



Generations

Part 2 – When You Love Family, You Provide For Family

Pastor Ted Cunningham

We're in this Book of Ruth and today we really hit the topic of poverty. Last week, we were talking about what your family's plan is, and how God will use your family's story. Whenever I'm preparing a message, I just try to think about all the stories happening in our church. This week, not only was I able to think of the stories of people in our church, but I ran into them in stores. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? You start thinking of someone and then there they are at Walmart or at Andy's. I could name all the food places I've been to this week and all of the snacks that I've had, but it's part of pastoring.

We have grandparents in here that God is using their story. We have grandparents that are raising their grandchildren. We have grandparents for whom, physically and financially, and to be honest with you, emotionally and relationally, it's a challenge. To my senior adult friends in here, you know how tired you get. Can I get an amen? So for grandparents to raise grandchildren, we want you to know, at Woodland Hills FAMILY Church, that we recognize how difficult that can be. This is one of the reasons we do things like the shoe vouchers. We just want to help make the burden a little bit lighter whenever we can. We have single parents who are trying to get by, trying to make it. They're working multiple jobs; they're working very hard and they still can't pay all of the bills.

Today, we are going to talk about poverty. We're even going to use the term "welfare" because we are going to see that God, in a sort of way in the law, had a welfare program, ways to take care of those in poverty. But, we really need to start rethinking poverty as a culture and especially as a church. As we see poverty today, we see the haves and the have nots. We see people that are really hurting. We think of poor and we think they are living outside, they're living down under the bridge, they're living in their cars. We see the term "homeless" and we think of someone who is going to sleep out under the stars tonight. But, we might need to start rethinking even what we mean by homelessness and how we can help.

I hope you know that there are people in here today, this morning... I know this for a fact. They don't have a home. Where they are going to sleep tonight is a day to day decision, a day to day thought, a day to day concern. They don't know and some are here, asking us how we can help. We want to help, but today we are going to look at the bigger plan for that.

This isn't meant to be humorous, but, earlier this year... There is a movie coming out at Thanksgiving called *Believe*. My friends put the movie together. It was filmed on the east coast. It's a great Christian

movie. They said, "Ted, we have the perfect part for you. We want you to be in the movie." It's not a comedy. There are funny parts in it, but I was not given a comedic role. I was given two lines. I think the whole movie pretty much pivots on these two lines. I didn't even have a name in the movie. My role was homeless man number 2.

I spent eight hours on set to deliver my two lines. It was me and about a hundred other people who were acting homeless. They didn't think I was good enough for homeless man number one, so they gave me homeless man number 2. Homeless man number 1 was a real actor from Hollywood. I have to be honest with you, I think he was a little smug. I should have been homeless man number 1...

We all got dressed up, and as I looked around, I thought it was interesting. I didn't realize they were intentional with this, but when I showed people pictures of me dressed as homeless man number 2, the number one comment I got was "You don't look homeless at all." They did that on purpose because most Christians today don't understand homelessness. When they think homeless, they think hobo. When they think homeless, they think someone who hasn't taken a shower for two or three months. The movie was very intentional with making sure the homeless looked like people who were getting up every day, going at it, but they just couldn't get ahead. That's true in our culture today. Today, we are going to look at God's grace and his plan. I want, with all those stories, for you to be thinking about people you know who are struggling financially.

We are in a political season, so I have to say this. And this is a political statement. Last week, I gave you things that were not political, but this is a political statement. We have to be careful with our political beliefs that we don't start to develop the have or have not mindset. We have to be careful, when we see someone who's homeless, that we don't develop the attitude that they are lazy.

I'm preaching to myself because as I've studied this week, the Lord has convicted me of a judgmental, republican attitude. I'm just telling you I can go there when I see people in need. I can go, "Why are you in need?" and I can automatically start asking the questions. A big part of it though is for 20 years in ministry, we've been fooled a lot by people. We have people that are truly con artists that come after us in the church, trying to get money. It becomes a challenge, it becomes very difficult at times to figure out those who are truly in need and working hard and trying to provide for their family and those who are lazy and they don't want to work and they just want to rip people off. I asked the Lord to give me more discernment. I don't want this attitude.

There's a great line, in the movie *Believe*, from a single mom trying to raise her son. The son is Isaac. A great young man plays his key role in the move. But, she has a line in that movie that I love. As she looks at Mr. Peyton, the one who owns the company that had to lay all these people off... It's a simple line. She says, "Here's the problem. People like you stop noticing people like me..."

In this political season, if we could just take a pause and look at God's plan today for how to deal with poverty. If poverty is part of your family's story, how can we as a church come alongside you and how can you continue to help your family and move forward with your family.

There's a great line that Compassion International uses. I heard this on Friday and I thought if that isn't what we need in our culture today. We think that the opposite of poverty is wealth. So like the goal is to move people from poverty to becoming wealthy people. The opposite of poverty is not wealth. The opposite of poverty is enough. The opposite of poverty is having enough, working enough, making enough to provide enough for your family.

Today, as we look at this, I hope you see God's plan unfold in your life and in your family. I hope you see that God does have a plan for taking care of those who need help. If you find yourself below what we would call the poverty level and you find yourself struggling, working hard and not able to pay the bills, this today is not a democrat or republican talk. This today is asking what God's plan is for caring for you and for your family.

To begin, I want to look at this major theme. If you are brand new to our church and you're joining us in this series, we are going through the Book of Ruth. If you have your Bible's, you can turn there. In four parts, we are looking at what your family's story is and asking you to reflect on how God has used you, your family, and the generations that have gone before you to bring you to where you are today. We talked last week about how your family shaped you, your family influenced you, but ultimately, your family doesn't define you. Some of you in here are breaking family curses. You're maybe going to break out of generational poverty. Maybe working wasn't modeled for you in your family and so you were just sitting around waiting for someone to come and take care of you. Maybe part of your story through this series is that you're going to have a change of heart and a change of mind to where you now go after it and you're like, "I'm not going to live this way anymore."

We saw the story last week, in Chapter 1, of Elimelek, who is from Bethlehem, Judah. He takes his wife and his two sons to Moab to try to get help for them because there was a famine in Judah. He goes and dies. His two sons marry, but then his two sons die and we're left with three widows in this story. By the end of Chapter 1, it's down to Naomi and Ruth. Ruth says, "I'm going to stay with you. I'm going to take care of you. Your God will be my God and your people will be my people."

In Chapter 2, we're going to see that Ruth goes even beyond that to say "I love you, Naomi. I want to care for you. Part of my love for you is I want to provide for you." We're going to introduce a new character into the story today named Boaz. In this story, we're looking at those moments we all have at movies where we say. "I didn't see that coming." We're going to look at the fact that Boaz comes in and extends grace to Ruth.

I want to look at this major theme that appears in the book. **God's sovereignty...** We talked about it last week. God has a plan. God is in control. We don't ever have to worry when tragedy strikes whether or not God is still in charge and God is in control. But then we looked at **Human Responsibility**. You and I make choices every day. How does my choice and God's plan work together? There are two ways to think about this.

The first way is to say God's sovereignty is apart from human responsibility. We put these two against each other. If you are student of theology, you know the two school of thought here. I'm going to use the word "extreme" to represent them. Extreme Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty over everything,

even your salvation. God has chosen, according to what we call even hyper Calvinism... God has a plan. God has chosen those who will be saved and those who will not be saved. God has predestined those who will spend eternity in heaven with him and predestined those who will spend an eternity separated from him in hell. That's the extreme. God's sovereignty... the plan is already predestined; he already knows, he's already decided.

Then you have the school of thought that we call Arminianism. Arminianism teaches human responsibility. This says you and I have a free will. God's not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repent, and you and I should make the decision to place faith in Jesus.

Some think these two ideas are opposed to one another. I've got another way that we need to look at it and it appears in the Book of Ruth and it's God's sovereignty *and* human responsibility. God is at work in the insignificant details of your life. In this story that we're looking at, we don't see a story of direct revelation, angelic visitors, or visible miracles. We see God's plan working out through everyday ordinary life. And now, in Chapter 2, as they've come from the land of Moab, back to Judah, in the Promised Land, we see God's plan working out through the lives of people. Here's what we want you to know and it's where we ended last week. **God works in the details of your life, your family, and yes, your work, even when you don't see it.**

Just be really honest. How many of you right now have a job you don't enjoy? Wow, we are a happily employed group of people. That is fantastic. Again, I feel I'll get a different response at 11:00. It'll be "Why do you think I have this coping mechanism? I hate my job." How many of you have had a bad job? How many of you had a job once that you hated, with an employer you hated, with a dominant man or woman boss you just couldn't stand, but that job led you to the better job you have today? You can now look back and say God was in the details. You made choices all along the way, but you saw God's plan unfolding.

Now we want to jump in to Ruth 2. It's a long chapter. I have promised Stephanie and the children's team that I will not be delivering a 53-minute sermon this morning. It went long last week. we're in Chapter 2. Remember we ended Chapter 1 with the barley harvest, so the whole thing is going to be in the context of work. We're going to read the whole chapter and I'm hoping, through this whole series, we read every verse of this four-chapter book as we see this beautiful story.

1 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek... This was Naomi's husband, and clan just means a group of families that descend from the same patriarch. **...whose name was Boaz.** So, he's introduced at the very beginning.

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi... This is the daughter-in-law, if you're just joining our series. Ruth is the daughter-in- law of Naomi and she made a covenant with Naomi. She said, "I'm going to go back with you. I want to be with your people and I want your God to be my God." But, now you have this pair, Naomi and Ruth, who are impoverished, struggling, in a place of deprivation and despair, but Ruth is going to deal with it. Ruth has a plan. **"Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."**

We are going to see this in a second. This is actually part of the Old Testament law that we call the Gleaning Law.

Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” I’m just wondering how many senior adults are being taken care of right now by children who get up every day and go to work and parents are like, “Go”. You have a responsibility. There are some folks in our church who are sending their parents off to work. There are adult children in our church that are sending parents off to work and spouses off to work. I say this from the heart of a pastor who loves you; it needs to be you getting off the couch and going to work. It needs to be you thinking through and asking the Holy Spirit to call you by name this morning. You say, “Ted, I have a disability.” Let me tell you, there are many places in Branson, Missouri that hire those with a disability. This isn’t me picking on your one particular story. I know there are some here right now who think I’m going after them. I’m not. I’m just saying if you are sending your parents, the grandparents of your children, off to work to provide for your children, it’s time for you to get up and go to work.

3 So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek. I think it’s important that we see “as it turned out” because Verse 1 introduced Boaz, but it doesn’t mean that Ruth knew this was Boaz’s field. It turned out that she happened to be in his field. So, she’s going to take advantage of the reaping laws.

Here are the reaping laws that we find in Leviticus. I want you to see this. This is what she is using. This is, of sorts, God’s welfare plan for those who are foreigners, those traveling through the land, and those who are in need.

Here’s what he tells the people in Leviticus 19. ***9 “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.”*** The stuff that falls. If you’ve ever picked at Persimmon Hill blueberry patch, you know there are probably more blueberries on the ground than we ever get in bags or buckets. Gleaning would be allowing those in need to go behind and not pick from the plant, not pick the grapes from the vineyard or pick the grain from the stalks, but to go on the ground and pick up anything that was left over. We use this term today. If you want to be successful at work, get behind someone who has gone before you and glean wisdom from them.

In many ways, this is what I did with Dr. Gary Smalley for years. I just went along and carried his bags. I wanted to glean information from him. Also, when he got to a place in ministry where he didn’t want to do some of the ministry anymore, he would start dropping stuff behind him and I would come behind him, gladly, and pick up what I would call table crumbs, the leftover part. This was the plan.

10 “Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.”

Notice it doesn’t say gather it all up, set it in the corner of the field, and do the work and harvest it, so we can have people deliver it to those in need. No. We need those in need that are hungry to start working. We need them to also come in the field and take the sweat of their brow to provide for their

family. They may not be rich like Boaz. They may not have a field. They may not have multiple fields. They may not have workers that can harvest for them, but they can get up each and every day and get busy and get after it.

So, this is the gleaning law. I just want to encourage my republicans to keep quiet because you are going to tick off the Bernie supporters, alright? I have to bring that up in jest because there are some of you who are going to be thinking socialism versus capitalism throughout the whole message. You're going to be thinking republican versus democrat. Let's stick with God's plan today. This is super important.

I have so many pastor friends that have told me I use way too much political humor and that I have to stop it because I'm driving people away. I go, "Well, we are trying to keep from going to a third service. That is a goal." I don't know if you know this, but a third service is a major hassle.

I said, "I think you guys are ridiculous for going through a political season and not even recognizing it. You have to talk about it."

Watch how this translates now into the New Testament in 1 Timothy 5. You've heard me share snippets of this, but here's the whole text.

3 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren... The key here is family. If a widow has family, the burden falls on them. Again, your parents are not the burden of the government. Your parents are your burden.

I'm going to brag on someone for just a second here and it's my mother in law who is taking care of her 91-year-old father right now. I'm watching this and I praise the work that she is doing and the way that she is caring and providing for him. We know that when you get into your 90s... And some of you won't experience that, but I'm going to tell you, being around many who are in their 90s, they start to not think properly, if you know what I'm talking about. Many things start to go wrong and there is nothing coming back from them, but all you're doing is caring for them. If you have someone in need in your family, it starts with you. This is where I say thank you and I praise the work of every grandparent in here who is taking care, and I mean physically, emotionally, relationally, and financially, of your grandchildren, you understand the burden for providing for family falls on the family first.

If there is one in need, the grandchildren, the children, ...**these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.** You've heard me say this before and it's like I tell Carson all the time. As I do things for him, I'm reminding him and Corynn that I can't wait for them to return the favor. "All these meals I'm buying for you, I'm one day going to sit there and you're going to bring them all back to me. All the times I wiped your rear-end... There's a day coming when you will return the favor unto your father."

Then Paul holds no words back. He says, **8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.** In a nutshell,

to provide for a family, here are the steps. It's super simple. You identify the need, you take initiative, and you work hard.

Let's look at that, picking the story back up in Verse 4. ***4 Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!”*** We are going to see in Boaz's character this chapter and all the way through Chapter 4. He is a man of great character before the Lord. In a very dark time in the Nation of Israel, in the period of the Judges, when everyone did what was right in their own eyes, Boaz was one who followed the line.

“The Lord bless you!” they answered.

5 Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters... This would be like the foreman. He asks about Ruth, this lady he sees who is now working in the field. ***“Who does that young woman belong to?”*** What family is she with, who is she here for?

6 The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. 7 She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now...” He is going to give her a glowing report after seeing her work for only one portion of a day. ***“...except for a short rest in the shelter.”*** So, he's already noticing Ruth's hard work.

This is a key to providing for our families. Hard work is a key to a good reputation. Whatever it is you do, whatever you're trade or practice, hard work is the key.

Colossians 3: 23 reminds us, as followers of Jesus, of the value of hard work, but to never forget who your real employer is. If you've had a difficult boss or you have one now, ***Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.*** You, as a follower of Christ, in the workplace, are presenting the gospel every day when you go in and work hard. People are like "What is with that guy's great attitude?" "Why is she always working hard and not getting here late and not leaving early. She takes short breaks, but she's after it. She's really producing for this company. What is going on?" That you would be able to return the glory to the Lord. "I am doing this because I know even when the boss is away, He's watching. I know when I don't have someone over my shoulders, looking at me... I work at home or I work at Starbucks or wherever it is I work, I know ultimately who the one is I report to."

This isn't a political statement, but it's just reminding us of where we are going today. In this country, it's supposed to be a land of equal opportunity, but we have many today who are confused, thinking we live in a land of equal outcome. We are transitioning as a culture to "It's not fair that that guy has what he has and I don't have it. It's not fair that he's a have and I'm a have not. I want to do whatever it takes for me to become closer to him and I'm not going to work towards it; I just want you to give it to me." This is the entitlement mentality. This is "You owe me."

I was in a setting a couple of weeks ago. A guy was sitting behind me and I was listening to this conversation. I could tell he was a successful business man. He was talking to a younger lady. It was almost like they became mentor/mentee very quickly. They had just been introduced to each other.

They were sitting right behind me. Here's what he said and I thought it was powerful. He goes, "Can I tell you what the problem is with the "everybody matters" culture?" My ears perked up because I could tell we were speaking the same language. He said, "I have to tiptoe around stuff at work because we live in this everyone got a trophy growing up. You just showed up and you got a trophy. You didn't have to succeed, you didn't have to win, you didn't have to work hard to win. You could lose the race and get the same size trophy as the guy who took first place."

He said, "The problem with that mentality is I've got a lot of lazy people. They show up and they want credit just for showing up. They want credit for going 'Hey, I have a wonderful personality; you should pay me for that personality.' We don't pay people for personality, we pay people for productivity."

I don't know if it was wrong, but there was one time I was really leaning back to hear. And I don't like to eavesdrop, but he was going back and forth. I could tell this young lady... Can I be honest? He was saying things to her that her father should have said. It's like she was hearing it for the first time. I don't know if it was wrong, but there was one point he said something and I went "Amen!" Oh, I can't believe that just came out of my mouth."

Do you know what the scripture says in Proverbs? Do you know what drives a person? It's hunger. Hunger drives them. When entitlement drives you, guess what? We are soon for collapse. If your family is built on entitlement, if your family is built on waiting around for people to level the playing field to give you stuff, it just doesn't work that way. I do agree we should be working to make sure everyone has equal opportunity, but the outcome falls on you. If you get an opportunity, take advantage of it.

Do you know what success looks like in our culture? There was a meme I saw online. You know it's bad when you start preaching memes. The meme said "In our country, success looks a lot like an old man in overalls who got up every day and went to work over 30, 40 and 50 years and at the end, he had some things. And now you have a new generation going 'I'll wait; I want some of what you earned.'" Rather than I'll go out and work for it. Some of you are going, "But, Ted, I am a special person. I have a great personality; people would love to work with me. And, Ted, my parents told me I should hold out for a management position because of how good I am at leading. They say I'm a natural leader."

Can I just encourage you...? And this is important in Branson. **Take any job while you wait for the perfect job to come along.**

I would love to do this one Sunday. We should play that Alabama song, *Forty Hour Week*, and then ask you... I've seen it online this week. Give us your first seven jobs. I'd love that. I've seen successful people listing their first seven jobs. Guess what? For most of them, their first seven jobs were nasty. If I were to go in here and ask people who have been able to provide for their family for 30 and 40 years, I would find out that early in their work history were jobs that were menial and boring and nasty and they were taking the jobs no one else wanted to do.

We had a staff member here years ago whose spouse worked for a parachurch ministry in town. She was an intern. I asked them one night at dinner how the internship was going and he piped up, frustrated, and goes, "The internship isn't going well."

I said, "What seems to be the problem?"

He said, "Well, they give her all the jobs that they don't want to do."

I go, "I think that's the very definition of an internship. You're doing what the boss did years ago, but now he has to actually go out and get new clients. He has to go out and talk to the customers. It doesn't make sense for him to make copies anymore, so he hired you or brought you in. I know you want to be the CEO, but let's start with this task."

We are going to see this in the text today. **Faithfulness in menial tasks may lead to greater opportunities.**

I'm not going to get involved in the whole minimum wage discussion... but here we go. Don't wait for someone else to determine your income. Don't sit around waiting for this outcome. Decide you are going to go after it. I would guarantee most people in here who have provided will tell you that years ago they didn't have one nasty job; they had three nasty jobs at once. It was rough, but they did it. This is what I'm saying again to the grandparents and the single parents in here who are working multiple jobs to provide for their family, this church praises you. We see how hard you're working.

The reason we do shoes... People are like, "Are the shoes for people who don't have jobs?" No. We are very specific with what we say. The shoes are for those who could use a little extra help. The shoes are for those who are working hard and still don't seem to be getting anywhere. I know it's frustrating. I know the recession hits and you want to picket Wall Street. I was ticked off too. I wanted more people going to jail if they were doing criminal activity that brought us into that mess. I was right there with you.

I'll be honest with you. After the recession hit... I have a skill. I buy houses high and sell them low. This is my skill. For the first year of the recession, I got up almost every morning at 2:00 or 3:00 am because I spent 10 or 12 years building up equity in homes, flipping them every two years. I then put it all into one house and the recession hit and I lost it all. We never got to a place where we were upside down. Our house was worth what we still owed on it, but as a pastor, I felt like a failure. I think I physically could have taken all that cash out of the bank and thrown it in the fireplace. That's what I felt. Many of you felt this. I do now know, eight or nine years later, that God allowed me to go through that as well because I want to be able to feel what you are feeling and you want to feel what I'm feeling. This is how we rejoice with one another and how we mourn with one another.

Amy would tell you that for the first year, I got up every morning at 2:00 or 3:00 am and just sat on the end of the bed. Amy would remind me that I didn't cause the recession. "If you had all this information again, but not the fact that the bubble was going to break and the recession was going to happen and the Branson economy and the housing market was going to tank, you probably still would have built this house. You still would have done this."

Something happened about a year after that. Some of you were giving houses back and obviously I didn't have to do that. But I said, "It's time for me to stop whining and complaining about this. It's time for me to just work harder. There's plenty that I can do."

And there is plenty you can do. There's plenty that your family can do. Faithfulness in just the grunge work sometimes. You're like, "My company doesn't recognize the hard that I do." You do your work as unto the Lord and allow his plan to be working out in your life and in your family. You're like, "I don't want to make beds. I've been out to the Chateau and I can do Stephen Marshal's job. He walks around the place making sure... I'm a great overseer, but they want me to make beds." Yeah, make beds and do it faithfully. Work hard at it. "Work in the kitchen? I should be the executive chef, not the sous chef or a server." Be a great server. Work hard at it. Be faithful in it. Watch how the story continues to unfold in Verse 8.

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter..." He uses a term of affection. "...*listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me.* **9 Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you.**" This is important. In this day, we're now not only talking about deprivation and despair, but we're also talking about security. He's saying he can protect her if she stays and works in his field. If she goes to work for someone else, harm could fall upon her. **"And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."**

10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?" A Moabite woman from an enemy nation.

11 Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. **12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done."** This is important. Verse 12 is the like the key to whole Book of Ruth. **"May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."**

This is very important in the text. He is saying, "I am giving this blessing upon you that God will care for you in the same way, Ruth, that you have cared for Naomi." But what you are going to see unfold is he becomes that blessing. This is a powerful verse in this text. He's not just going to pray for her blessing, he is going to become the blessing. Here's what we take away from the text. **God blesses your family through you and through your hard work.**

I put out on Facebook this week this post. I had no idea the reaction it would get. I was just saying I was grateful for the men in here that get up every day and go to work. I was saying, "Dad, you may not feel like a hero, but you are a hero." Father's Day is such a low attended Sunday. In most churches, Father's Day is the lowest attended Sunday of the year. The reason is... This is my simple opinion. On Mother's Day, we praise mom. Mom is to be honored and blessed. "You are the most noble of women. May we bow down and kiss your feet. Here's flowers; here's chocolate."

Then you come to a Father's Day service and it's "Men, you are scum and you need to step it up." Raise your hand if you've ever felt that tone at a church service. Not this church, but a church service. Dad would say, "I'd rather go golfing or fishing; don't make me sit through a Father's Day sermon where I'm told I'm not doing enough." Dad, I want you to hear today, thank you for your hard work. Here's the key. **When God blesses your family and God uses you to bless your family, give God the glory.** Return it to him.

You've seen this little clip before, but I'm going to show it again. This is an example of misplaced grace. [Video plays]

Lord, we cleared this land. We plowed it, sowed it, and harvested. We cooked the harvest. It wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be eating it if we hadn't done it all ourselves. We worked dog bone hard for every crumb and morsel, but we thank you just the same anyway, Lord, for this food we're about to eat. Amen.

That's Jimmy Stewart in *Shenandoah*. That's a 22 second clip and you need to show that to your family. That is misplaced grace. That is "We worked hard, we did it, we sweated, and it's all on us." No. "Lord, you allowed us to work. Lord, you allowed us to plant. You allowed us to reap the harvest. You allowed us to prepare it. We return it back to you."

Now continuing in the story as we close out. **13 "May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she (Ruth) said. "You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants."**

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar." When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. 15 As she got up to glean... Think about this. We sometimes think well wouldn't it just be great if Boaz said, "Hey, just stay here. I'll let the guys go out and work and bring it back to you." He's going to follow the law, but now watch. He's going to go beyond the law. Not outside the law, but just beyond. He's going to give even more grace to her. ...Boaz gave orders to his men, "Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. 16 Even pull out...** This is his generosity and his hospitality. ...**some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her.**"**

Ruth is now sitting at the table of Boaz. This is important in family theology and what we believe around here. **When you invite your family to eat at your table, you are saying to them "You matter to me and you matter to God."**

One of the reasons we spend so much time on hospitality at our church, making things look the way they do and feel the way they do and welcoming people, is because we don't want to have a have or have not mentality. We don't want those who are working hard, but not able to make the bills to come in here and feel like they don't fit in with this group. Let me tell you something. You matter to God and you matter to us. We are grateful that you're here. We want to help as a church family, as a collective body. We are here to help one another, to meet the needs for one another.

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. She's put in a full day. **Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.** **18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered.** This shouldn't have been how much you got after a day's work, so she knew what she would be coming home with. Probably just enough to make it that day, enough to keep them fed that day. **Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.**

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today?" "What fertilizer are they using that you were able to get this much of a harvest. This is going to take care of us for a while. This is more than enough." **"Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!" Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,"** she said.

20 "The Lord bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, **"That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers."**

21 Then Ruth the Moabite said, "He even said to me, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.'"

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else's field you might be harmed."

23 So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

This is so powerful and this is where we end. Boaz speaks a blessing over his daughter. They are from the same clan. Through marriage, they are now part of the same family. He speaks a blessing, but this is key for us to walk away with. We've got to stop looking at those in need and saying, "I'll pray for you." Does anybody know what I'm talking about?"

Denise said it this week. Denise works with a lot of our benevolence as a church. Denise came in and she said to me. "I told her I'd pray for her and I did." I'm *like that's typically what we probably should do*, but I got what she was saying. What Denise does that I love watching almost every single day... Denise prays with and for people who are in need and then, because of your generosity, we are able to meet needs. We don't pass the bucket to enrich ourselves, we pass a bucket to meet needs of those within our church. And just so you know, Denise follows the gleaning law of the Old Testament. I don't think she would say that as specifically as I'm saying. A lot of people who are need, she'll put them to work. That's not out of cruelty; that's out of "We want to help, but don't sit around and wait for a handout. Work for the help."

This is key in your family. This is for every husband, every grandparent who is raising a grandchild. This is for every single parent. **Pray for and be the blessing in your family.** That the Lord would shine upon you. That he would bless your family. But don't ever forget, Dad, Mom, Grandma and Grandpa, God

will use you to bless your family. Some of you are caring for family right now, financially, physically. I've talked with some in here who are going broke caring for a family member. We continue to pray for you, but we also continue to help.

Today, if you could use a little extra help, you can stop by on the way out today and pick up a shoe voucher. There are some who think they can't do that. They don't want to be seen. Listen, there is no one looking at you. I can promise you that. We are all grateful. Almost all of us in here have a story where someone needed to help us.

Some of you are like "I never needed help. I have a successful business that my father gave me." That's not a political statement. Some of you need to realize it wasn't a church that gave you a hand up; it was a parent. For some of you, it was a family member who helped you get to where you are today. You didn't get here all by yourself. Your family story brought you to here.

For some of you, you need the extra help. So when you leave here today, there are boxes that say *Mercy Offering* on the top. We do this every time we take the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of every month, and we encourage you to give generously. I know some of you already gave and you're giving online, but we encourage you to give. That goes to meet the physical needs of those who need medical help, dental help, glasses, clothes, shoes. Every dollar you put on those boxes on the way out will meet the physical needs of those in our church who could use a little extra help.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you. That we would take the example of Boaz today... His generosity towards Ruth, his provision and protection. May we, as a church family, never becomes ones who just pray for people to be blessed, but may we continue, as a church, to be the blessing. May we not only pray for financial needs to be met in the lives of families who need a little extra help, may we not only pray that your gospel to the corners of the globe, but may we actually provide for that. That we would give generously to meet those needs.

I can't get out of this book, Father, without praying for every widow and widower in our church family, those who are struggling or don't have family caring for them right now. I pray a blessing over them, but not just praying a blessing over them, but we want to be a blessing to them. If there are ways we can meet needs in their lives, we don't hesitate to do that. For those who need a little extra help going back to school, I pray that you would bless the families in here that they would stop by and pick up a voucher for a pair of shoes.

For those giving in the Mercy Offering today... If they have plenty, I pray that they would go to someone who has nothing, but needs enough, that maybe today and tomorrow can be better for them to be able to eat to be able to have a place to stay. I ask that you continue to bless Woodland Hills so that we can continue to bless others. For he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. We believe that and we hold to that truth.

We love you and it is in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.