

Nothing is Impossible with God Ruth 4

Today is a special day for us.

For Hope Community Church and I think for  
the Bread of Life Church too.

Here we are two quite different congregations  
worshipping together as one body.

Praising God together with one song,  
praying together with one heart,

Honoring Jesus as Lord together with one voice.

I never dreamed that this would be possible.

Five year ago did you ever think this might happen?

But here we are.

**And isn't this gathering so like God?**

Think about it.

We speak different languages. Mandarin and English.

We can't even read each other's words.

And some of us speak Thai, and Indonesian, Korean,  
and Dutch and Spanish, and Cantonese.

We come from different continents, with different histories.

We have different customs.

Our cultural heritage is different.

We think different and value things different.

We relate to people different.

Since the tower of Babel people so different

have separated themselves from each other.

They've lived in isolation from each other.

They could not communicate or cooperate with each  
other because they were so different.

And as a result of the pride of Babel high barriers  
developed between people,

mistrust, stereotypic misunderstanding, and even  
hatred prejudice racism - came between people so different.

Yet here we are dating each other and exploring the  
possibility of a relationship together,  
maybe even marriage.

It seems like mission impossible.

It goes against the grain of conventional human wisdom.

Birds of the same feather should fly together.

But here we are.

**And isn't this gathering so like God?**

What makes **me** think our hopes

for a joint ministry are possible?

What makes me think that our union could produce  
something of kingdom value, something beautiful,

bringing glory to God?  
What makes me willing to step out in faith in  
this risky venture?  
There is only one reason: God.  
And knowing the nature and the work and heart of God.

Isn't this what God is all about?  
What seems humanly impossible, Jesus told his disciples,  
in Mark 10:27, what seems so against the grain of  
conventional wisdom is possible with God.  
All things are possible with God, Jesus told us.

A couple weeks ago the leaders of the Bread of Life  
Church and the leaders of Hope community church  
got together to talk; and  
we read together from that great chapter in Ephesians.  
Chapter 2. In that chapter Paul tells us  
what God is like and what his ministry looks like.  
What the heart of God is after.

In that chapter we are told that in God's great love,  
in his abundant mercy God is  
destroying the barriers between people (14).  
Destroying.

God is breaking down the dividing walls of  
hostility between people,  
God is abolishing the rules and customs that  
used to separate people.

That would make them call each other unclean.

Why? Look at verse 15.

Because God's purpose, God's plan is and  
was and always will be to create in himself one  
new people, one new community out of the many.

That was God's heart right from the beginning.

God's whole purpose was and is to make a place of peace,  
a place of shalom,  
a place of kingdom ministry for all people.

And that is why God, through the cross of Jesus,  
put to death the hostility and mistrust and the  
misunderstanding and prejudice between people.

So that those from the far east, and  
those from the far north, and those from the near east,  
and those from the far south and west  
could be brought together into one community for  
the glory of God.

That is the telos, the direction, the goal of God plan.

Here we are people from many tribes and nations.  
Worshipping together, dating each other.  
Isn't this so like God?

Paul tells in Ephesians 2:19 that we in Christ,  
through power of the cross, are no longer  
strangers, and aliens, and foreigners to each other.  
Rather we are fellow citizens,  
we are all members of God's household.  
We are all part of God's family.  
In Jesus the whole family is joined together,  
You too, says Paul (22), are being built together to  
become a dwelling in which God lives with his Spirit.  
That is what is possible for us too.

It is because of this ability of God to do the impossible that  
we are sitting here together hoping and wondering and  
praying for what God wants to do with us.  
It is knowing that with God all things are possible.  
Especially these kinds of things.  
And that as we trust God to lead the way,  
we can follow the heart of God.  
Paul says in Philippians 4: 13;

**We can do all things through him who gives us strength.**  
Amen? repeat

Now, you may be wondering  
what all this has to do with Ruth.  
At Hope Community Church we have been studying the  
book of Ruth these last four weeks.  
And it just so happens that this week  
we are considering this fourth chapter.  
This chapter about marriage and property and giving  
birth to joint ministries.  
Like so many other stories in the bible this is again the  
same story we are talking about from Ephesians.  
It is a story about how God destroys the dividing walls  
between two totally different people  
through the power of the cross, and  
makes them one, and  
from their union God gives birth to a child whose  
ministry brings glory to God and grace to the people.

What do you think is the probability of  
a poor Moabite traitor's widow marrying a  
wealthy Royal prince from Israel?

Its as good as a snowball's chance in hell.  
It was unheard of.  
It was simply not allowed by the law of God.  
It was totally unimaginable and totally impossible.

Ruth was a woman from Moab.  
And Moabites were despicable in the eyes of Israelites.  
All the fury of prejudice and racism burned against her.  
And for her to marry the Mayor of Bethlehem was  
mission impossible.  
If you would tell to Moses or to Judah or to Sarah or  
Deborah that a person like Ruth would marry Boaz  
and become the grandmother of the greatest king  
of Israel and the great grand mother of the Son of God.  
They would laugh you out the door and tell  
you are blaspheming. That goes against even what  
God is telling us, they would say.

But here they are in this chapter, this improbable couple  
Ruth the Moabite widow marrying Boaz  
the Mayor of Bethlehem.  
And the point is God even at the very beginning of his  
kingdom was destroying the barriers and the dividing walls  
between people for his glory and for t  
he cause of his kingdom.

Now I am not telling you that this is easy.  
The whole story of Ruth tells us it is anything but easy.  
This marriage needs all the strength and effort and faith  
and commitment and sacrifice and suffering  
people can give; and it requires  
God's supernatural intervention at every step of the way.

Let me tell you what this marriage between  
Ruth the Moabite and Boaz the Mayor took.  
It took a godly desire on the part of  
Ruth and Naomi and Boaz.  
And it took a godly faith, and a godly Redeemer.

First it took a godly desire. Remember chapter one.  
Ruth with all her heart and with all her soul and with all  
her mind and with all her bodily strength  
said to Naomi.

**Where you go I will go, Your people will be my people,  
and your God will be my God.**

That my friends is a godly desire for  
God's purpose, God plan. A desire for God himself.  
An intense and pervasive and deep desire  
for God and his grace.  
A commitment to be faithful, as I said last week,  
in sickness and in health,  
in good time and in bad till death do us part.  
An intense desire for God and his people.

Secondly, a marriage like that of Ruth and Boaz,  
takes a godly faith.  
An extra ordinary willingness to walk the talk.  
Ruth took the initiative and offered her body and her life  
to Boaz and the marriage.  
Naomi offered her family heritage and all her property  
to Ruth and Boaz and their children.  
And Boaz,  
Boaz too had to sacrifice himself for the sake of God's will.  
Notice in verse 6 of chapter 4 what the marriage to Ruth  
would mean to Boaz.

When Boaz offered the proposal first  
to the closest kinsmen Redeemer, the man was all ears.  
You want me to become the owner of the  
property of Naomi? Where do you want me to sign?  
This is a no brainer.  
"Not so fast," says Boaz.  
You see when you take over the property of Naomi  
you also acquire the dead man's widow,  
Ruth the Moabites.  
And you will have to fulfill your God given  
responsibilities to the marriage.

When the closest kinsman heard what was all involve here  
- that he had to sacrifice the future his own estate,  
he immediately said, no thanks.  
I cannot redeem Ruth and Naomi's property,  
because I might endanger my own estate.  
Ruth gave up her life, but so did Boaz give up his life  
for the sake of the marriage.  
Boaz too had to give up his family rights and his family  
destiny and join the family of Naomi and Elimeleck.  
So that is the second ingredient to being involved in God's  
impossible plan of making his people and his kingdom.  
It takes a godly faith, a willingness to give up your  
life for the sake of the gospel and the sake of Jesus

and his ministry.  
A faith that is willing to walk the talk.

And finally, It takes a godly Redeemer,  
someone like Boaz or Ruth, but even greater than they.  
You may remember that the book of Ruth is basically  
about that great couple Elimelek and Naomi.  
God is King and God's grace is lovely.  
This great testimony was in danger of becoming extinct.  
Elimelek (God is King) died in Moab and his  
sons died there too.  
The only people left were Ruth and Naomi, a couple  
of hopeless widows with no future.  
What redeems this situation?  
The only thing that could redeem this great couple, this  
God is King and God's grace is lovely testimony was  
if a boy child would be born to them.  
But that is impossible.  
Elimelek is dead and Naomi is old and a widow.

If a son was possible this son would be  
the redeemer of this family.

Now look at verse 13.

“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife.”  
This took a godly desire and a godly faith to accomplish.  
But then the bible continues.  
“Then Boaz went into her and the Lord, YHWH,  
enabled her to conceive and she gave birth to a son.  
The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to YHWH,  
who this day has not left you without a kinsman Redeemer.  
May he, this son, become famous in Israel... Obed.  
One who serves as Redeemer.”

For a marriage like that between Boaz and Ruth to give  
birth to some beautiful for God,  
something of kingdom value,  
We need a godly Redeemer to make it happen.

For Boaz and Ruth and Naomi and Elimeleck it was the  
intervention of God.  
It was God enabling Ruth to conceive.  
It was God giving them a son.  
For us it is the cross of Jesus and the spirit of God  
being poured out on God's people.  
This is what destroys the barriers between people and  
makes a partnership agreement between them possible.

This is what makes a relationship between  
the Bread of Life Church and Hope  
Community Church possible and  
potentially fruitful for the kingdom of God.

A godly desire for God and his will.

A godly faith that goes the extra mile in walking the talk,  
and an openness and a willingness to let God and  
Jesus and spirit be the godly redeemer we need  
to make it happen.

With this desire, and with this faith, and with God  
nothing is impossible. As Jesus said,  
All things are possible with God.

We can all things through him who gives us strength.

Let us pray. Father in Heaven. Our Redeemer and King. God of love and kindness and grace. God of the impossible – who made great things out of nothing. Help us we pray. We can so easily get caught up and see only the selfish gains in the relationship between BoL and HCC we are considering. We so easily see only property, or money. We so easily look only at the potential for increased numbers and increased ministry. We dream about human glory and enhanced ministerial reputations. O God help us and keep us from temptation. O Holy Spirit, it is so true also with us that the worries of this world, the deceitfulness of money, and desires for other things, keep us from letting the Word of God bear fruit in our lives. O God, our faithful redeemer give us godly eyes to see what you are doing among us, to see what your will for us is. Help us focus on your purposes and your plans for your church. Give us a godly desire for your will and your purposes. Give us a godly faith so that we can truly be disciples of Jesus, your sons and daughters, who are just like you. And especially Holy Spirit give us the humility and the reverence to let you be the one who Redeems us through the sacrifice of Jesus, and the power of your Word and Spirit. And so here we are Lord, sitting together as two congregations worshipping, praying, hoping. Father in heaven: our deepest desire is to hallow your name. And in all our working together and talking together may your kingdom come, may your will be done among us as it is in heaven. And give us the bread we need for this journey together. And forgive our sins, forgive everything that misses the mark of your glory and is stained with human ambitions. Forgive us as we also are called to forgive others. And Father, Redeemer and Creator, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. And all God's people say. AMEN.

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HfH is an international organization constructing houses for people who could never afford them.

HfH gives poor people a place to call home and raise their families