



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist** Churches

Sunday 1st November 2020, 10:30am, Ruth 4: 9-17 “God in the Joy”

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon.

We come together to worship our loving and faithful God, to be reminded of the joy that results from our obedience and discipleship. Ruth committed herself to the Lord Almighty with her promise to Naomi: “your God will be my God” (Ruth 1:16). We gather in different places, some in our homes, alone or with our families, others physically in chapel.

Wherever we are, we know that by faith in Christ Jesus we are in His glorious presence. His Holy Spirit ministers to each one of us in our personal situations as we celebrate and give thanks for the joy we receive by following Him. In our worship today, as we conclude our four-week series on the book of Ruth, let us consider the journey undertaken from grief, leading to hope, integrity and now to joy, oh the sweet, sweet joy of the outcome.



Good morning church!

Opening Proclamation:

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our
salvation.

Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

Psalm 95 NIV(UK)

Song: There is a redeemer StF 338

Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0LA3GvAUGU>

There Is A Redeemer,
Jesus, God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
Holy One,

*Thank you O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
and leaving Your Spirit,
till the work on earth is done.*

Jesus my Redeemer,
name above all names,
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O, for sinners slain.

*Thank you O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
and leaving Your Spirit,
till the work on earth is done.*

When I stand in glory,
I will see his face,
and there I'll serve my King forever,
In that holy place.

*Thank you O my Father,
for giving us Your Son,
and leaving Your Spirit,
till the work on earth is done.* vv. 1-2 Melody
Green (b 1946) v. 3 Keith Green (1953-1982)

Opening Prayer:

Glory to you this joyful morning O Father:
you sent Jesus to give light to counter the
darkness and victory over death, You
invite us into a relationship with You,
giving us eternal life.

Glory to you this joyful morning O Christ:
for us and for our salvation you suffered
and overcame death, opening the gate of
the path to everlasting life, showing us the
Way.

Glory to you this joyful morning O Holy
Spirit: you empower us each day and lead
us into the truth, breathing new
invigorating life into each person who
faithfully follows the Son.

Glory to you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
now and for ever. **Amen.**

Confession:

Lord God, your love for humankind
present in the beginning of all things,
extends throughout history and touches
all our loves.

Your love sees failings
and forgives.

Your love feels pain
and wipes away our tears.

Your love knows grief
and comforts the sorrowful.

Your love sees sin
and still loves the sinner.

Forgive us when we fail to live lives that
reflect your love.

Forgive us the many times when we take
for granted

all that you have done for us.

Transform us, through your Spirit,
and empower us to serve you,
this day and all days.

In a few moments of silence, we name the
things for which we are asking pardon, for
ourselves and on behalf of the world in
which we live.

Silence

Amen. Contributed by Kate Philips of Bransgore

Absolution:

Thank you Lord for Your gift of forgiveness
and that on this day of joyful celebration
we may rise to Your offer of a new
redeemed life, free from the shackles of
guilt and sin. "Therefore, if anyone is in
Christ, he is a new creation, the old has
gone, the new has come!" **Amen.**

**Song: Joyful Joyful we adore Thee (Ode
to Joy)** Sing/read/pray/proclaim words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMY3ivdNzwE&ab_channel=HIMaachen

Joyful, joyful, we adore You,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before You,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heaven reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You,
Centre of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,

Chanting bird and flowing fountain
Praising You eternally!

Always giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Father, Christ our Brother,
Let Your light upon us shine;
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the joy divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
Joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Henry Van Dyke (1907)

Prayer before the reading: Lord, prepare our hearts like fertile soil for the reading of your Word. By the gift of Your Holy Spirit may we be eager and active listeners as You speak to each one of us this morning. Lord, enable these words to take root and grow within us so that Joy will be the fruit we receive. **Amen**

Reading: Ruth 4: 9 – 17

⁹ Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, 'Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!'

¹¹ Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, 'We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming

into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. ¹² Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.'

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ The women said to Naomi: 'Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.'

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, 'Naomi has a son!' And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. NIV(UK)

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

Preaching notes:

When Boaz makes the announcement to the elders and all the people, they are all gathered at the city gate. In ancient Israel the city gate was far more than just the practical entry point, it was the place where important decisions were made, note in Proverbs 31-which is quoted in the preaching video in respect to Ruth being a virtuous woman (Ruth 3:11)- "*Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land*" (Proverbs 31:23).

The city gate had no "break-out" rooms for privacy, no secret gatherings "behind closed doors", it was an open space for

bringing issues out “into the open” (perhaps that is where this phrase originates). Note that in verse 2 of chapter 4, just prior to our selected passage, Boaz “took” or “enlists” ten men of the elders in wanting to discuss the matter of Ruth, Naomi and Elimelech’s property with the “closer next of kin of whom Boaz had spoken”.

Commentaries vary in the way of translating and understanding whether the land in question had already been sold (perhaps by Elimelech when they originally left Bethlehem to make a fresh start in Moab) or was to be sold (in the present tense) in either event the “nearest kin” agrees to redeem the land until he discovers it comes with Ruth whereupon he withdraws. Here we see the hand of God at work in the same way as with Orpah, the daughter in law who did not make the journey from Moab, an initial good intention but an unwillingness to make the full commitment.

As the right to redeem the land and remaining family of Elimelech passes to Boaz he announces to the gathered crowd “you are all my witnesses...” he emphasises the significance of what he is committing to do, singling out the fact he will take Ruth, Mahlon’s widow, as his wife, this is the last time she is referred to as “the Moabite”, her redemption is complete, she is now fully accepted.

It is important not to miss the pronounced blessings within these passages. Firstly, we have the blessing, in the name of God, pronounced over Boaz by a leading elder at the gate (verses 11 and 12) referencing the two wives of Jacob and the family of Perez (see Genesis 38). As a way of highlighting the importance of “the family

of Perez” we see the genealogy of Boaz beginning with Perez and leading to Jesse the father of David, who was to be made Israel’s King. The genealogy in Matthew 1 carries this line through to Joseph, the husband of Mary.

Secondly, the woman pronounce a blessing over Naomi (verses 14 and 15). This is after the birth of the son born to Boaz and Ruth. “Praise be to the Lord...” the baby, named Obed, is foreseen as one who will renew the life of Naomi and sustain her in her old age, Ruth is highlighted by the women as one who is “better to Naomi than seven sons”.

We must not miss that within this amazing story of love, loyalty, faithfulness and obedience is a parallel story of our own redemption. Jesus is our Redeemer, He restores us from an empty way of life (1 Peter 1: 18,19) to a fullness, a wholeness that can only be provided through a relationship with Him. Naomi, in chapter 1 of Ruth, talks of “leaving full and returning empty”, she is overcome with tears and bitterness because of her circumstances but God had not left her, nor had He dealt bitterly with her. God’s promises are the same then as they are now, through the coming of His Son Jesus to the very place that this story of Ruth takes place – Bethlehem (the house of bread, the house of provision).

As Ruth and Boaz marry, it is a picture or a foretelling to us of the Church, being prepared as the spotless/sinless bride for Christ, the bridegroom and the redeemer (Revelation 19:7-8, Ephesians 5: 25-27, Matthew 25: 1-13 and Revelation 21:1-2).

What joy for us to know that God is working in our lives, it is often only we look back at situations that we see His

hand, deliberately and lovingly guiding our path.

God is active today in our lives, as believers, just as much as He was for Ruth, Naomi and Boaz. Three individuals, bound together by grief, hope, integrity and finally joy who God brought together to fulfil His purpose, a purpose that is still wholly relevant and active today. **Amen**

A time of reflection to consider the lessons that God would have us take from these four weeks in “Ruth”.

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.**

Prayers of Intercession:

Father God as Ruth found joy in the love of Boaz and the birth of her son, we find joy in bringing our prayers to you, for our world and those we know who are in need.

It is with joy we give thanks for all those who have recovered from the Coronavirus. We pray for healing and hope for the many who are testing positive for the virus, who are isolating at home, those who are very ill in hospital and those who have lost loved ones. . We pray for the those affected by the thought of another lockdown, whose livelihoods

are threaten and their way of life changed. We pray for the leaders of our country who are having to make hard decisions, that they seek your wisdom for the challenges they face.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

It is with joy we give thanks for all those asylum seekers who safely make the crossing of the channel in small boats to our country. We pray for the families of those who lose their lives in the attempt to flee persecution, who leave their homes because of war, corrupt government, famine through drought or flood to seek a new life, to live without fear. We think particularly of the young family from Iran who lost their lives on Thursday. We pray for all who are welcomed with joy into a community where they find peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

It is with joy we give thanks for all those who respect and cherish the diversity of our country, where colour, creed, background and culture are valued. We pray for all who feel excluded and persecuted because they are seen to be different, who are offended by prejudice taunts that hurt and destroy. May we be an all-inclusive society where all are valued.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

It is with joy that we give thanks for the skills of doctors and nurses who bring those of our congregations who need operations, through surgery to life without pain. We hold before you God our Father, those we know who are far from well (name those you know in your heart). We ask for your healing Holy Spirit

to be with them to bring comfort and peace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

As your children here this morning, we come with joy to thank you for our church, its fellowship and the knowledge that we belong to you and each other. For the ongoing caring we have for one another despite having to keep our distance. We pray for the mission of our church that we may be a light in darkness and a place a refuge in times of trouble.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Amen. Contributed by Deacon Glenda Sidding

Song: Be Thou my vision StF 545

Sing/read or proclaim the words.

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

Please note that this clip omits the 4th verse but it is by far the best congregational version available..

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art--
thou my best thought by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;
thou my great Father, I thy true son;
thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my battle shield, sword for my fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower:
raise thou me heaven-ward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Irish 8th Century, translated by Mary Elisabeth Byrne and versified by Eleanor Henrietta Hull.

Blessing:

Be people of joy.

Let joy live in your heart and share the joy of Christ with all you meet.

Share joy by seeing the good in each other.

Share joy by remembering good times and hoping for good times to come.

Share joy by praying for our world.

As you go out into the wonder of God's creation or stay indoors to keep safe, share joy, peace, and hope with those you meet. **Amen.**

Contributed by Liturgy Link

Notices:

Joyce Copsey, a long-standing and faithful member of Highcliffe Methodist Church died on the 23rd March peacefully in a Chandlers Ford nursing home. Her daughter Elizabeth has asked that on this Sunday we remember her mum in our prayers and celebrate in our hearts the many happy times she spent with us all. In the absence of holding a thanksgiving service her friends and relatives are being asked to donate to the church in her memory.

Phillip Dixon, November 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