

The purpose of this guide is to help you continue your worship throughout the week – slowly and carefully looking back on Sunday's service and considering what was read, sung, prayed and preached more deeply – with an eye towards devotion and application.

Call to Worship - From Psalm 16:11, Galatians 4:4 - Praise the Lord, for He has made known to us the path of life. In His presence there is fullness of joy. And when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, to redeem us. And this is our comfort: that He has made us sons and heirs with Christ.

In the story of Ruth, we are beginning to see Boaz' role as a redeemer - which points us to the redemption that Jesus gives us. Listen for notes of "redemption" in our service today.

Song: Come Thou Fount

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing / Tune my heart to sing Thy grace

Every once in a while, someone comes by to tune our piano at church. It is regular and necessary maintenance. Our Sundays are like that - we need to be tuned again to sing the grace of God, after living in a world of sin and suffering throughout the week.

Song: I Stand Amazed (July song of the month)

He took my sins and my sorrows / He made them his very own
He bore the burden to Calvary / He suffered and bled for me.

*Anyone who has kids (or has been a kid) knows the agony of someone "taking" something from someone else. Taking is usually bad. Remember that Eve **took** and ate of the fruit - but here, Jesus "takes" in a way that brings great blessing.*

Song: Here is Love

On the Mount of Crucifixion, fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the flood-gates of God's mercy flowed a vast and gracious tide.

Pastor John Piper has said "God loves to show mercy... His anger must be released by a stiff safety lock, but his mercy has a hair trigger."

Scripture Reading - 1 Peter 1:3-21 - *How does this relate to our sermon passage?*

Confession of Sin - Heavenly Father, You have not left us in the dark. You have blessed us by Your creation, Your Word, Your Spirit and Your Son. And so, You have given us powerful promises of redemption and a future hope. You have given us good commandments to walk in. Forgive our hard-hearted cynicism, pride, and frantic self-dependence. Forgive us for doubting You and fleeing from You. Forgive us for when we have rebelled against Your guidance. Keep us from willful sins; may they not rule over us. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.

I can hear echoes of myself in the idea of "frantic self-dependence." How have you seen this in your own life?

Assurance of God's Forgiveness – Isaiah 44:22 - I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.

God beckons us to return to him. In the Book of Ruth, Naomi and Ruth "return" to Bethlehem and they are redeemed. But God does one better by basing our return on our already-purchased redemption. As great as God's mercy is in the story of Ruth, the mercy bound up in the Gospel is even greater.

Song: Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Lifted up was He to die, "It is finished!" was His cry;
Now in heaven exalted high; Hallelujah! what a Savior!

This is an appropriate song after confession, because it highlights both the suffering of Jesus but also the finality of His victory. As a result, we walk away from confession freshly humbled and freshly encouraged.

Sermon Passage: Ruth 3

- How does chapter 3 advance our story after what we saw in Ruth 2? How is this story similar to Ruth 2?
- What in the world happened at the threshing floor?
- Do you notice a change in how Ruth is identified in this section? How is that potentially significant?
- What do you notice about the way Boaz conducts himself in this passage? How does it remind you of Jesus (you can both compare and contrast!)
- What are some ways you would characterize the faith of Ruth? Are there areas in your life where this is encouraging to you?
- How does this story combine God's sovereignty and human responsibility? How do both of these doctrines help us to think about our own successes and failures?
- The story of Ruth is beautiful - the redemption theme is wonderful - how is the Gospel story even better? How do these two stories compare?

Song: Amazing Grace

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

One of our goals in our Sunday service is to leave reminded not just of our sin, and even not just our forgiveness, but of the glorious future we have because of Christ. One reason this is such a great hymn that has transcended churches and cultures is that it traces this movement - we were once blind, but now we see, and someday we will see perfectly.

Closing Prayer: Consider closing your time by praying this prayer from Scotty Smith about "redemptive attitudes in a bad attitude world."

Heavenly Father, we're your cherished daughters and sons in Christ; but we're also your Spirit-convicted children. These attitude-Scriptures don't mince any words. We live in an hour and world of hair-trigger criticism, festering resentments, and unfettered spite. We must do better and be different.

Call me naïve, but I never anticipated a day when so many adults in positions of power and influence would act and speak like manner-less, spoiled, bullying children. Lord, as your beloved children, grant us fresh grace, thicker skin, and bigger hearts. You've called us to be salt and light, not hot sauce and Roman candles. Certainly, we must not only resist the madness, but also demonstrate a different way forward.

You never call us to denial, but you always call us to yourself. There are real issues before us in our culture and communities. Grant us wisdom, strength and plenty of grace. By the power of your Holy Spirit, the truth of the gospel, and the gift of community, keep our appropriate anger from morphing into destructive revenge. May the fire in our bones be the purifying fire of your Spirit, and not the destructive wild-fire of our politics.

Help us uproot every root of resentment, bitterness, and spite, growing in the garden of our hearts. Keep us from wallowing in our concerns longer than we linger in your presence. Father, help us build more bridges and throw fewer grenades. Write stories of redemption with the ink of the gospel and the hope of heaven. So very Amen we pray, in Jesus' tender and triumphant name.