

Bible Month – Ruth Chapter 4 - 28th June 2020

A short act of worship for use in people's homes, provided by Erica Gassor.

Call to Worship: He who dwells in the shelter of the most high will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91: 1

Hymn: *Ye Servants of God* (a wonderful hymn by Charles Wesley! [Click here to hear it on YouTube](#))

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| 1. Ye servants of God,
your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad
his wonderful Name;
the Name all-victorious
of Jesus extol:
his kingdom is glorious;
he rules over all. | 3. Salvation to God
who sits on the throne!
Let all cry aloud,
and honour the Son.
The praises of Jesus
the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces,
and worship the Lamb. |
| 2. God ruleth on high,
almighty to save;
and still he is nigh:
his presence we have.
The great congregation
his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation
to Jesus our King. | 4. Then let us adore,
and give him his right:
All glory and power,
all wisdom and might,
all honour and blessing,
with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing
and infinite love. |

Prayers of Praise and Confession

Father God, help me always to remember that I am *your* servant and always 'publish abroad your wonderful name'! I praise your holy name and thank you for all that you have given

The World in which I live – that you created.
The wonder of nature – which you created.
The wonder of humankind - who you created.

Father, I thank you for your amazing love for this World and for everyone you have made – I stand in awe of what you have done. The beauty of everything around – the amazing complexity of creation – the provision of all I need. Teach me how to care for what you have given and please forgive me when I neglect your creation. Forgive me when I am thoughtless, selfish or greedy and do not share all I have. Teach me to follow your Son Jesus' example of love, compassion and care in all I do, help me to be better and more considerate each and every day. **Amen.**

Now say the **Lord's Prayer**

Reading – Ruth Chapter 4 [YouTube link](#)

Reflection:

Throughout the book of Ruth the theme of taking responsibility and going 'the extra mile' has struck me very clearly.

We heard in the earlier chapters how Ruth went the extra mile for her mother in law, Naomi, leaving her homeland and all that was familiar to travel and settle in Bethlehem. Once there Ruth again ensured that she worked hard to provide food for them both. We heard how Boaz went the extra mile when Ruth was gleaning in his fields, ensuring that there was sufficient grain for her and that she was in a safe environment. Again last week we learned how honourable Boaz was when asleep on the threshing floor and Ruth visited him. Now in this fourth chapter we hear more about Boaz and how he again went 'the extra mile'

The son of Salmon and his wife Rahab, Boaz was a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem, and relative of Elimelech, Naomi's late husband.

Although Boaz was a relation of Naomi's husband he was not the closest and did not really need to take any responsibility for the returning widow and her daughter in law and her wish to establish succession for the land which had been her husband's. However, Boaz wanted to accept Ruth's approach on the threshing floor and in today's reading we heard how Boaz called a meeting, in the presence of witnesses, with the closer relation (whom they called the 'guardian redeemer' in the Law of the time) and asked him if he was going to take responsibility for the land as he was first in the line of succession. At first the Guardian Redeemer said yes and then Boaz reminded him that he would also be accepting Ruth who was the daughter-in-law and a foreigner in their land. Worried about inheritance, the Guardian Redeemer relinquished his responsibility in front of witnesses and Boaz was able to honour his commitment to Naomi and to take Ruth as his wife. The marriage resulted in the birth of a son, Obed, who was in turn the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David. With hindsight we can see God's hand at work in all these events!

We can also see clearly that Boaz went way beyond what was required of him – he went the extra mile. The name Boaz name means 'in him is strength' - yes indeed he displayed strength, responsibility and compassion.

What are our responsibilities and obligations in life? Do we know them? Boaz knew his. Do we 'go the extra mile'?

How important it is to go the extra mile in the current situation. We see this in so many workers in the NHS and caring professions, together with those in other essential services. They have been going way beyond their normal responsibilities to help in these exceptional times. Working to levels of exhaustion, staying away from family and friends to avoid the possibility of passing the virus on and many many other acts way beyond their normal duties. We may wonder how we can help in these times but all of us can make a difference. For instance not just saying 'good morning' to your neighbour as you pass-by but checking they are okay for everything and that there is nothing they need, responding via the Food Bank appeals to those who are struggling with poverty by putting two items in the collection box instead of one. Take the time to call someone who you know is alone and would appreciate a chat – it is so good to laugh and talk.

As Jesus clearly stated and as is recorded in Matthew 5 verse 41-42: 'if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not run away from the one who wants to borrow from you'. This is just as important a lesson today as it was in Ruth's time.

Prayers of Intercession:

Father God, I turn my thoughts to the World and events around. I pray for all those who have been affected by the Coronavirus – those who have suffered, those who have lost loved ones, those who are finding isolation and lockdown difficult, those who have lost their income. Your loving hand reaches out to everyone – I pray that each person will find you in their sorrow and distress, come close to you and know that you are the source of peace and hope.

I pray in thanks for all those who have gone way beyond their normal duties and given so much more to help those in need. I thank you Father for each person and all that they have given.

I pray for all those who are making their voices heard to achieve equality for all – please lead them Father God to do this in a peaceful and loving way. May this call for equality not be restricted to the colour of skin but also to all those who live in poverty, all those who live with disabilities – either mental or physical, all those who are refugees, all those who live in fear and distress. Show me how to extend my love to *everyone*.

I pray for the families and friends of all those who have lost their lives in this last week through acts of violence and abuse. Father, be with all those suffering loss at this time.

I pray for the leaders of the World, that they may seek co-operation and liaison with each other in research, trade and communications so that we can live in peaceful coalition with other nations.

I pray for all those who suffer violence and live in war torn areas – I pray that peace will come to this World. Lord and Father show us all how to live. Amen

Hymn: *O Jesus I have promised (Written by John Ernest Bode who was born in London but later became the Rector of Westwell in Oxfordshire. He wrote this hymn - one of my favourites - when his daughter and two sons were confirmed – what a wonderful gift!)*

– make this your commitment as the conclusion of the service today!

[Click here to hear it on YouTube](#)

O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me feel thee near me:
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear;
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten, or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou Guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee,
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be;
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my Friend.

Blessing:

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord smile upon you and be gracious unto you.

May the Lord show His favour to you and give you peace. Amen