

## 2nd March 2018 pm English

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Date: 02 March 2018

Preacher: Rev. A.I. MacDonald

[ 0 : 00 ] Good evening. A warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see a good number. It's good to see some visitors with us tonight as well and you're especially welcome and good to see some who've been away for a period and who are back safely with us in the congregation too. It's good to see you also. Just one or two intonations before I hand over. First of all to say that after the service this evening there'll be a fellowship at the manse and all are welcome to come along just for a time of informal fellowship and a cup of tea. The services tomorrow will be at 12 noon and that will be a bilingual service. The Gaelic prayer and psalm and the rest of the service will be conducted in English and the Reverend Anassian will conduct that service. The prayer meeting will be at 6 and that's led by one of the elders and then there'll be an after church fellowship at 7, half past 7 depending on when the prayer meeting finishes. And at that fellowship Jim Sim and also Peggy McLeod who's just back from Nepal. They'll share a word of testimony at that service tomorrow, at the fellowship tomorrow evening. Also to say that the session is open and if there are those here tonight who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are trusting him and who have not yet professed their faith and sat at the Lord's table this session, we'll be meeting just in the room on the left and please stay behind either here or just go through at the end of the service and we'd be delighted to meet with you. And finally just to welcome the Reverend Anassian

McDonald. I don't really need to introduce him because we know him well. We're very pleased to see him and we pray that the Lord will bless him and use him over the course of these next few days. So I'll hand you when I can.

Thank you Reverend David for having me and for the welcome that you have given me not only here but in your home and amongst your family. It has been a privilege for me to be there and to see the progress that you have made in this place as the Lord has truly led you in many aspects and in all indeed aspects of your intention with regard to the glory of God and the extension of his kingdom. Now we're going to begin our worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 147. Psalm 147 singing from the beginning of the Psalm verse 1 through to verse 7 of the Psalm.

Praise ye the Lord for it is good praise to our God to sing for it is pleasant and to praise it is a comely thing and we sing down to the double verse 6 7 the Lord lifts up the meek and casts the wicked to the ground. Sing to the Lord and give him thanks on heart his praises sound. These verses of Psalm 147 praise ye the Lord for it is good praise to our God to sing. Let us relate our hearts in prayer. Let us pray.

Eternal and ever blessed we come before your presence this evening seeking to acknowledge your glory that spirit that would wait upon you in the knowledge that our healing in a permanent way is ultimately with him who in the power of the resurrection set behind him the finished work of Calvary and yet pleads it eternally before your presence for it was eternal before your presence in him the lamb slain before the foundations of the world were ever laid.

[ 4 : 58 ] We give thanks before you Lord for your many merges and as we come to this place this evening we acknowledge your mercy to your people who guided by your spirit sealed in the work that is being completed here.

We bless you Lord that we bless you Lord that we can raise our Ebenezer before you and say with one a fold hitherto the Lord has helped and sustained.

We bless you Lord for your many merges and we pray your hand for good upon all who furthered and helped in the building of this place and in the setting of this fellowship in the comfort that we enjoy here this evening in a temporal way.

But in so doing Lord we pray that you would lift our hearts and our minds above what is seen and temporal to that which is eternal.

Not in negligence of your temporal blessing but in acknowledgement that behind them is the greater blessing, the lasting foundation that is laid in him in whom the hope of your people resides for time and for eternity.

[ 6 : 40 ] That we might so learn to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness. We give thanks Lord this evening for all those who are engaged in the project of establishing this place.

And we ask your hand upon each one of them in such a way that they would see their need of Christ and that they would see also the wonder of his provision in a spiritual and a lasting way. We bless you Lord for this fellowship of your people. We bless you Lord for the opportunities that you have given them. We bless you Lord for all who hold office among them.

And who are concerned for the advancement of the gospel in this place. We pray Lord for their pastor and for his family and for all that you have given them.

We ask that you would sustain and uphold them in all that they seek to fulfill. And we ask oh heavenly father that your hand would touch especially those who identify with the fellowship in an outward way.

[ 8 : 05 ] And yet whose inward commitment is still hesitant and reluctant. Break through the darkneses that inhabit our minds.

And draw us into the light of that fountain that you have opened for sin and uncleanness. And draw us to him in whom all these images are fulfilled.

And enable us to say above all else at this time of solemn ceremony before you. Sir we would see Jesus that in the light of all that is revealed of him through your word.

We may rejoice and praise your name. We pray Lord that you would enable us so to examine ourselves.

As to see afresh our need of your mercy. For we come short of your glory in word, in thought and in deed.

[ 9 : 16 ] And as we acknowledge your goodness. We recognise that it is not because of anything we are in ourselves.

For we have sinned and come short of your glory. And we continue to do so. Enable us therefore to seek the shelter of the shed blood of the new covenant.

That under its cover we may be brought into that sphere. Where there is now no condemnation. To be found in Christ.

And to glorify him alone. Is to draw near in the ministry of your spirit. For that is the fulfilment with which your Holy Spirit is yet operating among the children of men.

Showing forth the things that belong to Christ. Glorifying the Son. As is the will of the Father. That we should behold his beloved Son.

[ 10 : 26 ] In whom he is well pleased. Grant your hand for good upon all that shall be done at this special weekend. May your hand be upon all that has been shared with your people so far.

Of your word. And Lord we would dare to believe. That you are working in the hearts and minds of many in this gathering.

And that you have spoken to them already. At the diets of worship yesterday. And in their own preoccupation with your word since.

Draw Lord to yourself. For that is by your spirit. And not by any might or by power. That you are fulfilling your purposes.

Wherever your people gather. We pray your hand for good upon us. And upon all that we would commit to your care. In this community.

[ 11 : 29 ] We pray Lord for other fellowships. In the community. Those of other denominations. And those we left behind us. We ask that you would be gracious to them.

And that your hand. Would be ministering among them. To confirm the truths of your word. And to draw. Lord God to yourself.

All your people. Making them willing. In a day of your power. Look upon us as a nation. And as a people. Who have reached a crossroads.

In our political experience. Where we are in two minds. If not more. We pray your hand. Upon our leadership.

We ask wisdom for them. Guidance in the decisions. They are making. And clemency. For those with whom. They are debating the issues.

[ 12 : 31 ] Of the freedom of this nation. Grant your hand. Lord. Upon all parties. That in it all. We may. Come to see.

That we need. The sovereign hand. Of the greater. Sovereign creator. To order our ways. Lord hear our blessing.

For all who hold. Office. In government. And in opposition. Hear our prayers. Hear our prayers. For those who rule over us. In temporal affairs.

Hear our prayers. For those. Who deliberate. In council. At a local level. Of government. Grant your hand.

For good. Upon all that we would commit. To your care this evening. And we would ask. Even as others did. When the day was far spent. That you would abide with us.

[ 13 : 29 ] And that you would open our eyes. Through the breaking down. Of the bread of life. In the word that proceeds. From the mouth of God. That our souls.

Might be nourished. And that we might rise. Above what is temporal. To the perspective. Even as the eagle. Rises above the land.

And takes view of things. From on high. Your ways are higher. Than our ways. Your thoughts. Far transcend. Anything we can imagine.

Or conceive of ourselves. But by your spirit. Enlighten us. In the perspectives. Of eternity. This evening. For we ask it all.

In Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen. We're going to sing.

[ 14 : 29 ] From Mission Praise. Three hundred and eighty three. Three hundred and eighty three. Jesus. The joy of loving hearts. Through source of life.

The light of men. From the best bliss. This earth imparts. We turn and fill. To you. Again. And down to the end.

Of this hymn. Jesus forever with us stay. Make all our moments. Calm and bright. Chase the dark night. Of sin.

Away. Spread. Through the world. Your holy light. Jesus. The joy of loving hearts. Now we are going to read God's word.

From the book of Ruth. Chapter one. The book of Ruth. In the Old Testament. After Judges. And before Samuel.

[ 15 : 36 ] Ruth chapter one. We shall read the whole chapter. At verse one. In the days when the judges ruled. There was a famine in the land.

And a man from Bethlehem. In Judah. Together with his wife. And two sons. Went. To live for a while. In the country.

Of Moab. The man's name. Was El-Melech. His wife's name. Naomi. And the names of his two sons.

Were Melon. And Kilion. They were Ephrathites. From Bethlehem. Judah. And they went to Moab. And lived there.

Now El-Melech. Naomi's husband. Died. And she was left. With her two sons. They married. Moabite women. One named Orpah.

[ 16 : 34 ] And the other Ruth. After they had lived there. About ten years. Both Melon. And Kilion. And also died. And Naomi.

Was left. Without her two sons. And her husband. When she heard. In Moab. That the Lord. Had come. To the aid.

Of his people. By providing food. For them. Naomi. And her daughter. She-in-law. Prepared. To return home. From there. With her two daughters.

In law. She left. The place. Where she had been living. And set out. On the road. That would take them. Back. To the land. Of Judah. Then Naomi.

Said to her two daughters. In law. Go back. Each one of you. Sorry. Go back. Each of you. To your mother's home. May the Lord.

[ 17 : 31 ] Show kindness. To you. As you have shown. To your dead. And to me. May the Lord. Grant. That each of you. Will find rest.

In the home. Of another husband. Then she kissed them. And they wept aloud. And said to her. We will go back.

With you. To your people. But Naomi said. Return home. My daughter. Why would you. Come with me. Am I going to have.

Any more sons. Who could become. Your husbands. Return home. My daughter. I am too old. To have another husband. Even if I thought.

There was still hope. For me. Even if I had. A husband tonight. And then gave birth. To sons. Would you wait. Until they grew up. Would you remain.

[18:28] Unmarried. For them. No. My daughter. It is more bitter. For me. Than for you. Because. The Lord's hand. Has gone out. Against me.

As at this. They wept again. Then Arpah kissed. Her mother-in-law. Goodbye. But Ruth clung to her. Luke said.

Naomi. Your sister-in-law. Is going back. To her people. And her gods. Go back with her. But Ruth replied. Don't urge me.

To leave you. Or to turn back. From you. Where you go. I will go. And where you stay. I will stay. Your people.

Will be my people. And your God. My God. Where you die. I will die. And there. I will be buried. May the Lord. Deal with me.

[19:24] Be it ever. So severely. If anything. But death separates. You and me. When Naomi realized. That Ruth was determined. To go with her.

She stopped urging her. So the two women went on. Until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem. The whole town was stirred.

Because of them. And the women exclaimed. Can this be Naomi? Naomi. Don't call me Naomi. She told them. Call me Mara.

Because the Almighty. Has made my life. Very bitter. I went away. Full. But the Lord. Has brought me. Back empty.

Why call me Naomi? The Lord. Has afflicted me. The Almighty. Has brought. Misfortune. Upon me. So Naomi returned.

[20:24] From Moab. Accompanied by Ruth. The Moabites. Her daughter-in-law. Arriving in Bethlehem. As the barley harvest.

Was beginning. May God bless to us. The reading of his holy word. And to his name. Be praise. And glory. We continue.

Our worship. Singing to God's praise. In Psalm. One hundred and thirty. Psalm. One hundred and thirty. Lord. From the depths. To thee I cried.

My voice. Lord. Do thou hear. Unto my supplication's voice. Give an attentive ear. Lord. Who shall stand. If thou. Lord. Should mark.

Iniquity. But yet. With thee. Forgivenesses. That feared. Though mayest be. Down to the last verse. And plenteous redemption. Is ever found with him.

[21:22] And from all his iniquities. He Israel. Shall redeem. The Psalm. Number. One hundred and thirty. Lord. From the depths. To thee.

I cried. Now let us turn together. To the passage. We read. In Ruth. Chapter one. And we shall read.

From verse twenty. Ruth. Chapter one. And we shall read. At verse twenty. Don't call me Naomi. She told them. Call me Mara.

Because the almighty. Has made my life. Very bitter. I went away full. But the Lord. Has brought me. Back empty. Why call me Naomi.

The Lord. Has afflicted me. The almighty. Has brought. Misfortune. Upon me. So now. Moab. Returned. From Moab.

[22:25] Accompanied. By Ruth. The Moabite. As her daughter. In law. Arriving. In Bethlehem. As the barley harvest. Was beginning. Let's ask God's blessing.

Upon our meditation. In his word. Together. Jesus. Stand among us. In your risen power. And make this time.

Of meditation. On your word. To be a hallowed hour. To every soul. Within this place.

Lord. Our God. Our God. We are unworthy. That you should come. Under. Our wing.

And under our roof. But we pray. That we would find. Ourselves. This evening. By the miracle. Of your grace.

[23:21] Under your wing. And in your care. Speak. Speak Lord. And enable us. To hear. For the glory.

Of your name. And for the good. Of our souls. In Jesus name. Amen. Now I'm sure.

That we are all. Very familiar. With the book. Of Ruth. I think. That when I first. Of all. Thought I would. Come here. And preach. A few sermons.

On the book of Ruth. My immediate. Reaction was. It's hard. Too familiar. For people. To listen to. Once again. But it's the word of God.

And that is what we have to remember. And therefore. The word of God. Can speak. Into our situations. Though. Sometimes. We have gone through.

[ 24 : 16 ] Parts of it. For years. Yet. God is always. Bringing. His truth. Out of his word. And here. We are. And we're going to.

Consider this evening. This woman. Because this woman. And her. Companion. Ruth. Naomi and Ruth. Are going.

Into a new arena. There's a sense. In which. It is going to be. A new beginning. And that kind of. Feeling.

And circumstance. Should ring through. For you. As a congregation. Here together. Entering. A new arena. So as we look at it.

And as we remind ourselves. Of the story. We remember. That it was. During the turbulent times. Of the judges. It was a time. When the Philistines.

[ 25 : 12 ] The Amalekites. The Moabites. And others. Were intruding. Upon Israel's. Israel's. Boundaries. And also. Doing so.

In such a way. That Israel. Had to pay. Heavy taxes. To those. Who were conquering them. And so. Even in times. Of famine. Things were. Very difficult. And as we see. As we read. Through this story. We see. That Naomi.

Is. As if. She was. The very. Lynchpin. At the very. Heart. Of the. Testimony. That is given us. Through this book.

And yet. This Naomi. Is someone. Who is burdened. With a lot. Of spiritual. Baggage. And that is what comes out.

[ 26 : 09 ] Through. Through her own testimony here. As we meet her here. As a broken woman. Broken to the extent. That her own name.

Naomi. Which means. Pleasant one. Our delight. Seems to be. Mocking her. And yet. God's hand. Is on her life. And on her. Sad circumstances. And as she. Arrives. In Bethlehem. There is an awkwardness. That she is feeling. In herself. She is. In a way. Saying. Through the. Through the denial.

Of her name. Don't call me. Naomi. Because. No. I am. No longer. Worthy. Of that name. She feels.

[ 27 : 05 ] That she. No longer. Belongs. And we are going. To look together. At various. Facets. Of her situation. As she is.

Introduced. To us here. And the first thing is. There is the tragedy. Of conceded. Failure. In her life. The tragedy.

Of conceded. Failure. No longer. Pleasantness. No longer. Is that. Pleasantness. About her. She has lost. Her husband. As well. Ele melech. Meaning. God is king. Melech. The word. For king. And. Eli. A word. That is related. To one of God's. Titles. God is my king. Was the meaning. Of her husband's name.

[ 28 : 00 ] And that. Reflected. The situation. In which she was. Brought up. Because. When she was. Brought up. In Israel. To begin with.

Things were. Very different. The place. Was regarded. As the. Pleasant land. In fact. Her name. Is involved. In what. Malachi.

Says. About Israel. As the. Delightful land. And also. In Daniel. Chapter 8. At verse 9. When it is. Referred to. As the. Beautiful land.

Where God. Was to give. His people. True. Fulfillment. And yet. This woman. Is. In the midst. Of a. Bitter. Experience. Here she is. And somehow. Though. The. Covenant. Promises. Seem. To have. Deserted.

[ 28 : 53 ] Her. Deprived. Of her. Husband. Having. Lost. Her. Two. Sons. She. Has. Forfeited. As if. Were.

Her. Real. Standing. Anymore. Amongst. The people. Of God. And though. She has. Come back. And there. She is. She. Does. Not. Any. Longer.

Feel. That he is. She is. Part. Of it. All. Perhaps. We are. In that. Kind. Of situation. Ourselves. Perhaps.

We find. Ourselves. And somehow. We are. Professed. And yet. Our own. Situation. Seems. So. Different.

From the. Profession. That we are. Called. To make. God's. God's. Blessing. Has. Been. Prayed. Upon. Us. The delight.

[ 29 : 47 ] That is. In Christ. Who is. As we sang. Together. Of the real. Pleasantness. That was. Portrayed. With regard. To the land. Is.

Come to. Its. Fulfillment. In Christ. Jesus. And yet. Somehow. We seem. To say. To ourselves. Somehow. We do not. Belong. A tragedy. Conceded. That's where she was. But also.

There was a trial. The trial of. A continuing. Frustration. A trial of. Continuing. Frustration. There were all the.

Tragedies. Behind her. Circumstances. Went against her. And she says. That she went. Away. Full. That is the way. She speaks here.

[ 30 : 41 ] She says. I went. Away. Full. And I had. Come back. Empty. What had made her. Go away.

If. There was. Fullness. Why did she. Forsake. That. Fullness. Why did she. Go out. From. Bethlehem.

The house. Of bread. There's no doubt. That she was one of. The notable. Families. That's why. People are so. Shocked. When they're saying.

Is this really. Naomi. The dignified. Naomi. Because. Elimelech. Had good connections. That's where you see it. Later on.

In the third chapter. Especially. When there were two. Who could be potential. Redeemers. Of their economic. Situation. So really. Elimelech.

[ 31 : 36 ] Was a man. Of some. Stature. He had status. They were a notable. Family. And yet.

Now. They seem. To be called. In such. A difficult. Tragic. Situation. What then.

Were the contributing. Factors. Well. The family focus. First of all. Was negative. The family focus. Was very negative. God is king. Was the name. Of the man. Her husband. Her name. Was pleasantness.

They had been born. At that time. When things were going. Well in Israel. Because at that time. In Israel. There had been.

[ 32 : 30 ] Victory. By a man. Who was. A nephew. Of Caleb. And there were. Times. When things. Were really. Going well. In that situation.

And then. They had come. They had come. To the famine. And they had come. To times. Of poverty. And difficulty. And so. It had all.

Changed. Their circumstances. Had changed. Abraham. Experienced. Something like this. He went down. To Egypt.

When there was. A famine. And we find. That Isaac. Also. During a famine. Went together. Went to ask. For help. From the Philistines. But this family.

As they. Are under pressure. What do we find. Them doing. When we see. The blight. Of the situation. Taken. Before us. Even in the names.

[ 33 : 27 ] They gave. To their boys. Melon. Means sickly. And killion. Means. Failing. Or pining.

The names. They choose. Reflect. Their circumstances. Things. Have changed. Do you remember. When.

One. Of Israel's. Of Jacob's. Sons. Was born. Rachel. Gave birth. To a young. Baby. And she was. Dying. And she called him. He is the son. Of my sorrow. And the father. Looked and said. No no. He's going to be. The son. Of my right hand.

There was a man. Who in the midst. Of bereavement. Approaching. Had a positive. Attitude. In which he was saying. No we're not.

[ 34 : 25 ] Going down that route. The son. Of my sorrows. We're going. The son. Of my right hand. Well there wasn't. That strength. With Naomi.

And her husband. Elemele. They. Saw. Things. Falling. Apart. And they.

Took that. To themselves. In such a way. That they. Capitulated. In their faith.

At that time. But you might say. Well. Isn't it. Wasn't it. The same. For others. Well it was. But isn't it. Very significant. That Boaz. Was born.

To a woman. Called Rahab. Fathered. By Salmon. Because Rahab. Who had been. Rescued. From Jericho. Had become.

[ 35 : 21 ] The wife. Of Salmon. And they had. A child. And the child. Was called. Boaz. What does Boaz mean?

In him. There is strength. So when Thickly. Was born. There was.

A cousin. Who was. Testifying. Through his name. Of a different. Attitude. And a different. Outlook. Altogether.

The family focus. Was somehow. Very negative. Now. I'm sure. That even. Amongst us all.

There are times. When family focus. Can be very negative. To us. And there can be. Things. That are climbing. In upon us.

[ 36 : 19 ] That are driving us. Along that road. But even. But even. On top of that. There's not only. The family focus. There is the famine. That is.

Really. Bearing down. Upon them. These 18 years. When the Moabites. Were oppressing. They said to themselves. We must well. To go over.

To Moab. We'll have a better. Life of it. In Moab. Some of us.

May have lived. Through the privileges. Of the gospel. As I have. As an old man. In a generation. When Christianity. And the cause.

Of Christ. Was exalted. In this man. Some of us. Have heard recently. About the death. Of Dr. Billy Graham.

[ 37 : 14 ] And some of us. May remember. Back to days. When people. Were flooding. To the Kelvin Hall. And to such places. And yet. We live today. In a land.

Where councils. Would never. Never. Countenance. Having Billy Graham. Come and speak. Freely. On their premises. Why?

Because secularism. Is overtaking us. As a people. The powers of darkness. Are working their way. Into our systems. Even into our education system. And in other systems. In our land. Because you see.

The Moabites. Have come in upon us. And even in the church of Christ. They are saying. Even as Elimelech. And Naomi said. We're as well.

[ 38 : 09 ] To go over. To the secularists. We're as well. To capitulate. And I believe.

That it is because. Some. In the course of Christ. Have been saying that. And saying. We're as well. To capitulate. That we are here tonight. In this very building.

Because the church of Christ. Is collapsing. In some elements of it.

Because we are taking. The secular line. On moral issues. And on other issues. And that's where we are. There is a famine.

And there is a futility. That was just. Unremitting. And this. Runaway family. Where do they end up? Well they have turned away.

[ 39 : 10 ] From the house of bread. Yes. Things were tough. But what do you do. When things get tough. Well what happens then.

Is the tough. Get going. And that's what Boaz did. But here was a family. And they were in the midst.

Of a collapsing situation. And we find that. Elimelech has died. And we find that. Melon. And Kilion. Have died as well. And here is one woman. A tragic. Conceded failure. A trial. Of continuing frustration.

Frustration. As one thing. After another. Fails her. But then we come to our positive element.

[ 40 : 04 ] The tragedy of this conceded failure. And the trial. Of a. Of a. Continuing frustration. And we come to see. That there is a testimony.

Of constraining faith. A testimony. Of constraining faith. You know. No matter. How far we go.

We may find. That God. Has chased us. To where we are. And even. That the things. We run away from. That they are there.

Ahead of us. Jonah. Ran away from God. And he found that. God was ahead of him. There was a fish.

Prepared. That's what the Bible says. God. Prepared. A fish. For Noah. For Jonah. Not a fish. For him to eat.

[ 41 : 06 ] But for him. To be eaten by a fish. Swallowed by. Why? Because. You cannot. Ultimately. Run away.

From God. And there is no one. In here. Tonight. Who can say. I can. Run away. From God. I can.

Hide. In some. Far. Country. I can. Give myself. To secularism. And go there. Fully. The psalmist. In Psalm 139. Says. Even. If I. Make. My. Bed. In hell. You are there. Waiting. For me. And that is. What we find. Here. We find. A woman. And there is. An evangelist. Who is telling her. That there is bread. In Bethlehem. No.

[ 42 : 03 ] There was bread. In Moab. Too. But the different. Is. The difference. Is. That bread. In Bethlehem. Is provided. By God. God.

Has visited. His people. That's what we read here. God. Has visited. His people. In Bethlehem. And the house. Of bread. Is coming.

Alive. Again. There is. If you like. A revival. Taking place. In Bethlehem. Because God.

Is in the fields. Of Bethlehem. And that's what the next chapter. Is about. Because God. Has a purpose. Not only for Ruth. But for Naomi.

The delight. Is going to recover. There is a testimony. Of constraining. Faith. Fear. Because she hears. What's happening.

[ 42 : 57 ] In Bethlehem. And there is. A determination. To go back. To Bethlehem. There is a verse. In the book. Of Proverbs.

It reads. Like this. Better a little. With the fear. Of the Lord. Than greater wealth. With turmoil. Better a meal. Of vegetables.

Where there is love. Than a fatted calf. With hatred. Better one crust. In the father's presence. Than ten thousand delicacies.

In a distant land. I wonder if we're still. Searching the delicacies. Of distant lands.

Like the prodigal of old. Or have we come. To the stage. Of sitting down. And reflecting. As this woman. Seems to have done.

[ 43 : 55 ] She is reflecting. Why is she reflecting? Well first of all. She was stimulated. By the good news. She heard. Now we're not sure.

We don't know. Who the messenger. Who came from Bethlehem. To Moab. With the news. That God was visiting. In the fields. Of Bethlehem. And that there was bread.

By. That given. In the fields. Of Bethlehem. We don't know. The name of her evangelist. But we know. That the message. She received.

Was pouring. Into her will. And into her desire. In such a way. That she was.

Beginning to say. We will rise. And go back. To Bethlehem. And I wonder. Whether tonight. Even among us here.

[ 44 : 51 ] There are. Those. Or there are. Some of us. Who might have been. On the very. Perimeters. On the very. Borders. Of capiculating. To secularism.

To the isms. Of our day. And yet. The message. Of God. Is boring. Its way. Into our lives. And we might.

Be beginning. To say. In the words. Of a paraphrase. Drawn. From the book. Of Osea. Come. Let us. To the Lord. Our God. With contrite.

Hearts. Return. Let us. Make. Our way. Back. She was. Stimulated. By the news. That she. Had heard. But there's.

Something else. In it too. She's not. Only stimulated. But she is. Separated. By the grace. She discerned. Orpah.

[ 45 : 49 ] And Ruth. Were going with her. But she sees. That there is. Something that is. Necessary. Within going. With her. Because. The spirit.

Of a Moabite. Was such. That there was. No real. Repentance. Among the Moabites. Jeremiah. Jeremiah 45.

Verse 11. Puts it like this. Moab has not been at rest. From youth. Like wine left on its dregs. Not poured. From one jar. To another. She has not gone into exile.

So she tastes. As she always did. Her aroma. Is unchanged. What is that saying?

It is saying. That there are people. And their providences. Have taught them. Nothing. In a spiritual way. They haven't been poured. From one vessel.

[ 46 : 44 ] To another. They taste. The same. In other words. There has been. No change. Within them. They are still.

The way they were. There was a thief. On the cross. And his prayer. Was very different.

From the one. On the other side. Who received the promise. He said to Jesus. If you're the passion. You say you are. Take me. And yourself.

Back down. Into the world. Because what I want. Is the world. I want. I want. More. Of the world. That's.

Moabite. That's. Orpah. There seemed. To be a steering. But in the steering.

[ 47 : 43 ] There was no real. Power. To carry her. Along the path. That Ruth. And Naomi. Were. Stepping.

I wonder. If tonight. There are people. Who are. Unmoved. And unstirred. And if you and I. Find ourselves. In that condition. If we can say. Well. Secularism. Will do. For me. Or. Or. The Moabite. Spirit. Will do. For me. It is time.

We started. Praying. Create. In me. A new spirit. Create. Lord. Something. In me. That will. Respond. To the gospel. That I've been hearing. For years. The wine. Of Moab's life. Was the same. As it always had been.

[ 48 : 45 ] No newness of life. No refreshing. No exile. For them. No spiritual discipline. That was shaping their lives.

They seemed to get off. With everything. It's a dangerous place. To be. It's a dangerous place. To be. Spiritually unchallenged. Separated. By the grace. She discerned.

But we find her also. Sustained. By the God. She acknowledged. She was sustained. By the God. She acknowledged.

She knows. That God. Is chastening her. But she acknowledges. That Jehovah. Is Lord. The Lord. The word.

[ 49 : 39 ] That is used. For Lord. Here. Indicates. To us. That it is. The covenant. God. Of Israel. She is speaking of. Orpah. Had gone back. To her gods.

But this is. The God. Of the covenant. That she is. Speaking of. And she is. Acknowledging. And he. Is also. The God. Of Abraham.

El Shaddai. The one. In whom. There is. There are. Resources. And you. And I. Tonight. Where are we?

Can we. Come and say. I tried. The broken. Cisterns. Lord. But. Ah. The waters. Failed. Is that. Where we are. Because. That's what. She is saying here. She had gone out. From Israel. She had gone out. Fool. She is. The prodigal.

[ 50 : 39 ] Of the old testament. And she is coming back. The tragedy. Conceding. Failure.

The tired. One frustration. After another. The testimony. Constraining her. Come unto me. Said Jesus. Who. Comes to him. Those who are heavy laden. Those who are laboring. Where are we?

In the light. Of all that Christ. Has done. Because the house of bread. Is full of bread. For us. Because the symbolism. Of that house.

Is in the person. Who's came. And who said. I am the bread of life. And that is the bread.

[ 51 : 36 ] And that is the bread. And that is the bread. That is symbolically. In the communion. That we are. Are hoping to. experience. Okay. For us. People. That it is who.

That speaks to us. Better things. Than any other. Element. Within. Our own.

Experience. Mara she is saying I went away full but the Lord brought me back empty and the amazing thing is that that is the way God wants you and me tonight it's reflected for us in the words of a hymn that some of us have sung in the past nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling and surely surely if there is anything at all that can draw us spiritually it is him who was looking forward to Calvary and who said I when I am lifted up will draw all men to me the drawing power of the cross of Calvary was symbolically and spiritually involved in the return of this woman who couldn't call herself and who felt that she couldn't say

I'm not a delight I'm really a bundle of damaged goods I am bitter in myself with all that I have known in my experience but she has come for the healing of her bitterness and that is what the rest of this book testifies to may God help us to reflect tonight upon where we are and to look to him in whom all that God is Jesus the joy of loving hearts we sound let us pray together as we close Lord our heavenly Father we bless you tonight for all that you are as the fountain of life as the light of the glory of God of your glory in the passion of your son shines in upon us grant us the grace that we might be obedient to the call that comes to our more that there is indeed

Emmanuel in the fields of Bethlehem and that round the gospel is the pleasant place and the wonder that made others say I joined went to the house of God go up they said to me in Jesus name Amen our closing praise is in hymn 755 when I survey the wondrous cross on which the

prince of glory died my richest gain I count but loss and poor contempt on all my pride where the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all let us sing to God's praise the grace of our Lord  
[ 55 : 40 ] Jesus Christ the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and evermore Amen