

Winter Conference 2013

Godwin Sun

Message 4 of 4

Today is the last day of 2013. I remember on January 1st 2013, I was also on this pulpit. So I have been speaking from the beginning of the year to the end. What a great blessing it is from the Lord. I am thankful to the brethren for the opportunity to be with you.

This time, the Lord has given me the burden to fellowship with brothers and sisters from the Book of Ruth. I truly see the preciousness of this book. I truly feel my gifts are limited. It seems I am not able to fully discharge the burden within this book. I pray that with the Spirit of truth, brothers and sisters can see even more clearly what is in these simple words. This book is a very important reminder for all of us in the last days. I hope brothers and sisters do not merely listen to the simple explanation that I have, but may we all come to consider this book well. May the Lord lead us because we are living in the days as in the days of Judges, where there was chaos, darkness and famine. So through this book, we may know how we ought to live in the presence of God, we may leave this sad and tragic condition, and be in the eternal purpose of God. Let us not chase after the outward excitement, but to follow the guidance of the life within.

Brothers and sisters, we have mentioned in this short story, there are very ordinary people; yet through them, God is able to manifest His desire. This is an encouragement to all of us for we are all ordinary people. We thank God. God is able to use Naomi. God is able to use Ruth. God is able to use Boaz. Likewise, God is able to use you and me. May the Lord give us wisdom through this book. In this Old Testament book, God has given us His very clear and illuminated will. This morning we have reached chapter 4. I think we should read the entire chapter, because it is very difficult for me to pick out the verses.

Ruth 4:1-22

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the

field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.” The closest relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it.” Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. So the closest relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” And he removed his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today.” All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman.” So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi!” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

Let’s go back and look at chapter 3:11-12

Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence. Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.

Let us also turn to Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, so that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God.

Lastly the book of Colossians 2:13-14

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

We have mentioned many times that behind this short story of Ruth, there is the glorious unchanging will of God that governs all these events. We can see this principle throughout history in the Bible. In a generation where God is able to gain for Himself a group of people, through this group of people, God will manifest and make His glorious will known. And that is testimony. Now, if throughout a generation, God is not able to gain such a group of people, the will of God will still move forward, yet it is a grave loss to the people of God on earth. Therefore, it does not depend on how capable or gifted we are. The Book of Ruth shows us the most important thing is for us to walk in line with His will. We have mentioned that in the Old Testament, the eternal will, the purpose of God, is from Abraham to David. Anyone who has anything to do with this line is blessed.

Brothers and sisters, we realize the Book of Ruth is only an expedient way for God to work. Even though the children of God rebelled against God and did not obey the word of God, the love of God towards them did not change. God raised up the judges to deliver them. The judges manifested their function as a partial deliverance, as they delivered the people into peace and rest. When we read the Book of Judges, we can see God raised certain judges to give the people peace for twenty years; some gave them peace for forty years, while others gave eighty years of peace. Let us pay attention that the deliverance was only for a limited time. Our Lord does not desire anything that is only temporal. What God desires is eternal. When we read church history, we will discover when the people of God were in desolation, God raised up for Himself brothers and sisters who were gifted. Likewise, they brought revival to the people of God, but very quickly when these gifted saints were gone, the people again fell into darkness like the times of the judges. Therefore, church history is very much like the Book of Judges. Of course, these judges were very devoted and loved the Lord, but we also read there were many judges whose conducts were not good. Many were pious and loved the Lord. They were strong and talented, able to lead the people of God into battle, able to conquer the works of the enemy, and brought forth partial deliverance to the people of God. In church history, the Lord raised up many who were gifted, who likewise brought temporary deliverance and rest. But brothers and sisters, we know that the heart of God is not upon these. Many times, we talk about the Brethren Movement two to three centuries ago in Europe. We even know the Brethren Movement only brought about a partial revival. It did not bring on a full revival. That is also some work that God has done in time. Of course, the brethren were a good testimony for the Lord, and they brought much blessing, but after those who were gifted passed away, we see once again the Brethren Movement fell into bondage and darkness.

It is the same situation for the work of God in India and China. Yes, the Lord has raised up individuals in order to protect His people because God loves His people. God has chosen such people to be a glorious manifestation of His will. When God's will is not able to be fully executed amongst His people, God raises up certain individuals to protect them. We must understand that the heart of God is upon His own Son, and everything that has to do with God's own Son is eternal. The Book of Ruth shows us there was a group of people who walked in the way of the unchanging eternal will of God. As a result, their value far exceeds that of the judges, for they were ones who ushered in David. This is the greatest purpose of the period of the judges. May the Lord open our eyes.

It is indeed precious when gifts that are given for the protection of the church. Now perhaps the Lord does not let us do anything great. We might be only minor judges; nevertheless, we must walk in the same principle as shown to us in the Book of Ruth. Otherwise, the value of these gifts is extremely small. In the Book of Judges, there were some judges who did great, while some did not do so well. Do you remember there was a judge named Shamgar? He was a herdsman. He was very ordinary, but when the spirit of God came upon him, he killed six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He was able to deliver the people at that time. We realize such function is precious. Perhaps we feel we are very ordinary and may wish the Lord will use us to share the Gospel one day and six hundred people will be saved, just as Shamgar killed six hundred with an oxgoad. Now, not that this is bad, but brothers and sisters, more importantly we need to take note of how we live under the guidance of life. The Book of Judges represents gifts, while the Book of Ruth focuses on the life and daily living. I thank the Lord our Brother Dana and our Brother Ted are sharing their messages along these lines. They are living in the principles of Ruth. It is the Lord's grace.

Brothers and sisters, the guidance from the Book of Ruth is a very important guidance for us. We must take note of the words that Lord is speaking to us from the Book of Ruth. All who desires to go on this way of recovery ought to pay attention to the Book of Ruth. Let others chase after the gifts, but may the Lord have mercy upon us, that we would take note of the very important principle that He shows us from the Book of Ruth, so that we may live under these principles, that we may be just like Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. Not only will we usher in the eternal glorious purpose of God, we will also receive blessing from the hand of God.

We mentioned at the beginning that these people had not seen that glory during their lifetime because they had passed away when David was born. These people did not know the great impact they had on the work of God. We have to thank the Lord that in church history, there are so many children of God that follow the Lord so faithfully, yet they do not know the great impact they will have in the church to come.

A few years ago, when I was in China, some brethren took me to visit the grave site of Sister Margaret Barber. I was greatly moved. Our sister gave her whole life for the Lord, and she was

one that was filled with wisdom. She had very precious experiences of the cross. She had very deep knowledge of the Bible. She was one who followed the guidance of the Lord closely. She was serving in a very small area on the island. In her heart, there was only this burden: that through her the Lord would raise up the young people in China. There was no other burden upon her. She followed the Lord closely. She had strict requirements on the young people and many could not bear it and left. In the end, she only gained six young people. Of course, one of the six was Brother Watchman Nee, whom we are familiar with. Our brother, who was led by her, had such a great impact on the church history in China. When we read the biography, we realize that Brother Nee knew she was one who was greatly gifted. Brother Nee said, "You should go to many places and hold special meetings, as you have so much you can give. Why don't you?" And Brother Nee pleaded with her in tears. Yet our sister was one who closely followed the Lord. And she was greatly influenced by Sister Jessie Penn-Lewis. Sister Penn-Lewis was also one who closely followed the Lord, and she had these very famous words, "You have to follow the Holy Spirit in cold blood." Brothers and sisters, what does it mean to follow the Holy Spirit cold blooded? It means we would follow the smallest requirement of the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, there is a reason these individuals have such a lasting impact upon the church on earth.

Our sister's grave was within the missionary cemetery and the entire site was destroyed during the Liberation Army Movement. Later on, some relatives visited from England and picked up small fragments of her remains and put them in a small coffin, and buried them in what seemed like a vegetable garden. The brother who led me there was very emotional. The brother ran to her grave, he stood there and said, "Brother Sun, she is here. She is buried here." When I saw that scene, I was greatly moved. Our sister toiled all her life for the Lord and at the end she was buried in a small coffin here. Some brothers said perhaps we should make a better grave for her. But many elder brothers said, "Let our sister remain where she is. This is just like a picture of her life. She does not need any grand grave." Dear brothers and sisters, we thank our Lord. The church in China was able to have such a great revival due to the great sacrifice of our sister. Externally, it seemed like it was the work of Brother Nee and his coworkers, but behind them was our sister. We know she was the one who brought all the goodness of the Brethren Movement to China. If she did not introduce the Brethren Movement to Brother Nee, we would not have the revival of the church in China. So, brothers and sisters, our sister truly walked in the truth shown in the Book of Ruth. She just simply placed herself in the hand of God. She was willing to learn to die with the Lord so she gave the Lord a great opportunity to do the work that He wanted to do. Brothers and sisters, those who want to walk the way of recovery must pay attention to the many spiritual principles revealed in the Book of Ruth.

We have mentioned there are several important reminders for us in the Book of Ruth. The first one is, in our daily living, we must pursue to be satisfied in our spirit. Yes, a situation may seem desolate externally, but we can come to the presence of the Lord to be filled and satisfied. As we

follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will be strengthened in our spirit. We must accurately follow the word of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, just as Ruth came to Boaz and the field of Boaz. Today, not only do we love the Lord, we also have to know what the will of God is. In fact, what is the most important work of God on earth today? We must receive the direct guidance. We cannot be tempted by other things and depart from the will of God. We also shared that we must let the Lord have His way to do His work in us, so that He can complete His own work upon us. Then, we must experience dying with Him. If we are not dead to ourselves, it will be very difficult for God to work. This is an experience each Christian ought to have. Brothers and sisters, as long as we die to ourselves, then very naturally the Lord can do His work.

In my past years of service, I see these words are not merely doctrine, but they are true experiences. Many times, I reflect and think about the kind of person I am. I am not very wise, do not have many gifts, do not have great desire to pursue, or to offer myself to the Lord like others. I only feel that the Lord loves me, so I am willing to follow Him, and am willing to place myself in His hands. I see all the brethren before me, how they know the Scriptures and how their lives are so rich. They have so many talents and gifts to govern the church. I thought to myself, it would be good enough for me if I just follow behind them. They can charge ahead in battle and I will just hold the banner behind them and follow. If I can do that my whole life, that would be good enough for me. I never imagined that one day the Lord would pluck me out from among these brethren, and placed me in a situation where I was alone, so that I must face all circumstances by myself. How fearful I was. I felt I had nothing. What do I have to serve the Lord? Dear brothers and sisters, thank the Lord that He allowed me to learn a simple lesson: die to myself. I must strive diligently to enter into rest.

Recently, on a trip to Canada, I held fast to these words: Even at work, there is rest within. These words held onto to me tightly. I told the Lord, "Where should I go? I don't want to be like others and I can't be like others. I cannot go into missionary work nor can I go into the streets to hand out gospel tracts and preach the gospel. These are not the things I can do." Whenever I encountered hardship, I hid in my room and prayed to the Lord. I confessed my inadequacies. I could not do anything. I must keep the rest within me. Some sisters who were with me reported on me to the brothers afar. These brothers were angry at me and said, "Brother Sun is no good. To have rest is not to be still!" But when I read the Bible, it does say to rest is to be still. I remember an elder sister gave me these very encouraging words, "Brother, don't be anxious. You need to believe the church belongs to the Lord. The work belongs to the Lord. All you need to do is this: spend much quiet time and wait before the Lord." Others urged us to come up with ways to expand our works, but only this sister gave me the greatest comfort. Thank the Lord.

There were only about sixty people gathering in Vancouver. I was not sure where they came from. In about three months, I truly saw that when we died to our self, God did His work. It was the same in Seattle. I continue to hold fast to this principle. I mentioned to you yesterday, in Seattle, it was not all smooth sailing and I encountered some hardships there. But I felt that the principle of dying with the Lord was the most powerful weapon. If you have truly died with the Lord, the enemy cannot do anything to you. You only need to learn to die with the Lord, and you will see the Lord's work around you. The Lord wishes to have His way in us. If we do not die, He cannot have His way. If we die, He can have His way. So I continue to work until today. There is nothing I can boast of. I do not have gifts nor do I have much knowledge. I often tell others I have not read many spiritual books. But if you follow the simple principles in the Bible and go onward, the Lord will do His work. The experience in Ruth 3 is real. We cannot treat it as doctrine. You have to truly carry the cross and follow the Lord. Then you will see how God brings you through and does His glorious work.

This morning, we come to the last chapter. This is a very beautiful and glorious ending. The end result is the ushering in of David. David was not only an important person in the history of the Old Testament, he was also an exemplification of God's glorious will. In the Old Testament, God's revelation began with Abraham. God gained the household of Israel through Abraham, but the household of Israel became a nation of Israel in David's hand. So one was the beginning point of God's glorious will and the other is the ending point. In the days of typology, this is a complete type. The greatest value of the Book of Ruth is ushering in the King, establishing the kingdom, and ending the desolation. The centuries of desolation in the Book of Judges finally ended in David's hand. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz had probably never dreamt of being able to bring forth such a glorious end. When David appeared in the Old Testament, spiritually speaking, he fulfilled God's ultimate goal and eternal purpose. Once again, historical stories are only phenomena. What is important is the hidden will of God behind them.

Brothers and sisters, we know that David's reign is a type of Christ's reign in the future. We are very clear on the conditions of the churches today. No matter how many gifts we have or how these gifts are of help to us, they cannot compare to the condition when our Lord returns. That is our greatest hope. Today, God is to have a way among His people. The way of God is not the external organization or methods. The way of the Lord is you and me, and the Lord must gain His way among us.

In chapter 4, our Lord must complete two important things, in order to accomplish His glorious will. They are also Boaz's promises to Ruth. Boaz was a very close relative of Naomi. According to the Law of God, Boaz had the right to redeem all of Elimelech's inheritance. If Boaz was to marry Ruth, he must redeem both the inheritance and the person. The process of redemption is very important. The Bible uses a picture to illustrate this. In Boaz's heart, he knew of one other person who was a closer relative and had higher priority to exercise the

redemption. The Bible did not say who this person was and only said that there was a relative. We are very clear that God wants to tell us spiritual matters through this story. Most who study the Bible have this understanding: This relative is a type of the Law.

We know before our Lord Jesus was born into the world, the Old Testament era was called the Dispensation of the Law, and the Dispensation of Grace began with our Lord. Therefore, the Law came first, and then Christ. The first encounter was with the Law, the closest relative. Boaz knew it well so he had to resolve the issue of the Law first. We know the Law has its great function, as it is the righteous requirement of God. But this righteous requirement can only reveal man's sin and condemn him. When man lives under the Law, he is very weak and cannot keep the Law. So the Law can only make us feel weak, but it cannot redeem us. Why did God put man under the Law in the Old Testament? It shows the fallen man is so weak and so powerless. It is impossible for man to be justified and live a sanctified life. Therefore, God placed the Israelites under the Law to prove one thing: the failure of the Israelites. They lived under all kinds of regulations and they were under great bondage. Until today, the Jewish people are still so sad, because they continue to live under the bondage of the Law.

Not long ago, a brother who lived in Philadelphia told me this story. He was living in a Jewish community because he bought a house from a Jewish person and he knew his neighbors well. He said one Friday evening his neighbor came to him all nervous and sweaty. We know that the Jews observe the Sabbath. When it comes to Friday evening, they are not allowed to do anything. They are not allowed to even touch the light switch. So the Jews would turn on the light before the time of Sabbath comes and would keep the lights on until the Sabbath is over on Saturday evening. This neighbor went out on Friday afternoon and when he returned home, he found that he had forgotten to turn on the lights. So he was all nervous and sweaty when he came to our brother's home and asked, "Could you please help me?" Our brother asked him, "What happened?" He answered, "Could you come to my house and turn on the lights for me?" Our brother was speechless. Brothers and sisters, this is a pious Jew. If he was Chinese, he would have just turned on the light, since nobody was watching. That would be a simple solution. But he came in full sweat! From this, we can see how the Law has put a great bondage on our conscience. It is hard for us to imagine, even to this day, there are still people who observe the Law to such a point.

The Law can only condemn man. We know very well today that it is the work of the Lord Jesus on the cross that has dealt with the Law. Colossians 2 tells us the Lord has canceled out the certificate of debt, consisting of decrees against us, on the cross. It is so amazing that the Lord used what Boaz did in the Old Testament to explain this to us. Boaz promised Ruth the promise and he went and waited at the city gate the next morning. The Chinese translation says "by coincidence". We know there are no coincidences in God. All things are in God's plan. God brought this close relative there. Brothers and sisters, we must believe everything that happens

to us, throughout our lives, is in God's plan. We must not forget our salvation is not because God has pity on us, but our salvation is based on God's glorious will. Every Christian should know God saves us because of His glory. It is not because you are pitiful that God saves you. Therefore, everyone who is saved by grace ought to live for His glory.

So we have reasons to believe all things that happen in our lives are under God's control. If you think this way, you will be at rest. Many couples who are married for a long time think they married the wrong person. Brothers and sisters, there are no mistakes. The Gospel According to Mark clearly tells us marriage is put together by God. God has put the two of you together after careful planning in His will. If you understand this, you can only give thanks. Thank the Lord for giving me such a wife. Thank the Lord for giving me such a husband. If your husband has a bad temper, you need to thank the Lord. If your wife keeps nagging you, you need to thank the Lord. It may sound funny, but in reality, it is not easy.

You must be able to see from the moment you are saved, everything is under the control of the Holy Spirit. The government of the Holy Spirit is not limited only in big matters; every little detail in our lives is under the control of the Holy Spirit -- the Bible recorded this as "by coincidence". Thank the Lord.

The close relative came and sat down at Boaz's request, as Boaz wished to deal with the matter publicly. Our Lord's crucifixion on the cross was very public, as it could not happen privately. This matter had to be made known before all men. We are amazed to see the entire process in which Boaz dealt with the Law. Many years later, when Paul wrote the Book of Romans, he described in Romans 7:1-17 the entire process of how the cross dealt with the Law. God set us free from under the bondage of the Law. Boaz asked the close relative to sit down. Sitting down means there is no rush. Boaz was determined to deal with the matter. Then, he invited ten elders to join them. The ten elders represent those who are experienced. Many Bible scholars tell us the ten elders seem to represent the Ten Commandments. This is to prove the Law cannot be the redeemer. So when Boaz asked the relative if he wished to redeem their brother Elimelech's land, the relative said that he would. This tells us the Law is interested in the inheritance. We are clear that in the Old Testament, when God gave the Law, the Law protects God's inheritance and therefore, it is only interested in the land. But when Boaz told the relative in order to redeem the land, he had to redeem Ruth at the same time, and take this Moabitess as his wife, the relative declined. What does this tell us? The Law has no compassion upon sinners. It cannot deem the sinful as sinless. It cannot tolerate women such as Rahab and Ruth because the Law is righteous. If the Law accepts people like these, the Law becomes unrighteous. Then the Law becomes lawless. This cannot be.

Brothers and sisters, it is indeed dreadful to fall under the Law. I will use a small experience to explain this. Last year in 2012, I was returning from the Far East and I was going through customs. I filled out a form, as I was going through the customs. Because I am a U.S. citizen,

the officer looked at me with a smile and said to me, "Welcome home. Welcome home." But as soon as he took the form from me, his demeanor changed immediately. He had a smiling face a moment ago, now his face was long. He asked me, "Where do you live?" "I live in Seattle." I answered. "I'm asking you one more time, 'Where do you live?'" Again, I answered, "I live in Seattle. I've lived there for thirty years." "Do you really live in Seattle?" He went back and forth with me for ten minutes. I was puzzled not knowing what I did wrong and why he was so strict. In the end, he showed me the form. Then, I realized I filled out the form with a Hong Kong address instead of my U.S. address. It probably happened because when I was filling out the form on the plane I was not very awake. I could not see very clearly and had mistakenly put down the address of the last place I stayed. Then he said, "Look! You put down a Hong Kong address. Based on this, I could penalize you." But he was nice enough to cross out my mistake and let me go. After I left that place, I truly felt it is dreadful to fall under the law. He was an executor of the law and a good executor because he was very strict. But since our God implements the Law, He would be even stricter. That is why the Bible tells us if we are guilty of one point of the Law, we become guilty of all. How strict is the requirement! The Law is merciless. We thank God that we live in the New Testament. If we lived in the Old Testament, the Dispensation of Law, then we would live in fear and trembling every day. God's mercy sets us free from under the bondage of the Law.

Now the Law had to give up its rights because it could not take Ruth as its wife; therefore, the close relative took off his sandals. This practice originated in Deuteronomy 25: If someone is not willing to take his deceased brother's wife, the woman would pull off his sandals and spit in his face. Removing the sandal means from now on you will no longer have the right to set foot on another's inheritance. Spitting means you are shameful because you would not help your brother. But here we only see removing of sandals but no spitting on the face, because the Law cannot be disgraced. From this, we see how the Bible is precise and accurate. It cannot be wrong. If spitting happened at that time, it would be a big problem. You can only remove the sandals but not spit.

When this person was not able to redeem Elimelech's land and Ruth, Boaz said he would redeem everything. Not only the land was redeemed, but the person was also redeemed. We need to thank our God wholeheartedly. Brothers and sisters, there are things in the Bible that are not easy for us to understand. Many Christians do not understand what inheritance means in experience. We know that after we are saved God has given us an inheritance. We also know that God led the Israelites into land of Canaan and gave it to them as their inheritance. The Book of Ephesians tells us we have gained an inheritance in Him. Not only have we gained an inheritance, He also has gained an inheritance in us. Here is an important matter we need to understand: If we cannot gain Christ as our inheritance, then Christ cannot gain us as His inheritance. When God gives us His life, this life needs to gain our entire being. On one hand, we enjoy this life; on the other hand, the more we enjoy the Lord's life, the more the Lord can

gain us. They are interconnected and therefore the inheritance is very important. Today, God has given His Son as our inheritance and we need to enjoy this inheritance fully. The more fully we enjoy this inheritance, the more God can gain us as His inheritance. This is what is written in the Book of Ephesians, “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.” God has gained thousands and thousands of Christians. If everyone experiences and enjoys the Lord every day, then God’s life will develop in those who are saved by His grace.

Until one day when the Lord returns, we will be like Him completely; then, we will gain the full inheritance in Him and He will gain His inheritance in us fully. Inheritance is an important matter. Brothers and sisters, as far as the Lord’s redemption is concerned, we need not stop at knowing that we are saved, but also understand we are redeemed. Many know the Lord has saved them, but do not know that the Lord has also redeemed them. Many have overlooked the part of redemption. Being saved is a process, but only through redemption can we reach the goal of God. Therefore, the Bible tells us about the redemption.

We thank our God. When we read the Old Testament, we see God had a special arrangement for the Israelites. The arrangement is that each family and each tribe has its inheritance. Some out of poverty or negligence had to sell their inheritance. After they had sold their inheritance, they were still in poverty and had to sell their children. After they sold their children, they were still hungry, so they eventually sold themselves. We can see how sad it was for the Israelites. But remember, they are the children of God, and they are God’s chosen people. Just like in some families, no matter how bad their children are, they are still children of the family. No matter how much trouble these children cause, you still need to take care of them. It is a matter of life. I came across a sister in China. She had a son who was eighteen years old. The son was always on the computer and her husband was very mad and would yell at the son or hit him for discipline. The sister also did the same, but the son did not change his ways. One day she came to me and said, “Brother Sun, can you find someone who will take my son? I want to give him away.” “What?” I said to her. “You gave birth to your son and you have the responsibility. You cannot joke about such a thing!” But she was not joking and she was serious in finding someone to give her son away. Our God never does such a thing. No matter how bad we are, He still loves us. He still keeps our inheritance for us. That was why God established this special rule among His people. A Year of Jubilee for every 50 years. In the Year of Jubilee, you could redeem the land, children, and yourself -- that which were sold. Brothers and sisters, do you understand? This is the heart of our Heavenly Father. We are His children. How God loves us! So God gave His people this rule of redemption. Brothers and sisters, we may have lost much in our lives on earth. We are just like the prodigal son, wasting the resources of our Heavenly Father. We may not love the Father, but the Father still loves us. When I look at myself, I am not good. When I look at brothers and sisters, they seem like they are very casual and not serious about spiritual matters. Sometimes, this causes us to shed tears. You do not realize how great a grace you have received. You have forgotten you are a child of God! How much the

Father loves you. From the day you are saved by grace, God has already prepared an inheritance for you in Christ Jesus. Psalm 16 tells us He has measured our inheritance to with measuring lines. It is very abundant and it falls in pleasant places. If it was up to us, we would say certain people do not deserve an inheritance in the future. He follows the Lord in such a way that his portion should be taken away and be given to another. Brothers and sisters, we are not our Father, and this is not the way of the Father. The Father has already prepared an inheritance for you before the foundation of the world. After the millennium and after we enter into the Kingdom, the complete inheritance that was prepared for you will be given to you, and you will accept it with a heart of gratitude. We need to change our attitude. I am speaking of myself also. We ought not to offend our Lord easily. We have received great grace. There is this thought of redemption in our Father's heart.

We need to understand this redemption is brought about with a price of great suffering from our Lord. Every time we think of Him on the cross, we ought to bow down and worship Him. This is such a price. If we despise what belongs to us, when the Lord returns, will we be gnashing our teeth and regret? May the Lord have mercy on us today. Let us encourage one another at the end of the year. Let us remind one another, that as the years go by, we will love the Lord more, be more godly before the Lord, and to revere what He is doing in us.

In Romans chapters 6 & 7, Paul shows us a complete salvation. These two chapters tell us what the Lord has accomplished on the cross. Not only did He deal with sin and death, He also dealt with the Law and our pitiful and corrupted flesh. All is accomplished by the Lord. Today, the Holy Spirit is to complete in us what the Lord has done on the cross. We must learn to die with Him so that He can do what He wants to do in us.

When Boaz made this decision of redeeming Ruth, he received praises from others and from his family. Simply put, the Lord's redemption is to be praised forever. "May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel." We know that the God's glorious will was revealed to Abraham, but Jacob bore the twelve tribes through Rachel and Leah. Therefore, God's promise was with Abraham, but the fulfillment of the promise was with Jacob. So people use these words to bless Boaz, "May you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem." And this is referring to the Lord gaining authority and glory in the future. The people also said, "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the Lord will give you by this young woman." From the Book of Genesis, we understand this is a result of sin. We are amazed to find that God puts this matter in the Bible. And God accepts this and places it into His glorious will. This was a situation which ought to be cursed, but God turned the curse into a blessing. God turned what was unworthy to be worthy. We know Boaz was the son of Rahab the harlot and Ruth was a Moabitess. Such a union was to be cursed in the eyes of the Jewish people. Therefore, these tell us our God is a God of great mercy. This includes your

story and my story. We were to be cursed. But the salvation of God is upon us and the love of the Lord is upon us. God has turned things completely around so the curse became a blessing and that which was unworthy became worthy. Here Boaz did a very wonderful thing for Ruth and this tells us how the Lord has set us free from under the Law. And Boaz took Ruth as his wife.

When we read the Book of Ruth, we will have many questions if we only rely on our mind to understand it. We might question why Boaz did not get married at that time when he was so wealthy. When he met Ruth, he said that Ruth had not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. These words tell us Boaz was an older person. Let me repeat it again, the stories in the Bible are only phenomena, it is through them that God wants to tell us spiritual matters. God kept Boaz single until that time in order for him to marry Ruth.

Thank the Lord, not only did they get married, they also had a son. The Bible said that Naomi was the one most comforted. Not only did she have an offspring, this offspring would also be a restorer of life and a sustainer of her old age. Now, she was able to get out of darkness and walk into light. The neighbor rejoiced with her and said that her daughter-in-law was better than seven sons. Indeed, brothers and sisters, one that is from God is far better than seven that are not. She became a nurse to this child. Naomi went through years of suffering and she treasured her grandson greatly. There is another type. We have mentioned that there are many characteristics of the Holy Spirit in Naomi. The Bible said she became the nurse for the child. After we are saved by grace, to whom does God entrust us? We are reborn by the Holy Spirit and God also entrusts us into the hands of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who nurses us. We truly thank the Lord. In John 14, the Lord mentioned about the coming of the Comforter and He will abide in you. What does He do while abiding in us? He is to nurse us. All the days of our lives are in the hands of the Holy Spirit; therefore, we need to learn to be mindful of the Holy Spirit. We follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we can receive the best care from the Holy Spirit. What a glory God has given us that we can become His children! Brothers and sisters, no one else is worthy to nurse us. In a royal family, when a child is born, they will not casually place the child in the care of just anyone. Those who take care of the child come from strict selection. We are far more honorable than the princes and princesses of the world. Who is worthy to care for the children of God? Even angels are not worthy, so God places us in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Brothers and sisters, the Bible says that the Spirit of God is the hand of God. It is God who raises us. Such grace! Thank God, because of this child, the family was filled with joy. At the end of the book, we see Jesse was the father of David. When David came forth, the kingdom of God was established and the period of desolation ended.

Brothers and sisters, the greatest work of God is to have His Son reign. Only when Christ returns to reign, will the desolation end on earth, then the kingdom of God can then be

manifested on earth. Today, we are still in the process. There are two important things we need to do.

First, we need to allow the Lord to continue to redeem our inheritance for us, throughout all the days of our lives. How do we redeem the inheritance? It is very simple: We need to continue to live in the principle of dying with the Lord. The Lord will do His work and will redeem all that you have lost. The Apostle Peter tells us when the kingdom of the Lord descends in the future, every brother and sister's entrance into the kingdom will be abundantly supplied. In other words, in our experiences in Christ today, we have already attained the abundance. It is not of poverty. The Lord wants to see His abundance in each child when He returns. It will please Him when we welcome Him under such condition.

Today, the Holy Spirit is continuing to do His work of nursing us. Another year has passed and often we regret what we have lost in the past. We should not stop at just regretting, but we need to ask the Lord to redeem these days for us. Our Lord is able to redeem them. Peter said that with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. This is a calculation of grace; if today, we live in the Lord for one day, the Lord counts it as a thousand years. We cannot live for a thousand years but the Lord can count a day as a thousand years. God is a God of grace. If you do not live in the Lord, even if you live a thousand days, the Lord would not count it even as one day. Our Lord has given us opportunities to redeem all that we have lost. The more we gain of Him, the more He gains of us. Brothers and sisters, we must be mindful of the heart of God.

Second, we must live in a life that is united with Him. As soon as we are saved, our lives are united with the Lord's life already. Every brother and sister is united with the life of the Lord, when he or she is saved. But what is to live in the reality of being united with the life of the Lord? That means we need to abide in the Lord by the leading of His life, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, because this life holds all the character of our Lord's life. Today, the Lord's life is in us so His beautiful character is in us. God's desire is to have His character replace our character. That is the reason God allows many circumstances to come upon us, in order for us to experience Him and be changed. When we have more and more of Christ's character in us, this is what we call to be conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our brothers also mentioned about conforming to the image of the Son of God in the last two days. How are we to be conformed? It is through living in the reality of being united with the Lord's life. It is already a fact that the Lord's life is in your life, but we still need to enter into the reality of it. We can see some Christians showing progress year after year. All the progress lies in the changing of their character. We cannot see life, but we can see its character. When you see a person's character change, you know that the life in him has begun to grow. Brothers and sisters, we need to pursue after the growth of life so it can be seen by the changes in our character.

The Lord lets us remain on earth and He continues to give us opportunities to pay attention to these matters. We ought to live properly in order to welcome the Lord's return. The Book of Revelation tells us our Lord is waiting to marry His bride. Today, the Holy Spirit is doing the preparation work in each one of us, so that the character of Christ can grow more and more and manifest more and more. When the church is adorned, ready and fully contains the character of Christ, then she is worthy of the Lord. When the marriage is completed, the kingdom of God will manifest. These are some of the important revelations in the Bible.

Brothers and sisters, we are truly very close to the coming of the kingdom of the Lord. For those who truly walk in the way of recovery, we cannot avoid the principles in the Book of Ruth. We must live before the Lord, under the light of this book. May the Lord give us wisdom through His words so that we will make the right decisions, and be able to walk in the way that is pleasing to the Lord, in the few days remaining on earth. In these days, as in the time of the Book of Judges, God has placed the Book of Ruth in front of us. The Lord's words are very clear. Let us look to His mercy and not consider these words as stories nor some messages of a special conference. Let us consider them well. May the Holy Spirit guide us into the truth.

Let us bow down and have a further word of prayer:

Lord how we thank You wholeheartedly. Not only have You redeemed us, You have also given us Your life. You have chosen us for Your glory's sake. We ought to live on this earth for Your glory. You are mindful that we are only man. We are very weak and we are easily influenced by people, matters, and things in our surroundings, and we follow our own ways easily. But we thank You, for Your love towards us never changes. You do not regret Your calling. You continue to give us opportunities. You give us Your words in order to correct us. Today, we live in such a horrible generation. But we thank You because You have shown us a clear way. Lord, we ask that the Holy Spirit will guide us onto this way, so that in the few days remaining, we can walk on the way that pleases You. May Your heart be satisfied, Your will can have its way in us, and Your own testimony can be shown forth. Lord, we confess that we have nothing and we are incapable. But we thank You, You are an almighty Lord. Whenever we have a little desire toward You, You will accomplish Your work in us. Lord, give us the light of repentance so that we can live under Your countenance daily. Lord, we entrust all Your children on earth unto Your hands, may You revive Your work in these days. Save us from this evil generation. We offer up our worship to You from the depths of our hearts. Thank You for being with us still. May You listen to our prayer. In the precious name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.