



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 25th October 2020, 10:30am, Ruth 3: 1-18 “God in the Integrity”

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon, preaching notes from Margaret Havers and prayers as indicated.

We come together to worship our loving and faithful God, to be reminded that He has plans for our lives, He knows us better than we know ourselves. It is He who by the giving of His Holy Spirit can provide us with the integrity we desire to enable us to live as transformed children of God. An integrity that we look for in others and criticise its absence but that we do not always present in ourselves. In our worship today let us consider the humble yet confident manner of Ruth at the feet of Boaz: “I am Ruth, your servant, spread your wings over me, for you are my redeemer” and the words of blessing given to her in response: “May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter”.



Good morning church!

Lord God, we gather in your presence to worship you today, whether we do this as individuals, with family and friends or physically in church. We do so with reverence seeking to know your will for us as individuals and as a Church Family. We think of the words of Psalm 46: *‘Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.’*

Thus we seek to be still, really still and know that you are God. Like Mary of Bethany who sat at your feet in your earthly life, we seek to hear your voice and to learn more of you.

We know Lord God that you save and heal us and that your compassion is endless and available for all. Your Holy Word the Bible tells us that you wish us to show

compassion to everyone we come in contact with just as Naomi did for Ruth when she chose to remain with her. That you are Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace and that in you we should put our trust.

Thus as we gather in your presence we read or listen to the song ‘Be still and know’. We say the words in our minds and hearts or join in with our voices to echo the words –

‘You are the Lord, who saves and heals. In you, O Lord, I put my trust.’ **Amen** Win George

Song: Be still and know

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgaHaioAiyg&ab_channel=brotherearl1944

Be still and know that He is God
Be still and know that He is holy
Be still oh restless soul of mine

Bow before the Prince of Peace
Let the noise and clamour cease

Be still and know that He is God
Be still and know that He is Faithful
Consider all that He has done
Stand in awe and be amazed
And know that He will never change
Be still

Be still and know that He is God
Be still and know that He is God
Be still and know that He is God
Be still
Be speechless

Be still and know that He is God
Be still and know He is our Father
Come rest your head upon His breast
Listen to the rhythm of
His unfailing heart of love
Beating for his little ones
Calling each of us to come
Be still
Be still

Steven Curtis Chapman

Hymn: StF 18 Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God (x3)
I am the Lord who saves and heals (x3)
In you, O Lord, I put my trust (x3)

Anonymous, based on Psalm 46:10-11

Today is Bible Sunday, an opportunity for us to consider and support the work of The Bible Society. The Bible contains God's living Word which is active and completely relevant for us today. Please join in this prayer for this important work.

Pray: Wonder-speaking God, you created this world by the power of your word and you renew us daily by your life-giving Spirit. We give thanks, that through the Scriptures, you give us the wisdom to know that salvation is through our

relationship with Jesus Christ, and that your word teaches, trains and corrects us.

We pray for all involved in the translation, distribution and production of the Bible worldwide, and for all who help people understand and live by it. Lord, so shape your people by your word that we will bring life and hope to all around us through Jesus who is your living Word. We ask this for your glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.** The Bible Society

A memory verse for today: *Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path.* Psalm 119:105.

Prayer before the reading and Sermon.

Lord God as we read Your Holy Word, and the sermon written by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit working in Your servant Margaret, we pray that our hearts and minds will be open to hear what You are saying to us today. **Amen**

Reading: Ruth 3: 1 – 18

One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for." ² Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³ Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

⁵ "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. ⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

⁷ When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!

⁹ “Who are you?” he asked.

“I am your servant Ruth,” she said.

“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”

¹⁰ “The Lord bless you, my daughter,” he replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, don’t be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. ¹³ Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning.”

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, “No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor.”

¹⁵ He also said, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and placed the bundle on her. Then he went back to town.

¹⁶ When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, “How did it go, my daughter?”

Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her ¹⁷ and added, “He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

¹⁸ Then Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Preaching notes:

The book of Ruth was written in dark times in Israel’s history, when people lived to please themselves. So the focus is on three people remaining strong and true to God - even when society around was collapsing. Millennia later, we can find truths here for ourselves, today.

If a woman was widowed, and she had no sons to care for her, Jewish law (Deut 25: 5 – 10) stated that her dead husband’s brother should marry her. (No matter whether she liked it or not - just a practicality). Or if no brother, someone who was a relative could volunteer to take responsibility for the extended family, and often called a kinsman redeemer. A footnote in NRSV at Ruth 3:13 says – *one with a right to redeem*. That word immediately brings to mind the need for rescue at a time of some deep trouble, with other options explored. Naomi’s husband had family back in Judah, so could there be a kinsman redeemer to perhaps, at least, look after the young widow of Elimelech’s son, if not the mother in law? Otherwise, there was

great likelihood of severe poverty for widows, even to death.

In today's reading, Naomi's suggestion to Ruth, at first glance might seem like seduction! But not really. It was acting out a custom. A servant often slept at the feet of the master, and even shared the same covering. Ruth doing that would signify to Boaz that he could be the one to protect her, to be her master, and maybe become the kinsman redeemer by finding someone to marry Ruth, as Naomi probably wished! So it was more of a business deal – not a romance. Later, with Ruth's grandson becoming the famous King David, the story was remembered and written down, and then could be seen as a beautiful romance, although it is a good story for other and better reasons!

Naomi had decided that Boaz was the nearest relative in her husband's family, and once Boaz had seen Ruth working in the fields, he'd liked her. She worked hard; he noted how others felt about her; and maybe had heard from relatives that she was Naomi's daughter-in-law. It all added up to Boaz committing himself straight away to Ruth. (Ruth 3. 9-11)

Then, in honesty and integrity, Boaz mentioned a closer relative of Ruth's father-in law, who would have a family right. So he, Boaz, would offer that man the opportunity to care for Ruth! That must have taken some doing, not to grab Ruth and marry her for himself! But Boaz knew it would be marrying in wrong circumstances – even though he wanted to marry her. Integrity like that illustrates God's standards and ideals for his people and for our world.

Boaz did give Ruth the gift of 6 measures of barley, though, regardless of the outcome of a visit to Elimelech's relative. A generous gesture. Boaz thought of others before himself. He helped Ruth because she had thought of Naomi before herself.

The Dictionary definition of Integrity: uprightness; honesty; purity; entireness; wholeness. Crossword alternatives can be: decency, justice; cohesion and morality. All so vital in life. Boaz had shown great integrity concerning Ruth from the very beginning - even before the custom of lying at his feet was enacted. Ruth showed integrity in staying with Naomi, and in respecting her mother-in-law's culture.

Taking the right action in a situation, faces us all from time to time, with choices that are not easy, and especially when we do not know the future. Taking the right action in integrity – as God would have us do are words for today. May others find God in our integrity when we make decisions living out our Christian faith.

Amen Margaret Havers

Prayers of Confession

Loving God, if at times we easily become downcast and given to despair, and focus on ourselves

*In your mercy***FORGIVE US, LORD**

Although we claim to live a resurrection faith,

we are often reluctant to face the death of what's familiar and comfortable, in order that something may come to birth with possibilities of new life.

*In your mercy...***FORGIVE US, LORD**

Loving God, we can find your will so hard to discern for ourselves that sometimes we forget to give consideration to the insights of others.

*In your mercy...***FORGIVE US, LORD.**

As your disciples in today's world, we confess now - in our hearts - the ways in which we have failed you recently and fallen short, *we keep a time of silence.*

*In your mercy....***FORGIVE US LORD.**

Jesus who was faithful to the end, spoke to all, and still speaks to us, of your love and mercy, and offers each of us forgiveness.

As we have repented and put our trust in Him, we hear His words, "***Your sins are forgiven***" **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Unchanging God, through the example of Jesus, you showed that your love for us is constant and new each day, so for that we praise and thank you. **Amen** Margaret Havers

The Lord's Prayer. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are Yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

Song: SoF 392: More Love more power.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW9SkRMtXTo&ab_channel=WorshipVideos

More love, more power,
more of You in my life (repeat x3)

And I will worship You with all of my heart
And I will worship You with all of my mind
And I will worship You with all of my strength,
For You are my Lord.

More love, more power,
more of You in my life (repeat x3)

And I will seek Your face with all of my heart,
And I will seek Your face with all of my mind,
And I will seek Your face with all of my strength,
For You are my Lord, You are my Lord.

Jude Del Hierro, Mercy/Vineyard, Keith Matten

Prayers of Intercession:

Thank You for allowing us into Your glorious Presence to make intercession before You.

Bless Your church, Lord. Thank you for all Your blessings upon us at Highcliffe and Bransgore, and for those that are to come. In whatever capacity You have called us, may we be wholeheartedly committed to You and to each other. May we keep in step with Your Holy Spirit; discover His plans, embrace what He teaches, and follow where He leads us. We pray for all who are ill, in recovery, incapacitated in any way, and for all those caring for them; and we name them before You.

We intercede for this restless and fearful world; for the multitudes on the move, trapped in war zones or languishing in camps. We name some before You. We especially remember our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters. Lord, bring Your grace and power to bear so that world leaders will act with wisdom and integrity, desiring justice for all. Help all seeking to bring comfort and succour.

We intercede for our country; for all in Government and authorities, and all under authority. May there be a spirit of integrity, wisdom, honesty, and humility in dispensing powers, applying Covid 19 restrictions and negotiating Brexit. May many who are fearful turn to You for comfort in distress.

We pray for the homeless especially as winter approaches. Please continue to give strength, patience and kindness, and adequate funding, to all who help them to find shelter and rest. For those relying on foodbanks, may they be filled not only with physical food but with hope for the future that their season of difficulty will come to an end.

We thank You for The Queen. May she, and Prince Philip, be kept safe and well, enjoying a time of rest together.

Finally, Father, we give you our own loved families and friends, both near and far. We pray that you will strengthen in faith, in hope and love all who know you; and bring all to know rest and peace in Jesus Christ.

We make all these intercessions in His most Precious and Powerful Name.

Amen. Jean Davies

Song: Guide me O Thou great Redeemer (Jehovah) Sing/read or proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAN4Eoj_eFOY&ab_channel=HymnChannel

Guide me, O thou great redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,

Feed me now and evermore,
Feed me now and evermore.
Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs and praises, songs and praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee. William Williams (1717-1791, translated by Peter Williams (1727-1796).

Blessing:

May you be blessed by the Lord.
Remember all that He has done. Rejoice in all He is doing. Receive all He shall yet do. Put your hand in His, trust in Him and walk with Him wherever He may lead. And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and those whom you love and those whom we ought to love this day and every day.

Amen.

Notices: Next Sunday (1st November) is our final week in Ruth and is titled "God in the Joy". Do you have any joyful stories or moments to share from these past few months? Or perhaps share what "joy" means to you. Please let me, a steward or perhaps your pastoral friend know of anything that will remind us of God's everlasting goodness and faithfulness that you would be happy to share.

Phillip Dixon, October 2020. YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith and Hymns and Psalms resources are provided under license: CCLI 178182