

# “How Much Thanks Is In You?”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016

You may be seated, Saints. Ain't it good to be in the House of the Lord? Congratulations to all of y'all one-hundred-and-eight-years-old not having a World Series victory fans. Okay, got that out of the way. For everybody who's been waiting, I've heard so much... God bless you. God bless you, God bless you. Five million people, huh? Five million people showed up to hear a baseball team, you know, lift a trophy in the air. And, that's not a bad thing, because, if the Orioles would have won it, I would have wanted to be there. So that's not a bad thing. But, what would it be like, to have five million people, gathered around, their hearts ready, and their hands ready, their minds right, to give a praise unto the one true and wise God. To lift up *that* banner; what would *that* be like? I heard, when it was a hundred and twenty, and they were all in one mind and one accord, I heard God answers with the sound of a rushing and mighty wind. That's what I heard, that's what I heard.

So, giving honor to God who is the head of my life; our Maker, our Creator, our Sustainer, the lover of our souls, our Alpha, our Omega, our beginning and our end, the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, that bright and morning star, He who makes a way where there is no way, and in Whom there is no shadow of turning, nor failing. Giving honor to that God. Giving honor to Him. Giving honor to Him, giving honor to that God. Giving honor to all of those who have come and stood in the gap to make up the hedge; from our founding pastor and his family to our pastor and his family, and all those who have stand in the gap and made up the hedge. And, giving honor to all of you, who present ourselves to none other than the only one true and wise God, that he might answer according to your petition, because He said, “According to your requests, let it be unto you.” (Psalms 21) Amen.

This month is the month that is set aside for Thanksgiving. And, actually, that's an inaccurate statement; actually it's one day—Thanksgiving is just one day in the month, but, it's supposed to be, as Christians, take the month—especially as this congregation—take the month, and set it aside as the time to give thanks. And, with that, our theme of the month is going to be:

**Mark 8:6** *And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.*

That is our theme for the month, our theme Scripture for the month: A time to give thanks. But, our Scripture theme for today—we're going to do a little bit of reading today. We're going to go through some Scriptures to, actually, to set a tone, to set a tone. Something that God has really laid on our hearts. From the Book of Ruth, chapter one:

**Ruth 1:1-17** *Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his*

people in giving them' bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me, And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

If we could bow our heads for just a moment: Lord, what an auspicious time that You would bring us before. And, God, we continually are in awe at Your majesty and Your power, God, at Your omnipotence, and, yes, omniscience, God, and, then, You are ever-present; You are always with us, God. You watch over us, and, who, but You, could do all the things that You do? We thank You for a time that we could come and bless Your name, in a body of believers together, to know You are the only One, risen, true, and wise God. And, we ask, Lord, that You add a blessing to Your Word, as we read and go through, as we study, and as we learn, God, that You would give us the blessing that You ordered for our lives, this day. And we do, we do, we pray and claim in Your holy name, the name of Jesus. And every one said, amen. Amen.

So, first of all, I want to talk a little bit about the theme of the month. From Mark 8:6, I'm going to talk just briefly about it. It's very important that we know the pretext of this Scripture.

**Mark 8:6** *And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.*

So, the Lord has this multitude there, that was following after Him, and they needed something to eat, after those three days were come across. And he said, "Well, what do you have?" and the disciples brought unto Him the seven loaves. And that's all this Scripture right here talks about. There's more that talks about more, but this one talks about the seven loaves. And they brought Him the seven loaves; the Lord said, "Oh, bring them to Me." And, as they brought the seven loaves of bread to feed thousands of people, He asked them to sit down. He gave them an order. He gave them a preparation to receive what He had for them. He asked them to get ready, He sat them down, and, then, the very next thing the Lord God did, He gave thanks. He gave thanks. He didn't talk about "Well, it's only such a little bit..." He didn't say, "I don't even know if they're fresh or moldy..." He didn't say none of that! He gave thanks, and then He break it, and then He gave it to the ones whom He had called. He gave it those who He had called, and He had them distribute to those who were without. The order of the blessing for God, and God's people. Because, first, there is a preparation for the blessing that he wants to give. And, then, His people have to give thanks. It doesn't matter what it looks like, it doesn't—this is not the message; this could easily be the message, but God really laid something else on my heart. This is not the message, but this has to be said: It doesn't matter what it looks like. It doesn't matter if it's hot, cold; it doesn't matter if it cost a lot,

or it cost a little. If God gave it to you, you have to give thanks that it might accomplish His purpose in your life, and then, to the ones whom He has called to do the job. This particular job was seven loaves to feed the people, but, He's called us all to do jobs on our jobs, in our families, in our ministry. He's called every one of us to do something, to be faithful with Him. So, we prepare ourselves. We give thanks to God for the calling, and what He's supplies us with. We make sure we're prepared, we give thanks, and then we receive what He has, and then we distribute to those He has called us to minister to. That is God's blessing. Without that thanks, without that blessing, thousands of people would not be fed. Literally, those are ours, those that He has called us to minister to. If we don't prepare ourselves, we don't give thanks, we don't receive what He specifically has for us, we can't do His job that He wants us to do. That's not the message; it could be, but that's not the message. It had to be said, though. You ever have something that just had to be said, you know it just had to be said? That had to be said.

So, we read some from Ruth, chapter one, verse one through seventeen, and, to provide a little bit of background here, it's important to know that there was a famine in Bethlehem-Judah, and, so, because there was a famine, Elimelech said, "I got to move my family. We've got to get some food. We're going to the place of Moab, because they've got some food, and we can survive." And, that's not uncommon. Nowadays, if you can't find a job, you go to someplace where you can get a job. "If I can't feed my family, if I can't feed myself, if I can't put gas in my car, if I can't catch the bus, if I'm distraught and distressed, I got to go to where I can take care of myself and those whom I have." That's something that's common. So, this is where Elimelech was. So, he moved his family over to Moab, a place where they could get food. His wife, his two sons. Moved there a little bit, doesn't even say how old they were at the time. After they were there for a little while, Elimelech dies, the patriarch dies. They married women from Moab in the land of Moab, they married, and the story goes on for a little while, ten years later, both of the two sons are dead. And, if we were to look at the story on face value, we would say, "What a sad story. Everybody's dying. What a sad story." But, that is not the *end* of the story.

It goes on to say in verse six, Naomi decides to go back to her country, go back to Bethlehem-Judah. She decided to go back, because she heard, "Oh, God has returned, and He's blessing the people there." So, she decides to go back, and, before she *completely* leaves, she says, "Well, I'm going to send my two daughters-in-law away. Well, they were kind of sad at this. Because, obviously, they had been with her for ten years or so. They were kind of sad that they had known Naomi all this time, and now there was a breaking up. And she tells them something specific: She tells them, "Go back to your people. Go back to your god." We're talking about thanks. The title of the message today is, "How Much Thanks Is in You?" How much thanks is in you? So, she tells her two daughters-in-law to go back. Because, you see, at the time, Naomi could only see, she could only hope, she only had a vision for what was in front of her. She couldn't trust in the unseen, only in what she could see, and, what she could see was, "I don't have a man here to provide for me and my family. Okay, ladies, you've got to go. Why do you have to leave me? Because," and she goes on to say, in verse nine:

**Ruth 1:9**      *The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

And, then, in verse twelve, she says:

**Ruth 1:12-13**      *Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.*

So, Naomi could only see what she had; she could only see what was in front of her. She couldn't trust in what she couldn't see. So, she was sending the two away. And, they both were sad about this. Orpah, and Ruth, they were both sad, and they both said, no, initially. They both said, no, because, see, Naomi knew that they had what was called "levirate marriage", a levirate marriage, which means, back in those days, if a wife had a husband, and the husband died and she had no children, his brother was to raise up children in his (brother's) name, so that she wouldn't be alone. A levirate marriage. And, that's why she said, "If I did have children, would they wait for them? It wouldn't be fair to you. Go home." Well, that whole promise of everything tells her, "This is the only hope I can give you."

## Part 1: Levels of Thankfulness

So we have the three. We have the three here, we have Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth. Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth. Levels of thankfulness; levels of being thankful. Now, we can call it levels, we can call it degrees, we can call it shades of being thankful, but, the truth of the matter is, not everyone has the same level of being thankful. Not everyone is thankful the same way, or the same amount. Everybody knows this: You can give everybody the same gift at Christmas, and, some people, they're just going to hug your neck and be real thankful, and some people are just going to say, "Hmmpf," and push it off to the side. The people that want to say, "Hmmpf," you kind of want to, you know, exercise a little bit of—yeah, you want to slap them. There ain't no other way to say that. You want to just say, "Hey, I spent my time, my money, for you, and this is what you give me?" So, there's different levels of thankfulness; something—a point we're all familiar with. And, so, let's talk, first, about Naomi. She was old, older than everybody else. She was the oldest one in this story. And, so, she felt like, "Hmm. I'm the oldest one, even if I got married now, I probably couldn't have kids, but, even if I did have sons, what would that be to you two ladies? I'm the oldest, and, you know what? I've had a miserable time. The hand of the Lord is against me, because I can't get what I think I need." So much so, her thankfulness dropped so far down, that when she went to return—if we were to read on, and read into the next chapter, she did go back to Bethlehem-Judah, and the people saw her, and they said, "Hey, this is Naomi! Isn't this Naomi?" and, before they could call her and greet her, she said, "Don't call me Naomi! Naomi means pleasant; don't call me that! Call me Mara. Call me bitter. Call me blech! I ain't got nothing to be happy about! I ain't got nothing to be pleasant about! Talking about—Naomi, nothing!" And, many of us have been there. Many of us have been at the place, because of the circumstances of life, "Don't tell me I'm blessed. I'm going to do something. Don't tell me God's good to me! You don't know how I feel! Don't tell me those things! Just look at me and see how miserable I am. Hmmpf." Many of us have been there, and this, this is the plight of Naomi. Her level of thankfulness had dropped so far, "Can't look around and see what I'm thankful for, because I've lost so much."

Next, we have to talk about Orpah. Now, Orpah was raised a Moabitess. She was a daughter of the children of Moab, a Moabitess. And, all you really know about Orpah was that she married one of the sons of Elimelech, of Naomi. She married a son, one of the sons of Bethlehem-Judah, and he died, somewhere in that ten-year period, somewhere around there, and he was gone. And, they presented it, now, Naomi's leaving, and she tells Orpah, "Go home." And, at first, Orpah says no. At first, she says no. She weeps, and she doesn't go. At first, when she starts to resist, when she starts to resist, something happens. And we can identify with this, too. Sometimes, when you go, when you've got your mind made up to do something to do something for God and in God, sometimes something comes along to push you off-track, to try to dissuade you. "I'm thankful!" But, we have to measure how thankful. "Well, you know what? You done prayed for a long time, anyway, you might as well stop, and get something done. Well, you know, you've been giving thanks for a while, you ain't got time for all that. It's time to think about what's really going on." So, Orpah, because of Naomi, was convinced. Naomi laid out a great argument.

“Orpah, I ain’t gonna be having no more kids, and, even if I did, you ain’t gonna be waiting around. You may as well leave, go to your people, go to your god.” Now, let me tell you something about the Moabs, the Moabites. They did not have the God that the Children of Israel did. They did not have that God, the great Jehovah. They did not have the great I AM. They did not have Him whose name is Jealous. They did not have Him who splits the Red Sea. They did not have Him who came and delivered the people from Egypt. They did not have that God! They had other gods, but their main one was a god Chemosh. Chemosh. Yeah, and they had figures, and they had images, but Chemosh was kind of an angry god. And, one of the things that you did for their god, of their nation, was you gave human sacrifices. People would offer their children to Chemosh. That’s the god that she left, that Naomi convinced her to go back to. That’s the god that Naomi said, “Return!” And she went, knowing what that god had to offer, and what Naomi’s God had to offer, but she was convinced to go, convinced to leave. That’s Orpah, and the sad part about this is that, when she left, that’s the end of the story, as far as Orpah’s concerned. It doesn’t continue on, as far as, when somebody left from following after that true and wise God. That’s the end of Orpah, as far as the story goes, not as far as the message goes. But, as far as the story goes, that’s the end of Orpah. Now, she didn’t realize, as so many people do, that she just left too early; that God was working something out. She didn’t realize that. She didn’t realize that God had it in His hands, if she would just trust Him, if she would not listen to everybody else, and just trust Him. Orpah. So, she leaves.

And, next, we have, of course, Ruth. The book is named after her. Now, whereas Naomi did not know to be thankful for her situation and for what she had, Ruth, on the other hand, did. And Ruth entreated her, she said, “Don’t even tell me, don’t even mention—where you go, I’ll go; where you stay, I’ll stay; your people is my people; where you die, I’ll die; and, where you go with your God, I go, with you and your God.” Because, you see, Ruth knew where she came from. She knew that this God was different from everything else she’d ever come in contact with. Ruth knew that, “I’d rather have every single problem you have, Naomi, and have a God who can deliver, than to go back, and have spoiled onions, and garlic, like they did back in Egypt, and all the things in Moab. I’d rather be poor in God’s house, than rich with the things of the world. Naomi, I’m with you, whether you like it or not. Whether you like it or not. I’d gladly go through it, as long as I can have God!” And so many of us know that story. Many of us know that on a personal level. Temptations, battles, trials, people talking down to you—I know I ain’t alone. You know that you had to make a decision, somewhere along the line, it’s either Jesus or everything else! And the very fact that you can come, and raise your hand, and say, I choose Jesus. I choose Jesus, over and over—I chose Him this morning, I’m choosing Him now, and, later on today, I’m choosing Him again. I chose Him thirty years ago, twenty years ago, ten years ago; I chose Him last week, this week, and, I’m choosing Him next week if I live that long.

Now, Ruth knew that she couldn’t see what was going to happen, but she knew, “If I had God, I’m going to be all right. I don’t know how all right it’s going to be, but, he will be able to keep me. I’ve seen Him do it.

So, her lot became that she was a gleaner, a gleaner. She was a gleaner. The attitude of a gleaner has to be super-humble. Now, in the Book of Leviticus, chapter nineteen, it talks about gleaning. Now, gleaning—in the Old Testament, they weren’t—when they had a field, and they had crops and everything, they weren’t—by a commandment of God—they were not supposed to harvest the entire crop. They weren’t supposed to take it all for themselves. In the Bible it says when one had plenty, they were not to glean their field. In fact, this is where the edict comes:

**Leviticus 19:9-10**      *And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field [You had to leave the corners of your field untouched.], neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. [Gleanings means every little scrap on the ground. They weren’t supposed to take every little thing and make it so that it’s bald and bare.] And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt*

*thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: [and then God follows that up by:] I am the LORD your God.*

“This is a commandment; this, you will do it. I gave it to you, and I’m telling you what you can do with it. You leave some for other people, for the poor, and the strangers!” And those sacrifices and offerings continued in tithes and offerings; you find yourself that have to give, and you give to others. That is the same principle. God set up the first charity. God set it up, made sure that people were going to be taken care of. But the attitude of a gleaner had to be very humble. “I ain’t got nothing for myself, all I can eat is—gather the scraps that they left on the ground from when they harvested, I can only get the little bit that’s left, and that can be enough. That can be enough to keep me, today. Tomorrow I’ll have to glean some more.”

So, this attitude of gleaning, of humility, of bowing down to get the scraps, you had to make a choice in that. Either you were going to be humble, or you were going to be mad. “Why is God not giving me my own field?” Or, you can be “...thankful to get the little bit I can get, to help myself, or whoever else I come in contact with, so that we can have something. God has provided.” And He let them know, “I am the Lord your God. This is what I leave for you.”

So, people everywhere have something to be thankful for. If you’ve got any blessing at all, that’s a, “Thank You.” Anything at all. “It wasn’t a whole lot, thank you Lord. Well, I wish I had more. Thank You, God, for what You have given me. Lord, I start there, because that’s where the blessing starts. It starts at, “Thank You.” And, all of us, I could be feeling a little better. Brother Andy, I could be feeling a little better, but, I’m good enough to be in the House of the Lord, and say, “Thank You, Jesus!” That’s enough to get me started, right there. “Well, I ain’t got a whole lot of gas, but I got enough gas to get to work and to the gas station. Thank You, Lord!” “Well, my electricity might not have made it all the way, but, it was a warm day today. Thank You, Lord Jesus.” I’ve been there. I’ve been there. I’ve been there. I don’t know if anybody else has been there, and, if you don’t be thankful for what you think is a little, let God take that away. Let God answer you according the rebelliousness and stubbornness, and then, maybe, you’ll talk—I knew—I’ll tell this story right quick: I knew a brother, once, he complained about having a job for ten dollars an hour. Complained so much, didn’t like it so much, he quit the job; threw it back in the face of the employer. And I watched him look for a job for weeks and weeks, until, finally, finally, we had a prayer, and he said, “You know what? I complained about making ten dollars an hour, and God is showing me, I would take that, and I wouldn’t complain, if He would give it to me, right now.” That’s where God was trying to get this particular brother. And you know what? Because he prayed, and sought, and humbled himself, God gave him a job making double that, and we told him, straight up, you better start in the altar and say, “Thank You.” You better start there, unless we have to teach this lesson all over again.

So, there’s people that, we have to say we are thankful, today. If you had a blessing in your family, it’s enough to say, “Thank You.” If you have a blessing in your health, you’ve got to say, “Thank You.” If anybody has ever been snatched back from the hand of death, you know what? You should never stop saying, “Thank you, Lord,” unless you have to teach again. I’ve been there. I’ve been there. I’ve been there. To trust in God one hundred percent; I don’t know how this was, but I was driving, and there’s no way to drive a vehicle, when it’s in the air, and rolling around. There’s no way to drive; you are along for the ride. And God told me I am one hundred percent in His hands. Thank You for the lesson, Lord, I remember it every day now. Every day, unless You have to teach me again. We have people who are thankful for everything that’s been happening in their lives. And, we have to make sure that we do deliver a thank You to God.

Right quick, I want to mention something: I had an opportunity to go to Baltimore, two weeks ago, and, my nephew had asked me to marry him and his fiancé. And, I told him, “You know I am a Christian minister.” And he said, “Yeah, I do, Uncle Parrish, but I want you to do it. I think it would be

kind of neat.” “Neat,” he said. Well, we’ll see. And, so, I went back to Baltimore, now, right quick: many of you know that God saved me from being Muslim, and many of you also know that I come from a family where the father and mother weren’t together. Yeah, that’s the household. So, that made for a very interesting environment. What happened, here, was, as I counselled my nephew and his fiancé, I told them, “This isn’t going to be a Muslim wedding, or one of those who, everything you say goes. I call on only one God, the Almighty God, and I ask Him to bless this. That’s the only way—if you’re calling me as a minister, that’s the only ministering I do.” And they said, “Oh. Well, okay.” So, we talked about how, “Marriage is something that’s holy and sanctified before God! He chose it, He ordained it! He blesses it! And this is where you’re walking to. You’re asking for God to lead you and guide you in this.” And they said, “We never heard this before.” “That’s okay; you’re hearing it now. And, furthermore, when we finish this counselling session, we’re going to pray.” And my nephew said something very interesting to me: he said, “Uncle Parrish, I’m twenty-six years old; I have never prayed. Never. I don’t know what that is, and that’s why you can’t ask me to do it.” And I said, “My nephew, that’s why I’m here, to help you.” And then I led, and he prayed, and it was the humblest and most sincere prayer, as he asked for God to touch his family, God to touch him, give him the things he didn’t have, and then his wife, with tears—well, she’s his wife, now—but his fiancé, with tears in her eyes, said, “I’ve always wanted a family in God. Now, this is the beginning. This is the beginning.” Amen. But, I had prayed for this, and, what happened was, at the rehearsal for the wedding, the groomsmen, and the bridesmaids, they didn’t know what to do. They were all in their twenties, and they didn’t know what to do. Why? Because, almost none of them had ever seen a wedding, because that’s not the custom, now. The custom, in that neighborhood, is not to get married, it’s just to live together. And I told them, “Okay, I am the Christian minister, here, this is how it’s going to be. I’m going to tell you groomsmen how to act, and you bridesmaids how to act. This is a marriage before God.” And they listened like they were in class. And, afterwards, they said, “You know what? We’ve never heard that before. Please tell us if we’re doing it right.” And then my nephew said, “Uncle Parrish, everybody wants you to come back and help us.” And, then, that isn’t the end of the story. And, so, I performed—and I’m saying this, because of Ruth—performed the wedding; it was a beautiful wedding, beautiful wedding. And, after the wedding—and, yes, I have no shame in my game.—“I call on the one true and wise God. I don’t care who you are. We call on Jesus. You are the One who blesses, You are the only one.” And, after the whole ceremony, the Muslim part of my family, wanted to challenge me, but I think they really understood, “He really calls on a real God.”

And, I got a phone call, I got a phone call from somebody. This phone call was from somebody I don’t have the greatest relationship with, for many years, for many, many years. And, as I got this phone call, they made comments about the wedding, and how it was, and they made some different points about what happened here, why was this, why was that? And, I was wondering why they were calling me, when we really don’t have the most fantastic relationship, and I asked God, “Really, what’s this about?” and then, they got around to asking me—in a round-about way, do I love them? Do I love them? And I was really taken aback, but I was not ashamed to say, “Yes, I do love you.” And then, God showed me that they asked me if I loved them, because, to them, I represent this Christian Almighty God. And if—they have been Muslim for many, many, many, many years—is it possible that, if I love them and could ever forgive them for everything that had ever been between us, then maybe, just maybe, the God that I served, as an example, He could love them, too, and can forgive their estrangement, and not knowing, and attacking the principles of Christ. The point is, Naomi didn’t even realize, she was the representative of the one true God, and the scraps that she had, when she was pushing everybody away, even the scraps that would fall from the table, was more than enough for Ruth to take, and there’s a Book in the Bible called Ruth. The book isn’t called Naomi. It isn’t called Orpah. It isn’t called Boaz. The Book, forever, is called Ruth. So, what a huge victory this has been, to be in her family.

And, lastly, last thing:

## Part 2: Lost the Fight

You see, I'd like to make the point that Naomi had the same thing that can hit people who have been around for a while; she had, what they call, "lost the fight." She lost that vision and that newness, and that happiness, and that enthusiasm, and that joy, and that preciousness that God gives, and was swept away by other things and she was at the place where she was throwing up her hands, saying, "I have nothing to offer," discounting that God. We call it lost the fight, because, so many people, especially if you've been around for a while, it's easier to receive that spirit. "I can't get as happy as I used to, and, praying, it just makes me tired. I'm tired of people talking about it. You wear me out!" And, the truth of the matter is, in Daniel 7:25, it says the evil one, he's the one behind trying to wear you out, so, the message here is, get your fight back. Get your fight back. If the devil has stolen it, has deceived you, put you in a situation where you made mistakes and messed up, God will receive you back every single time. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9), the Bible says. We turn around, come to God, "Come to Me," He said, "all ye that are labor and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28). "Take My burden upon you, and find rest to your souls," (Matthew 11:29) the Bible says. Get your fight back. "I don't have the compassion I used to have." Get your compassion back. "Well, you know what? I don't have the joy that I used to have." The Bible says the joy of the Lord will be used for (Nehemiah 8:10)—get your joy back. "Well, you know, I lost my zeal. I used to study, and I used to really love it, but I've been out of that whole realm for a long time." Get you study back. Whatever the devil tries to take from you, don't give up the fight. Pick back up your sword! Pick back up your shield! Encourage somebody, who else has lost the fight, and let Naomi know—which is what Ruth did, this is what Ruth did—she let Naomi know that, as much as she cleaved, when she found Boaz, and that whole situation—we'd have to read on a bit, and we're not going to get into that, we don't have time—that whole situation that transpired, Naomi finally saw, because somebody didn't let go, that God had this thing, all the time, all the time. She just didn't know how it was going to happen. And, so, at the end, Naomi begins to bless the Lord for what He shows her, through Ruth.

So, they say, "What do you get when you play country music backwards?" They say—anybody ever heard that one before?—"You get your wife back, you get your dog back, you get your truck back, you get your car back, you get your house back, you get your job back, when you play it backwards. I heard that some ties ago, but I have a different question, I have a different question: What happens when you remember the rock from which you were hewn and the hole of the pit from which you were dug? What happens when you remember what God did for you? What happens when you remember victory, after victory, after victory? God, He never fails. What happens when you say, "Man, every time I turn to Him, and I got serious about it, God answered me according to my needs—not my wants, but my needs."? What happens when you say, "God, You've never stopped being good to me." You get what the prodigal son had, where it said he came to himself (Luke 15:17). You get what happened to David, where his men talked of stoning him, where he encouraged himself (1 Samuel 30:6). This is the path I'm supposed to be going. This is what Ruth taught Naomi. And the promise is, if we strive lawfully we shall be crowned.

And last Scripture, Apostle Paul wrote it, but many people have been living it, both before and after:

**Philippians 1:6** *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

As the Lord has begun His work in His children, He will finish it. Give the Lord a praise.