

RUTH 3:1-5
DRAW CLOSE TO GOD!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Ruth chapter 3 as we continue our study in this fascinating book called Ruth!

Let me quickly review what we have seen so far, and this will tie into what we will be looking at this morning in our study of Ruth.

As our story opens up here in the book of Ruth, we saw Elimelech pack up his family and move them from Bethlehem to Moab because of the famine that was affecting the area of Bethlehem.

In doing so he was moving out of God's will, the land of Canaan.

And, as I have said before, Elimelech was moving out of the House of Bread, Bethlehem, and heading down to the toilet bowl, Moab. He was going to the world to find sustenance; you might say, instead of staying in the House of Bread and allowing God to provide for him and his family!

Now some may not agree with that, I mean he was only trying to provide for his family and there was food in Moab, so why not go down there?

Because, again, I don't see God calling them to Moab even though God will use this to do some amazing things.

You see, and what is interesting to me, is that we don't see him seek God's counsel in this matter. He takes the situation into his own hands, he may have been "*sick*" and "*tired*" of the situation he was in, and by the way that was the meaning of the names of his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion.

And if you still think that this was the will of God for them, remember what happens next. And keep in mind that they were only going down to Moab for a short time and it will end up being ten years away from the House of Bread living in a toilet bowl!

You see, it is there, in Moab, in the world, that *“My God is king”* dies! What do I mean by that? That is what Elimelech’s name means!

And I think that is an important point. That is what happens as we go into the world and away from God! We will die spiritually and sometimes even physically as happened to Elimelech!

Now, sometime during those ten years Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth. That was not something that they were to do, but when you live in the world you will obtain the things of the world in your life, as we see here.

And it even got worse. You see, not only did Elimelech die but so did his two sons and now Naomi was left with her two daughters-in-law and they were in a desperate situation.

You see, widows did not have any income and Naomi decided to go back to Bethlehem, to the House of Bread and she was encouraging her two daughters-in-law to remain in Moab and get married, start a family.

But we saw that Ruth refused; she wanted to go with Naomi and serve her God, the God of Israel, to follow Naomi and the only thing that would prevent her from doing this was death.

Again, prior to Elimelech and Naomi coming to Moab, Ruth did not know the God of Israel. But, through their witness I believe she came to saving faith as she came to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob!

On the other hand, Orpah wanted to go but she was not sincere, and she ended up staying in Moab.

So Naomi and Ruth head to Bethlehem, where God was providing for His people and it is there in Bethlehem that Naomi found a kinsman redeemer, Boaz, for Ruth. He was the one who could redeem her and the property of her husband back.

Now looking at this situation, you might think that if Elimelech did not go down to Moab, Ruth would not have found out about the true and living God. Ruth would not have come to Bethlehem and she would not have met and married Boaz. And thus, she would not have been in the lineage of King David, his great grandmother, and in the lineage of Christ.

Yes, Ruth had to get to Bethlehem, but I don't think God needed help with His plan. He did use the actions of Elimelech and his family to bring Ruth to Boaz, but that does not mean what Elimelech did was right.

God does use our failures many times for His glory. Many times, as we try to assist God with His plans, we just get in the way and mess things up.

This morning I want to focus on this point – ***DRAW CLOSE TO GOD!***

And maybe the reason the Lord has put this on my heart is because of all that we have been through this past year – 2020! I am almost afraid to say it.

Not really. But it was a trying year for many people. Not just because of the Covid-19 issue, but all that came out of that.

And what I found interesting is that how this one issue caused so many people to spend so much time digging into it. I am sure for many, they spent hours looking at this site and that site for information and some felt that this was not real and others felt it was real, but it is done by the government and I am sure that there are many other things in between.

And out of all this mess, I have seen a lot of confusion, a lot of anger, a lot of bitterness not from the world, but from Christians!

You see, the problem is where we are spending our time, or I guess I should say who are we spending our time with. Because whatever you invest your time into will be manifested in your life!

Let me give you this example.

I think we all know this, but if not, I will give you this health note. Eating McDonald's regularly, and I guess eating fast food in general, isn't a sustainable diet, it is not a healthy diet.

There was a 2004 documentary called *Super-Size Me* and it followed documentary filmmaker Morgan Spurlock as he ate three meals a day at the fast-food chain for 30 days. He gained almost 25 pounds and was told he suffered from irreversible heart damage.

Do you see that? What he filled his life with was then manifested in his life!

Now you may be wondering what in the world that has to do with what we are looking at here in the book of Ruth. It has everything to do with what we are studying here in the book of Ruth.

Keep in mind that Naomi, with her husband Elimelech lived in Bethlehem, the House of Bread. And her parents called her *"Naomi"* which means pleasant.

It is a beautiful name and yet, something changes as she spends time in Moab, in the toilet bowl you might say.

And as those ten years go by and she returns home to Bethlehem, everything has changed.

You see, at this point in her life, she was no longer feeling pleasant for the circumstances that life had brought her to, and she is now living in a place of bitterness.

I know that some commentators don't feel Naomi was bitter, but I think that is exactly what God is showing us here. In fact, it is exactly what she tells the women of Bethlehem, not to call her Naomi but call her "**Mara**", which means bitter!

And I want you to look at how she saw her present condition. She tells these women in Bethlehem, "**I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?**" Ruth 1:21.

In other words, she is blaming God for all her affliction and she is not yet taking responsibility for her own actions, and it would seem that she is bitter towards God and all that is happening in her life.

And that is something that we have to watch in our own lives. We can spend so much time in this world, consuming the things of this world that we become fat and lazy and bitter because of all that we see happening and yet, we should be the most blessed people on this planet!

Why?

Because we are children of God and as bad as things are getting, nothing will compare with what we have in Christ and what is ahead for us.

You see, if we are bitter, if we are losing touch with God and focusing more and more on all that is happening around us, we are not going to reflect the light of Jesus, it will be hidden under a basket of bitterness, anger, frustration and-so-on.

And thus, our study this morning – ***DRAW CLOSE TO GOD!***

And in these verses we will be looking at this morning, I have broken them down into four main points. They are,

CLEANSE YOURSELF – RUTH 3:1-3a

ANOINT YOURSELF – RUTH 3:1-3b

CLOTHE YOURSELF – RUTH 3:1-3c

OBEDIENCE – RUTH 3:3d-5

With that said, let's begin reading in Ruth chapter 3, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through the book of Ruth and we look at this important topic –

DRAW CLOSE TO GOD!

RUTH 3

VERSES 1-3a

The first point we will be looking at in our drawing close to God is we are to –

CLEANSE OURSELVES!

Now let me fill in some details here and then we will look at that point.

Remember back in Ruth chapter 2, we saw Ruth gleaning grain out in the fields, the leftover grain from Boaz's field.

Now, as we move into Ruth chapter 3 we see that the time of the barley and wheat harvest are over and it was now time to thresh the crop that they had brought in. We see that played out for us in Ruth 3:2 where we are told, **“Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our kinsman? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.”**

What that means is this. They would take the grain and they would beat or roll over the grain, thresh it and separate the grain out.

Then they would toss it in the air and the heavier grain fell to the ground and the lighter chaff would be blown away.

And in the end, they would gather up the grain.

They would also sleep by the grain they had threshed because they were protecting it from those who would come by and steal it.

That is what Boaz would be doing as he finished threshing the grain.

And I like what is happening in the life of Naomi. I think we see Naomi seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Instead of being bitter she is becoming pleasant because her focus is back on God.

And notice what the first thing she tells Ruth to do, “**. . . wash yourself . . .**” Ruth 3:3.

This should just make sense. There, in the Middle East, there is a lot of dust as well as heat and when you are out all day, working in the sun, you would get dirty and when you would sweat, that dirt would cake onto your skin! So you needed to wash yourself!

And what we see here is that Naomi is telling Ruth to prepare herself as a bride would prepare herself to be married. I do find that interesting and you will see why in a minute.

But what does that mean to us today, in our Christian lives?

Well, first of all we need to be washed to be saved! You see, our sins have separated us from God and the only way we can approach God is if we were sinless. That means there is nothing we can do on our own to save ourselves. We need someone to pay the debt of sin we owe, and that person is Jesus Christ!

Paul put it like this in Hebrews 9:22, “**And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

In other words, we have to be washed in the blood of Christ, we have to come to Him and ask Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives as we repent of our sins! Because “**... without the shedding of blood there is no remission.**”

And listen to what Jesus said on the night before His crucifixion when He instituted Communion with His men. In Matthew 26:26-28 we are told, “**And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’**”

Do you see that? His shed blood cleanses us, it removes the sin from our lives, all our sin; past, present and future sin because Jesus paid it all for us, the penalty that was due us, and thus, we are seen as white as snow. There is no record of our sin any longer!

That is what John tells us in I John 1:7, “**But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**”

Notice that Jesus, by His shed blood, has cleansed us from “**all sin.**” Not some sin. Not most sin. Not what I have done previously, but what I have done previously, now and in the future, “**all sin.**”

You see, before we can approach the Lord we must be washed in His blood and cleansed from our sins. Paul put it like this in Ephesians 1:7, “**In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.**”

Also, in Revelation 1:5 we are told, **“and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”**

I think that is pretty clear, Jesus has washed us from our sins by His shed blood!

Now, once we are saved, listen to what Paul tells us we need to do once we have been washed in the blood of Christ. In II Corinthians 7:1 we are told, **“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”**

Yes, God has cleansed us from all our sins, but in this life, we still sin. And thus, the call from Paul is to wash yourself, stay away from those things that are going to bring you down, that will cause you to sin!

This is not for salvation, but it is about identification. We are identifying ourselves with Christ because we are following His instructions to us, and we will cover that more as we finish up this morning and look at our last point – *OBEDIENCE!*

In I Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul wrote, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”**

If the pattern of your life is sin, then how in the world can you say that you are saved? It would be inconsistent with what you are doing. Imagine saying you are married, and you love your wife, and yet you beat her, you are in relationships with other women and that is enough to show that you can speak all you want about loving your wife, but your actions are showing something completely different.

The same is true with the Lord. If we say we love Him then we need to obey Him and again, we will cover that more in a few minutes.

Listen to what Paul said here about these believers in Corinth as he looks back at their past life and where they are now. He wrote, **“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”**

Your past with all its sinful ways is just that, the past. You may have done those things and you probably did those things, but like these Corinthians, as they came to Christ their lives changed as they were washed in the blood of Christ and their lives were set apart for God!

God has done that, now live accordingly!

Ray Stedman sums this up like this for us. He wrote,

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as he is pure. 1 John 3:3

What a powerful motivation this is to become like Him now; to accept your circumstances, to stop quarreling with what God sends to you, and begin in everything to give thanks, allowing these strange instruments of God’s grace to do their work in your life. Paul says, suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4).

A few experiences like this and you know absolutely that God is adequate, that He is able to work everything out. You know that every testing is another opportunity for God to demonstrate His great ability to work things out.

Thus hope does not disappoint (Romans 5:5); it gives confidence, a sense of unbeatable confidence that keeps you poised and assured under any circumstance. All that, is what happens now, as God begins to work through our circumstances to make us like Him. That is why John says that all those who have this kind of hope - this certainty - and understand this process purify themselves, even as Christ is pure.

But you say, Purify myself? That's the one thing I can't do. That is true. God knows that. He knows you cannot purify yourself, yet here He says to purify yourself. What does He mean? You purify yourself when you use the means He has provided for purification.

You mothers know how this works. Your little boy has been playing outside and is covered with dirt. He comes in, and you send him into the bathroom to purify himself. Like all boys, he turns on the water, runs his hands through it, turns the water off, wipes his hands on the towel, and comes out. You look him over and say, But you're not clean.

Well, he says, I washed myself.

But look at the dirt on your hands and on your arms and on your face and behind your ears. You're not clean at all. Then every wise mother asks, Did you use soap? Of course he hasn't, so she sends him back to use soap. What is soap? It is a purifying agent, a cleansing agent. It will do the job if it is employed.

So when he comes back the second time, he has washed with soap, and the soap has cleansed him, purified him. Now he says, Look, Mom, I've cleaned myself up. It is true that he did it, but he did it by using his mother's provision.

The provision for our cleansing is the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:7). If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

This means we must begin to take seriously this matter of a break of fellowship with Christ because of an impatient spirit or an ugly word or a lustful idea or thought that we have dwelt on. We must realize the stain of it does not disappear with the passage of time. It has interfered with our fellowship with the Son of God, and we must do something about it. We cannot simply forget it; we must do something about it. We must purify ourselves using His provision, that we might be clean.

Lord, teach me to purify myself using the means You have given to me to do it.

- <http://bit.ly/2X3QvDL>

Like Ruth, you must – ***CLEANSE YOURSELF!***

VERSES 1-3b

The second thing that Ruth is told to do is to – ***ANOINT YOURSELF!***

Let's face it, we still do that today. We put on some kind of fragrance or deodorant so that we smell good, we make ourselves presentable to people.

They used these fragrant oils to make themselves pleasant to others as well.

And remember what I have said. That Naomi is telling Ruth to prepare herself for marriage to Boaz, that she needs to make herself presentable to him.

Oil, in the Scriptures, speaks of the Holy Spirit and I like that because it does fit in with what happens in our lives as soon as we are washed in the blood of Christ. The Holy Spirit comes into our lives, makes Himself home in us to guide our lives and direct our lives, to make our lives presentable not only to the King of kings and Lord of lords, but also presentable to the people of this world so that they may see Christ in us!

That is what John tells us in I John 2:20, 27, **“But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. . . . But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.”**

And, like I have said, when we do, when we allow the Holy Spirit to fill our lives then the fragrance of Jesus permeates our lives!

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 2:14-16 as he wrote, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”**

Think about it like this. If you hang-out around a campfire, what are you going to smell like?

You are going to smell like a campfire because of your close proximity to it, the smell of the campfire has permeated your life!

That is true as we spend time with Jesus. The fragrance of Jesus will permeate our lives, not because we have done this or have done that, but just because we are close to Him.

So, the question is, ***“What kind of smell are you leaving behind?”***

Also, we have to remember that wherever we go, it doesn't matter who we are around, to all we are the aroma of God just as the incense burnt to the gods in a Roman Triumph Parade spoke of the aroma, the power of the Roman general and Rome itself.

But Paul tells us that this smell affected people differently. How so?

First of all, if you were part of Rome it was wonderful, joyous!

But if you were the defeated enemy it was the smell of death!

That plays out for us as well. As we share our faith, as we see people come to Christ, the smell, the fragrance from our lives, it speaks of everlasting life to them!

But for those that reject Jesus it is the smell of death, eternal separation from God!

Same smell, just the effects are different!

So as Ruth prepares herself, she anoints herself with oil and we as well, the moment we get saved are filled with the Holy Spirit, but we can hinder the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and then, the fragrance we are leaving is not that of Christ but of the flesh, which is not good.

Many years ago, A. W. Tozer wrote, ***“If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of this world, much of what the church is doing would go right on; and nobody would know the difference.”***

That should not be and if it is happening, and I think it is, it is because we are doing things on our own, we are guiding our lives and the sad thing is, as we do, the smell is not good!

Regarding these verses, Bob Hoekstra wrote,

The **fragrance of Christ** is one of the great **characteristics** that God wants to build into our lives by His grace. **“Now thanks be to God who . . .through us *diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge.*”**

This spiritual aroma, which results from getting to know the Lord, blesses the heart of God. **“For we are to God *the fragrance of Christ.*”** The Father loves to see the life of His Son being expressed in and through our humanity, even though this requires our dying to self. **“For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh”** (2 Corinthians 4:11).

As we are getting to know the Lord more and more, our God is not the only one who is impacted. This spiritual aroma of Christ impacts **every** person we meet. **“God . . . through us *diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge* in every place.”** This includes both the saved and the unsaved. **“For we are to God *the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*”**

This fragrance affects those who know the Lord: **“*the fragrance of Christ . . . among those who are being saved.*”** For those who are enjoying life in Christ, that heavenly scent in our lives is **“*the aroma of life to life.*”** Christ’s fragrance in us draws them to seek abundant measures of that life which they have already entered.

This spiritual scent also influences those who do not yet know our Lord: **“*the fragrance of Christ . . . among those who are perishing.*”** To them it is **“*the aroma of death to death.*”** They are dead in their sins, and this aroma makes them more aware of their deadness, more aware of their need for Christ. . . .

This work of God's grace is available to us every day we live and every place we go: **“the fragrance of His knowledge** in every place.”

- <http://bit.ly/3rLq1p4>

When my kids were young, we went to the Smokey Mountains on vacation and back then we did a lot of camping and we loved it. We saw so much of these United States as we camped.

But our camp site in the Smokey Mountains was a place where there was a lot of wildlife and one of the ones we saw every night were skunks.

Now this little family of skunks would walk by our campsite every evening and guess what they smelled like. Skunks! That stink permeated their fur, it emanated from them and you could not hear them coming, but you could smell them coming!

Again, when we approach people, do they smell us coming?

Now that can be good or bad depending on the smell you are emitting from your life. I pray that when people see us the fragrance of Jesus comes forth and ministers to them in such a way that they are drawn to Jesus!

Remember the story of Mary in Matthew 26:6-13. We are told, **“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’”**

Matthew tells us that it was Mary who took a pound of this very costly oil of Spikenard and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping His feet with her hair! So Mary is the one who does this act of worship and this act of worship cost her dearly but she did not see it as a loss.

We are also told that after Mary did this that His disciples were mad at her for wasting this fragrant oil. These are the men that were to carry on the ministry and they still didn't get it.

You see, in their minds it could have been used for the poor but instead it was wasted upon Jesus. I know, it sounds funny to put it that way but what other way are you going to put it.

And Matthew tells us the disciple that was the maddest at what Mary did was Judas Iscariot, the one who would betray Jesus! Not because he cared about the poor, he was in charge of the money!

And please understand that what we give to Jesus is never a waste, it is never thought of as nothing, it is precious to Him! And yes, worship does cost us something but if you truly love someone you will give to them that which is precious to you and for Jesus, most of all, it is your life!

Now think about this. She anointed Him with this oil, wiped his feet with her hair and that tells me that the fragrance that was upon Jesus was upon Mary as well.

She took on the fragrance of Jesus and I will tell you this. As you spend time with the Lord, as you are in His Word, you will take on the nature of Jesus. If you don't, you will smell like something else and that is not good!

Dr. F. W. Boreham tells of a visit to a town in the South of France. A number of women passed him, evidently going to their homes from their factory or place of occupation; and, as they passed, he noticed that their garments were fragrant. The reason, he ascertained, was that they were engaged in preparing scent from flowers, and it had distilled on their clothes. Those enjoying Christ's presence and engaged in presenting Him to others cannot but transmit His fragrance.

- <http://bit.ly/3aVO6TT>

So the second thing we are to do is – ***ANOINT YOURSELF!***

VERSES 1-3c

And the third thing that Naomi told Ruth to do was to – ***CLOTHE YOURSELF!***

What is the point here?

Keep in mind that Ruth was a widow and probably wore the attire of a widow. Now she is told to change her clothes and put on the attire of a bride!

I remember my grandmother on my dad's side, her husband died before I was born, and she wore a black dress every single day. And then one year, I don't know why, I think my parents bought her this dress, and for some reason she put it on. And I still remember it to this day, she wore a blue dress.

And for me, it was the strangest thing because I never saw her wear anything but black, a sign of mourning.

For Ruth, it was time to change her clothes to that of a bride. No more mourning but it is time to rejoice!

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 61:1-3, **“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”**

This is what our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has brought to us. That joy is found in the Messiah, in Jesus and thus, as a people, as a Church, we should have great joy because we have Jesus!

Martyn Lloyd Jones put it like this in regard to a joyful church,

As we face the modern world with all its trouble and turmoil and with all its difficulties and sadness, nothing is more important than that we who call ourselves Christians, and who claim the Name of Christ, should be representing our faith in such a way before others as to give them the impression that here is the solution, here is the answer. In a world where everything has gone so sadly astray, we should be standing out as men and women apart, people characterized by a fundamental joy and certainty in spite of conditions, in spite of adversity.

- Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, p. 23

You see, as Christians we have this great joy not because we are so good, but that it is His righteousness that has been imputed into our lives by faith.

That is what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

I like the way that The Living Bible puts this verse. It is simplistic and I like that. It says, **“For God took the sinless Christ and poured into him our sins. Then, in exchange, he poured God’s goodness into us!”**

Thus, as we come to Christ we have to put on the new garment or the robe of righteousness.

You cannot enter in before the presence of God with your own filthy garments.

Paul once again tells us in Philippians 3:9, **“And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”**

You see, it is then and only then that we can approach the Lord and fellowship with Him, when we are washed by His blood, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and righteous in His robes!

Let me share with you a few verses dealing with how we should clothe ourselves.

In Isaiah 61:10 we are told, **“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.”**

Isaiah speaks of what the Lord has done for us, not what we have done, but what He has done! What has He done? He has, **“... clothed me with the garments of salvation ... covered me with the robe of righteousness ...”**

You can't earn salvation, your life is not righteous and thus, our only hope is the Lord, and He has done these things for us! You see, the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness are obtained by faith in Christ.

And yes, it is the Lord who clothes us in His righteousness, but we also need to live accordingly.

What do I mean by that?

I mean that we are to put off the old life and put on the new life we have in Christ. Paul put it like this in Ephesians 4:22-24, as he tells us, **“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”**

This is important for us to understand. Before we can walk in purity, we have to fill our minds with pure things because if you don't, you will not walk in purity and holiness because your thinking is off!

Or think of it like this. You will never live like a Christian until you start thinking like a Christian. I hope that makes sense to you.

And Paul's point is simple here. When you first were saved this is not what you learned of Christ and yet some have walked backward into the old ways, not walking in purity!

You see, we don't just add Jesus to our old life, the old life is dead, crucified with Christ and we are a new creation in Christ. Folks, there must be a break with the past!

I am absolutely convinced that the reason so many Christians are living worldly lives is because they're thinking worldly thoughts.

Their minds are still conformed to this world's way of thinking and they have not allowed them to be transformed by the renewing that comes from God's Word.

And I have also seen this with some. They think that the Christian life is all about knowing facts regarding the Scriptures.

Now don't get me wrong, having the correct doctrine is important for us but unless you apply that doctrine to your life, it is worthless, it is empty.

And it is a choice on our part, a choice we must make and as we surrender our lives to Him, walking in His ways, our mind will be transformed.

With our minds being transformed our actions will flow from this new nature we have in Christ as Paul shows us in Romans 12:1-2, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

You see, to learn Christ is more than just knowledge about Him; it is an intimate relationship with Him. It is a communion with our Lord and Savior.

Thus, as you read God’s Word, as you hear God’s Word being taught, He will convict you of sin, encourage you as needed, He will bless you and-so-on.

Learning Christ is not just learning about Him but making Him part of your life!

Now let me deal with this because some are confused by it and that is this idea of the **“old man”** and linking it to being the **“old nature”** or our fallen sinful nature that we inherited from Adam.

We saw this in Romans chapter 6, but it does bear repeating here. You see, the **“old man”** isn’t our old nature because our old nature doesn’t *grow* corrupt, **it already is corrupt.**

There is no way we can **“put off”** the old nature, it will be with us until we die or the Rapture when it will be finally shed with our physical body - what Paul called **“the body of death.”**

In fact, Paul tells us in Ephesians that our **“old man”** is our former *conduct*. (Which we can and must put off every day)

The old nature is just that - your *nature* which you inherited from Adam. It speaks of what we *are* in Adam, not what *we do*.

So then, the “*old man*” is not my old nature.

The “*old man*” is my old conduct or lifestyle, the old desires, my old habits and actions that have died with Christ and are now buried with Him in death. In other words, the death of the old life.

And here’s the thing, and it should just make sense. We are told to “**put off**” the old man and his wicked ways, because, if you don’t, you will continue to become more and more corrupt.

The old man, that sin nature is like an ugly monster, the more you feed it the more it grows and the more it grows the more it wants to be fed!

Put it off, put it away, discard it from your life or it will control your life! Put on Christ instead!

Paul put it like this in Romans 13:14, “**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.**”

And in Colossians 3:8-11 Paul wrote, “**But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.**”

Put off the old man and put on the new man, put on Christ let Him fill your life and overflow your life to touch the lives of others by what we do and what we say!

And I think we all understand that, from a physical standpoint, what we put into our bodies affects the health of the body.

But what about our spiritual health, how is that affected?

We are told in Proverbs 23:7, “**For as he thinks in his heart, so is he . . .**”

And Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, “**. . . For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.**”

Yes, physically you are what you eat, but spiritually you are what you think!

So, Paul told us to put off the old man and put on the new man, put on Christ and he is going to begin with the transformation of our mind. Instead of focusing on the things of this world, we are to be focused on the things of God.

As we have looked at what Ruth was told to do and have seen how we are to apply these things to our own lives as Christians, remember what they are. We have seen that we are to ***CLEANSE OURSELVES, ANOINT OURSELVES, CLOTHE OURSELVES***, and lastly, and the key to all of this and we have touched on it looking at these other points – ***OBEDIENCE!***

VERSES 3d-5

Notice all that Naomi told Ruth to do and the response of Ruth is beautiful. It is a response that is born out of humility! She did not demand anything, but willingly submitted her life to Boaz. Notice what she tells Naomi again, “**. . . ‘All that you say to me I will do.’**” Ruth 3:5.

Now let me say this, because as some read this, they feel that Ruth is offering herself to Boaz in a sexual manner. Not at all!

I think the reason that some feel this way is because of the society we live in today, but that was not what Ruth was doing!

As I have said, the behavior of Ruth, in the culture of that day, was an act of total submission to Boaz. A servant would lie at their master's feet and be ready for what the master tells them to do.

And again, isn't that what we are to do?

Of course it is. We are to be bondslaves of Christ, ready to do all that He tells us or as Paul put it in Romans 12:1, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, [or spiritual worship].”**

Ruth was putting her life in the hands of her *GOEL*, her kinsman redeemer, just as we do with our *LORD!*

Now let me deal with this idea of obedience because for many, they will follow the Lord until they don't like what the Lord is telling them. That is not obedience!

According to Merriam-Webster, obedience's definition is ***“the act or instance of obeying; the quality or state of being obedient.”***

Furthermore, the definition of obedient is ***“submissive to the restraint or command of authority: willing to obey.”***

As Christians, that is exactly what we are to do, obey the Lord, not just when we want, but all the time!

Jesus said in John 14:15, **“If you love Me, keep My commandments.”** That should just make sense. Our love to the Lord is seen in our obedience to Him! And let me also say this. We are not going to be perfect here, but what is the passion of our heart? Don't we want to please the Lord and obey the Lord in all that we do?

I think we do and thus, when we don't, we feel bad. That is a good response because if you were comfortable in disobeying the Lord, that would not be good. Repent and get right with God and keep on walking!

James reminds us, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**” James 1:22.

The Amplified Bible puts this verse here in James 1:22 like this, “**But be doers of the Word [obey the message], and not merely listeners to it, betraying yourselves [into deception by reasoning contrary to the Truth].**”

For Ruth, she was not just a hearer of the truth, but she was a doer. She obeyed what she was told.

And the same should be true for us. We can't just pick and choose what we like and don't like. God has spoken to us and we need to obey as Ruth did!

I pray that you are encouraged this morning. I pray that you are challenged to walk closer with the Lord.

What we are seeing here is that Ruth is preparing herself for marriage just as we await our marriage with the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ!

And thus, we should be ***DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD!***

Look at what we have seen this morning. You are to . . .

CLEANSE YOURSELF

ANOINT YOURSELF

CLOTHE YOURSELF

OBEDIENCE

And I will close with this to show you the importance of obeying what the Lord has told us in His Word, for He knows best. We are told,

Robert Kupferschmid was an 81-year-old with no flying experience. However, due to a tragic emergency, he was forced to fly an airplane. On June 17, 1998, he and his 52-year-old pilot friend, Wesley Sickle, were flying from Indianapolis to Muncie, Indiana.

During the flight, the pilot slumped over and died at the controls. The Cessna 172 single-engine plane began to nose-dive and Kupferschmid grabbed the controls. He got on the radio and pleaded for help.

Nearby were two pilots who heard the call. Mount Comfort was the closest airport, and the two pilots gave Kupferschmid a steady stream of instructions of climbing, steering, and - the scariest part - landing.

The two experienced pilots circled the runway three times before this somewhat frantic and totally inexperienced pilot was ready to attempt the landing.

Emergency vehicles were called out and ready for what seemed like an approaching disaster. Witnesses said the plane's nose nudged the center line and bounced a few times before the tail hit the ground. The Cessna ended up in a patch of soggy grass next to the runway. Amazingly, Kupferschmid was not injured.

This pilot listened and followed those instructions as if his life depended on it - and it did. Imagine what would take place in the lives of believers if we listened to and obeyed the Word of God with the same earnestness.

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