

## **Sermon Handout for July 6, 2025**

**Title: From Strangers to Family: When God Fits the Pieces Together**

### **Scripture Focus**

#### **Ruth 1:16–18 (NIV)**

“Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God...”

#### **Ruth 4:13–17 (NIV)**

“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife... she gave birth to a son... ‘Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer...”

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### **Main Idea**

God takes the scattered, seemingly disconnected pieces of our lives and fits them into a story of purpose, redemption, and belonging. Like Ruth, we may not always understand the journey—but God sees the whole picture.

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### **Key Points**

#### **1. Your story isn’t lost—it’s in progress.**

- Life may feel like a puzzle with missing or mismatched pieces.
- But God knows the full picture even when we don’t.
- Romans 8:28 – “In all things God works for the good of those who love him...”

#### **Reflection:**

Have there been times when your life felt disjointed or directionless? How might God have been working even then?

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#### **2. Faithfulness often looks like choosing to stay.**

- Ruth’s commitment to Naomi wasn’t practical—it was sacrificial.
- Loyalty can be risky and uncomfortable, but it’s holy.
- Belonging often begins with a decision, not a feeling.

#### **Reflection:**

What relationships or communities is God calling you to stay committed to—even when it’s hard?

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#### **3. God uses detours, delays, and even quitting.**

- The speaker’s story includes false starts, changed majors, grief, and uncertainty.
- Yet every experience became part of her calling.
- Nothing is wasted in God’s hands.

#### **Reflection:**

Are there parts of your past you’ve written off? What might God want to redeem from those chapters?

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#### **4. Loss isn’t the end of the story.**

- Naomi lost everything—but God restored her through Ruth’s faithfulness.
- Ruth’s loss became a pathway to legacy and life.
- God often brings redemption through community.

**Reflection:**

Where have you experienced loss? Where might God be quietly bringing restoration?

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**5. Church is not an event—it's a family.**

- Like Ruth and Naomi, we're called to journey together.
- Church is where we move from strangers to family.
- Our diversity of backgrounds and stories is part of the beauty.

**Reflection:**

How can you help someone new feel like they belong here? What would it look like to build a deeper sense of family?

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**Life Application This Week**

- **Pray:** Ask God to show you how your story fits into His bigger plan.
  - **Connect:** Reach out to someone at church you don't know well. Share your stories.
  - **Encourage:** Tell someone what you see in them—a gift, a strength, a purpose.
  - **Reflect:** Write down how God has used unexpected pieces of your life for good.
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**Journaling Prompts**

Respond or journal later this week:

- When did I last feel like I didn't belong?
  - What are three puzzle pieces from my life that seemed random—but now look purposeful?
  - Who is someone I can commit to walking alongside like Ruth did with Naomi?
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**Closing Prayer**

Lord, sometimes our lives feel like unfinished puzzles. We don't see how the pieces fit, and we doubt that they ever will. But today, we trust that you see the whole picture. Like Ruth, help us to love boldly, stay faithfully, and follow your call, even when it's unclear. Thank you for turning our broken pieces into stories of grace. Make us a family here—not by blood or background, but by your Spirit. Amen.

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**Memory Verse**

“Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.”

— *Ruth 1:16b*

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**We're Family Now**

Welcome someone this week—not as a visitor, but as part of God's story being written here. Let's keep building this puzzle—together.