has said.

But this last kindness, this has said is even greater. You didn't take the easy road to happiness. Instead, you committed to something better. You committed to a higher purpose. And that's what real love does.

Real love commits to holiness above happiness. Now, does God want us to be happy? Absolutely. Absolutely. But he cares about our holiness over our happiness. And because he knows this, he

knows that true happiness is tied to holiness. Jesus didn't die on the cross so we can spend our life in the pursuit of happiness. True. That's our culture's counter love narrative. Man, do whatever makes you happy. Jesus died to make us holy. And he calls us to pursue holiness.

And for good reason. I mean, the story of Ruth shows us what can happen when people are committed to holiness. Beautiful things, man. We see like restoration. We see kindness. We see people going out of their way to care for the least of these. One of the marks of holiness is being sacrificial, living for the sake of others. Another mark of holiness is obeying God and keeping his commands.

And this path of holiness calls us to commit to that without compromise. Here's the thing. We live in this day and age that we want the kingdom and all its blessings, but we don't want the king. Right? That would be so nice. We want all the goodies that God can give us, all the rewards, but we don't want to necessarily have to obey him. That doesn't sound very good.

[ 22 : 06 ] But that's what we're called to. Holiness calls us to commit to God's ways, to commit to his process without any compromise. And look how Boaz exemplifies this. I want you to step into his shoes. Like he's been proposed of marriage to Ruth. So now he's like, man, this is really going to happen. Like I can marry this gal and he loves her. But look what he says. And now my daughter, do not fear. This is verse 11. I will do for you all that you ask for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. Right? Man, you could see his excitement. He's like, man, you are a beautiful, worthy woman. She is like inside and out, drop dead gorgeous. He's like, I've found the lottery. He is smitten. And as much as he's ready to commit to Ruth and be the family's redeemer and take Ruth for his own wife, he's committed even more to obeying God's rules. He knows there is an obstacle to making Ruth's and his dream realized. Verse 12, and now it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight and in the morning. If he will redeem you, good. Let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then as the Lord lives,

I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning. If we live, if you and I live to pursue happiness above holiness, you read this and you think, Boaz, you're an idiot. Like, forget that out-of-date, arbitrary custom. Like, that is so worthless. Man, you love that woman, you take what's yours, right? That's what we think. Doesn't God want you to be happy?

See? That's a little whisper. That's a little lies of this world. You know, it's like, man, we think like, we pick God and our happiness and saying, oh, he cares about our happiness against the reality of that he cares about our holiness. Boaz, however, here is committed to real love.

And real love doesn't take shortcuts. Real love follows God's process. It follows God's rules. It doesn't compromise obedience to God for personal benefit. And that's what we do in various ways. I mean, we do that all the time. We live in a day and age where it's like sex outside of marriage is very common. It's seen as like no big deal. And to be honest, man, that happens in the church all the time too. And we say like, well, we're already committed to each other, so it's all good. Or we really love each other. God understands. But it doesn't matter how committed you are. Everyone might even say to you, that's just suppressive, archaic thinking. But it's skirting God's rules, and it's skirting his holiness for your personal benefit. And just furthermore, guys, it doesn't build a foundation of committed, real love for the future of that relationship. It's building a foundation of compromising, of building on counterfeit love. And trust me, you don't want to start a relationship on that. You don't want to build a relationship on that. Sure, it might mean that you have to give up something you really enjoy. Totally get that. Like, that is a beautiful gift.

But it's meant for the covenant committed relationship of marriage and no place else. That's where it's meant to be enjoyed. That amount of intimacy and vulnerability, that's where it's meant to live and abide, and that's it. And you have to step back and say, you know what, God? Man, I don't get it, but you said it, so I'm hitting the yes button.

[ 25 : 49 ] I'm going to obey. And we do that in a lot of different ways. It's just not that big thing. It's like, man, every little lie we just give into and say, you know what? I'm going to just tell this little lie because it's just going to make my life a little bit easier. Or I'm going to cheat on this test. Or I'm going to cheat on my taxes. Whatever it may be, it's still compromising holiness instead of committing to obeying God and doing what He says to do. And here's the thing. Like, you take all those things away. Maybe none of those things are you. That's awesome. Good for you. You will at one point be confronted with a rule that God says, don't do that. And you're going to be like, well, I don't like that. And often that's our excuse to just bend it or break it. But if your God can't tell you no, you aren't serving the God of the Bible. You've made up a God who serves you. And that God is

just an idol of the heart, not the Savior of the world. Boaz didn't have to like the rule of closest of kin gets first right of refusal. That's what he's facing here. There was someone who was a closer kin to Naomi than he was. But still he honors it. Still he honors that rule. Being faithfully committed in the little things sets you up to being faithfully committed when it is costly.

Real love is committed to doing the small and insignificant things well. And that is why Boaz sends Ruth out early in the morning when it's still dark with her shawl full of grain. Right? Verse 14, she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize her. And he said, let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor. Talking about Ruth. And he said, bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out. So she held it and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. Ruth staying there isn't an excuse for them to like fall into temptation. You know, oh, we just like, man, we just got overcome with it. No, no. There was no further temptation that happened. They didn't lay a hand on each other. It's all about protecting this moment from being misinterpreted by others. It's protecting each other's honor. And so if she was seen to be coming in to Boaz and then leaving soon thereafter, after a short conversation, well, it could be interpreted that she was just another typical lady of the night. But with her going out pre-dawn, her being there that long time and going out pre-dawn, and also with this shawl full of grain, the likely interpretation, should she have been seen, would have been that she labored long into the night just to bring home more food. That would have been people, oh, okay, that's what was happening. And since nothing illicit happened between Boaz and Ruth, it's not them being deceptive or trying to cover up some sin. It is Boaz actually committed to guarding Ruth's reputation and her character from any kind of accusation, because actually that would have stood in the way and disrupted his desire to redeem both Ruth and Naomi and help them out. But such is Boaz's commitment to Ruth. He wants to make sure people continue to see her as she truly is. And so he doesn't lay a hand on her or take advantage of the situation. He's an honorable man. He honors her and he protects her purity. Young men, men in the room, that's a good thing to be as a man. We don't take advantage of the situation. We honor and we protect purity. He gives up a few hours of precious sleep. Remember, he had worked a long day. He had worked a long day and he, the day, the next day, he was going to work another long day. But he gives up a few hours of precious sleep to send her off safely. He never gets tired of loving Ruth. Real love is a commitment that never quits. Ruth never quits on loving Naomi. Boaz never quits on loving Ruth. And when Ruth returns to Naomi, Naomi immediately sees something. She sees Boaz's measure of commitment.

Verse 16, and when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, how did you fare, my daughter? Kind of like, so what happened? Right? Because I don't think Naomi was like, hey, you're going to be there for like six hours or five hours, whatever it is. So she's like, hey, that took a long time. What's going on?

[ 30 : 23 ] And then Ruth told her all that the man had done for her, saying, these six measures of barley he gave to me. For he said to me, you must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law. And she replied, wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today. It's very interesting is that the writer of this story doesn't get into recanting all the details of the conversation. Like he purposes to focus on this bag of grain and this phrase of you must not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed. He wants to shift our focus from everything that happened between Boaz and Ruth and they said to this particular thing. And we need to figure out why that is because there is some significance to this. And Naomi, she picks up on this. She discerns the meaning of the gift and Boaz's words. She is confident now in Boaz's commitment.

And so she concludes with, the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today. Naomi is confident in Boaz's chesed love and that he will and desires to be their redeemer. But she's not only confident in Boaz's chesed, she is confident in God's chesed for her. When Naomi heard the words, you must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law. This is the narrative's way of doing a little twist on the story of bringing us back to the beginning. It connects when Naomi first returns from Moab to Bethlehem and says, I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty. This gift of grain is God filling her emptiness through Boaz. There will be no more food shortage for Naomi, just fullness. But there's even more hope for Naomi because Naomi just didn't come back poor and without food. She also came back childless and sonless. And this is also a significant part of her emptiness. But scholars have pointed out that there is another interpretation of the grain that Boaz

gave to her. It's symbolic and it hints at

Naomi's childless reality. One of them said this, the grain not only signified a filling of the stomach, it also signified seed to fill the womb. The lack of an heir for a limeleck, Naomi's dead husband.

All of a sudden, what was a hopeless future for Naomi has changed. There's new hope. But we have to realize Naomi's past the age of childbearing. So how will all that tension, how will all that impossibility be resolved? You'll have to find out next week.

What we need to take away from our passage today is that real love is a committed love that never compromises and never quits. Ruth and Boaz are a great example of this, but Jesus raised it to the next level, the ultimate level. It is one thing to be committed to those you love. It is another to be committed to your enemies. And that is why Jesus' love is the greatest example of a said.

[ 33 : 44 ] It's the highest example of commitment, of unchanging, steadfast love. He loved us while we were still sinners. He didn't commit to the easy route of ruling the world, right? And we have to remember that route was offered to him by Satan. Satan said, if you bow down and worship me, man, man, everything's yours. I'll just get out of the way. That's it. Jesus had the easy path right in front of him. And of course, he didn't take it. He was not going to compromise. He was not going to bow down and worship anyone but God alone. And so he chose the way of the cross, knowing very well, saying no to that was saying yes to the cross ahead of him. And he came under the law. He kept the law.

He fulfilled the law. All of God's rules, all of God's commandments. And he did that for us because we can never do that. You and I can never do that. And he did that to save us and to bring us into eternal relationship, a relationship of love with him that will never, ever end. And Jesus never compromised holiness. He was faithfully committed to God all the way through, faithfully. And he did this because he is faithfully committed to you and me. And here's the thing. We need his salvation. We need his grace. And we need his mercy because you and I, we fail at being committed. We try our best. We're not very good at it. And we need that. We need his grace and mercy and forgiveness. And how do we receive it? Man, it's through faith in him. And we live in all that goodness, all that grace, all that mercy, all that kindness by faith in him. And still though, still though, while we're here on this earth, we are like Ruth and Naomi, confidently waiting for Jesus, our Redeemer, to return for us. Like Ruth and Naomi are just in this waiting period for Boaz to do his thing. We know our Redeemer lives. We know he's in heaven ruling and reigning, and we know he's coming back for us to receive the full redemption, as Romans says, as the sons of God. And we have that confidence. We have that confidence. We don't live like, well, maybe it's going to happen. No, no, no. We, as believers in Jesus, we have this steadfast, assured foundation that we live on, that we have this unshakable confidence because Jesus gave us a gift until he returns. It's his gift of grain, so to speak, a down payment promising that our waiting is not in vain. That's the gift of the Holy Spirit. Like Ephesians talks about that, meaning he is our down payment. He is the down payment, the guarantee that everything that Jesus said, our redemption, our salvation, that it is true. God himself dwells in you and I by the Holy Spirit.

And you know what he does? The Holy Spirit counsels us. He convicts us of sin. He encourages us, and he empowers us until he returns. And so that's the way we live, waiting in a confident hope that our Savior will not rest until he settles the matter of the fullness of our redemption. Philip, if you can come up, we're going to respond. If you're here and not a Christian, I want to say to you that we're all going to die. It's appointed once for a man to die. We all face that reality. What comes after death? I just want to bring you right into that like cold reality. After death, we face judgment. We got to stand before the creator of everything. We got to stand before a righteous and holy God. And deep down, we know that we aren't holy. We fall short. We pursue our happiness above God's holiness. And so we need a rescuer and a redeemer. You need a rescuer and a redeemer.

And this holiness, this hope, this rescue only comes from Jesus. And it only comes through faith in Jesus. The Bible says, man, you repent of your sins, you believe in him as Lord and Savior, and you will be saved. And it's stepping, it's crossing that line of faith and saying, you know what, Lord, I'm going to give up my right to pursue happiness. I'm going to lay down my life. I'm going to, I believe in you. I'm going to live for you. I'm going to commit to you because you first committed to me. If you're a Christian here in the room, I want you to think about this. Why did God have you here today? Sovereign Lord orders our steps. You're here today. You're living at this time.

You're hearing this message on Ruth for a reason. Why did he put this passage in his word, in his written word that reveals who he is? What does it show you about who he is and how is it calling

you to respond? How is it calling you to live? And I want you, I want to give us all just a moment to take that in. We're going to quietly close our eyes before we take communion. We're going to examine our hearts right now. We're going to listen and we're going to say, man, Lord, show me. [ 39 : 00 ] How do I need to respond to this? What changes do I need to make? What adjustments do I need to make in my life? And so let's do that right now. I'm going to give you a moment of silence to do that.

I want you to make sure I want you to make sure I want you to make sure I want you to make Amen. Amen. So Jesus, you always invite us into further grace.

To grow and to change and be transformed. To be more like you. Because you know our holiness is tied to our happiness. And you want us to be happy. And I thank you that you don't invite us into judgment and condemnation.

You invite us into your love. That overwhelms us, surprises us, wins us over. And so I just pray that everything that you have highlighted today in our hearts.

[ 40 : 36 ] That you would continue to work in us. And I know that you're patient with us. And I thank you for that. And continue to do that work until you bring it to completion. Amen.

If you would stand with me. I want us to take communion together standing. Amen. This is, among many things, the reminder of Jesus' commitment to us.

We never have to wonder if our Savior was committed to our salvation. He did whatever it took. He gave his life.

You can't give anything more than that. He gave it all. He stood in our place. The Bible says, He who knew no sin became our sin so that in him we could become the righteousness of God.

The great exchange. Our sins were put on Christ and his righteousness was put on us because of what he did for us. That's a beautiful thing. That is a beautiful commitment.

[ 41 : 43 ] And he is in heaven ruling and reigning, interceding for us right now. Pleading for us. Caring for us. Guiding us. All the way until his work is complete or he takes us home.

That is a beautiful commitment. That is a Savior. That is a real love worth knowing and worth living for and giving your life to. And so this, as we take this, we take this with great thanks and we celebrate our Savior.

You buy this little wafer that represents his body broken for us. We get to take it and say thank you, Lord, for the commitment you made. To save me and to save your people. And this cup represents his blood and in the same way he shed his blood for us.

His blood, the redemption, the forgiveness, the removal of our sins, taking it away. so that when God looks at us, he sees the righteousness of Christ. He sees us holy, not in our own holiness, but in Christ's holiness.

It's a beautiful thing. That is grace. We don't deserve it. We don't earn it. We receive it in faith. And we live it in faith. Let's drink together.