

Sermon 讲道信息
 July 七月 2 日, 2023 年
 All is Not Right, but All is Not Lost
 问题丛生，却希望尚存
 Ruth 路得记 1:16-18

I remember sitting in a history class in England, sometime in the mid-1970s, learning about the 18th-century wars between Britain and France.

记得 1970 年代中期，我在英国的历史课上学习 18 世纪英法战争的历史。

I learned that in 1759, British General Wolfe defeated the French on the Plain of Abraham, near Quebec City.

我得知，英国的沃尔夫将军 1759 年在魁北克市附近的亚伯拉罕平原打败了法国人。

I remember sitting in a geography exam in school, desperately trying to remember if Manitoba was east or west of Saskatchewan.

记得在地理考试中，我曾绞尽脑汁也记不起，曼尼托巴省是在萨斯喀彻温省的东边还是西边。

I remember learning about the St. Lawrence River and how important it was for trade and shipping from the Great Lakes.

还记得当时学到圣劳伦斯河及其对五大湖泊的贸易、航运的重要性。

But that was it.

不过仅此而已。

Canada was a distant country full of beaver, igloos, and lumberjacks.

加拿大当时对我来说，只是个遥远的国度，到处都是海狸子、冰屋和伐木工人。

At age 10, I had no idea that years later, I'd be living in Canada.

10 岁的我怎会知道，多年后我会到加拿大来生活。

I became a pastor in 1989. 我 1989 年作了牧师。

I visited Toronto in 1995 and Vancouver in 1996.

1995 年我访问了多伦多，1996 年又访问了温哥华。

I loved the size, the beauty, the people of Canada.

我热爱加拿大的幅员辽阔、风景秀丽，我也热爱加国人民。

It was far, far different from the cramped busyness of north-west London.

这里与伦敦西北部的逼仄繁忙截然不同。

In 2001, I joined the staff of a Baptist church in Penticton, BC.

2001 年，我受聘参加了 BC 省彭蒂克顿浸信会的工作。

Shortly after, my wife and I became dual citizens: British and Canadian.

不久后，我和妻子有了双重公民身份：既是英国人也是加拿大人。

I'll never forget my British background, but Canada is my home.

我永远不忘自己的英国出身，但加拿大才是我的家园。

Home. It's a strange word for most of us, I think.

我想，“家园”对于我们大多数人来说都是个不无困惑的词。

Where is home?哪里才是我的家园？

Is home the Philippines?是菲律宾？

Is home China?是中国？

Is home India?是印度？

Is home Germany?是德国？

Is home Taiwan?是台湾？

When I'm in Canada and I say, "I'm going home", I mean England.

在加拿大，我如果说“我要回国”，意思是指英国。

When I'm in England and I say, "I'm going home", I mean Canada.

而在英国，我若说“我要回国”，意思是指加拿大。

I'm stuck between fish and chips and Maple syrup.

炸鱼薯条和枫糖浆把我困住了，不知哪里是我家。

But in the end, home is Maple syrup, Tim Hortons, colourful plastic currency, and buses that say "Sorry".

但归根结底，我的家园是以枫糖浆、蒂姆·霍顿斯咖啡店、五颜六色的塑料钱币，以及公交车额头上的“对不起”字样为标志的国家。

This month, we're going to look at one of the most amazing stories in the Bible:

这个月，我们要来看一看圣经中最令人惊叹的故事之一：《路得记》

the story of Naomi, her daughter-in-law Ruth, and Ruth's second husband Boaz – the Book of Ruth.

就是拿俄米、她的儿媳路得和路得的第二任丈夫波阿斯的故事。

The story in Ruth is often portrayed as a love story with a "happy-ever-after" conclusion.

《路得记》中的故事常被描绘成结局“皆大欢喜”的一个爱情故事。

There's a lot of truth to this.

皆大欢喜之中蕴含着丰富的真理。

But it's really a story of God's sovereignty over ordinary lives during desperate times.

但事实上，这是个在绝望境况中，上帝对普通人的生活行使主权的故事。

And it begins with situations and circumstances that many people in today's world face
故事一开始就讲述了当今世界许多人面临的景况和境遇

– the longing for security, family, and certainty – home.

那就是渴望着象征安全保障、家庭生活和踏实感的家园。

It could so easily be the story of people looking for a personal "Canada"

它很容易就成为人们寻找自己向往的“加拿大”的故事

– a home and native land with God as the Ruler Supreme.

– 那就是，以上帝为至高掌权者的家园和故乡。

Allow me to unpack this opening chapter and then let's see how this might apply to us.
请允许我展开《路得记》的开篇第一章，再看看它如何适用于我们自己。

Ruth 1 describes a desperate situation. 第一章描述的是一种绝望的景象。

It begins, "In the days when the judges ruled..." 它一开始就说：“当士师秉政的时候，”
This not only tells us when in history this took place, but also tells us what that time was like.
它不仅告诉我们这是历史上是哪一时期发生的事，也告诉我们那个时代的境况如何。
It was a time of moral decay. 那是个道德沦丧的时代。

Society is crumbling, God is ignored, 社会在崩塌，上帝受到忽视，
and, as the very last verse of Judges summarizes, "Everyone did as they saw fit."
且如《士师记》的最后一节概括的那样，“各人任意而行。”

We think of Judges as heroes but forget that life was terrible:
我们把士师们看作英雄，却忘记了当时的生活是很可怕的：
vengeance, idolatry, disintegration, violence against women and children, death.
到处是复仇、拜偶像、崩溃、对妇女和儿童的暴力，还有死亡。

Israel's spiritual life is in freefall. 自由落体
以色列的属灵生活在经历着自由落体式的坠落。

What's more, the story of Ruth starts with a famine.
更糟糕的是，路得的故事始于大饥荒之中。

Famine was often a sign of God's judgement. 饥荒常常是上帝审判的记号。

Deuteronomy 32:24 says God will send a "wasting famine" if Israel deserts him.

《申命记》32: 24 说，以色列民若忘记神，祂就会降下饥荒，使他们“因饥荒消瘦”

So, imagine the desperation of a small family – a man, his wife, and their two sons.
我们来想象一下这个小家庭面临的绝境——这家有个男人、他的妻子和两个儿子。

They live in the Promised Land. 他们住在应许之地。

They are probably farmers, but there's a famine. 他们可能是农民，但饥荒来了，
Nothing is growing. 寸草不生。

The husband makes a terrifying decision: leave home and travel.
作丈夫的做了一个吓人的决定：离家去往他乡。

But travel where? 去到哪里呢？

To the land of their enemies, to Moab. 去到了以色列仇敌的国家——摩押地。
Moab had refused to help the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land;
因为摩押人曾经在以色列民去往应许之地的路上不仅不帮助他们，
their king even hired Balaam to curse the Israelites.

他们的王还雇了巴兰去咒诅他们。

In Deuteronomy 23:3-6, the Lord warned Israel to avoid Moab.

在《申命记》23: 3-6 中，耶和华还特别警告以色列民要远避摩押地。

How many of us here, celebrating Canada Day weekend, woke up this morning hungry?

在庆祝加拿大国庆日的周末时，有多少人今早饿着肚子醒来？

Fires and flooding continue tragically to destroy some communities in Canada,

有火灾和洪水持续严重摧残着加拿大的某些社区，

but in Vancouver, much of the time climate change or environmental challenges can seem remote.但在温哥华，气候变化或环境挑战往往看似很遥远。

What's more, in Canada, we live in a stable democracy.

更重要的是，在加拿大，我们生活在一个稳定的民主国家里。

We can vote freely. We can speak freely. We can travel freely.

我们可以自由投票，可以畅所欲言，可以自由旅行。

We can worship freely. 我们可以自由地敬拜上帝。

Our internet accounts are not under police surveillance.我们的互联网账户不受警方的监视。

Our news is not government controlled.我们的新闻不受政府操控。

Our laws are based upon due process.我们的法律以程序正义为基础。

We have so much to be thankful for. 我们有很多事应当感恩。

We're not desperate like Elimelek, Naomi, and their two sons, forced to move countries

我们不像以利米勒、拿俄米和他们的两个儿子那样身陷绝境，被迫迁徙异邦，

because they are victims of food insecurity, climate change, political upheaval, war, and moral social decay.

因为他们遭受着食物不足、气候变化、政治动荡、战争和社会道德沦丧的侵害。

But to read the opening verses of Ruth brings us face-to-face with the cry of so many in our world:

读《路得记》开篇的经文，也让我们直面世上众多人的呼号：

refugees, migrants, homeless, victims of war, families on the brink of economic and climate disaster.

有难民的、新移民的、无家可归者的、战争受害者的、在经济和气候灾难边缘挣扎的家庭的。

To read these Scriptures is to read of our world today.

阅读这些经文就是阅读我们当今世界的概况。

Elimelek, Naomi, and their two sons arrive in Moab.

以利米勒、拿俄米和他们的两个儿子来到了摩押地。

Life seems to go well.生活看似顺利。

But then Elimelek dies.但紧接着，以利米勒死去了。

That's grief enough – burying a husband in a foreign land.

把丈夫葬在异国他乡已够悲惨的了。

Then Naomi's grief increases.

可拿俄米的悲哀还不止于此。

Her two sons marry Moabite women.她的两个儿子娶了摩押女子为妻。

Naomi must know her Jewish history. 拿俄米一定知晓自己的犹太背景。

Exodus 34:16 warns Israelites against marrying foreign women;

《出埃及记》34: 16 警告以色列人不要娶外邦女子为妻；

Numbers 25:1-3 describe how Moabite women seduced Israelites and corrupted them with pagan worship.

民数记 25: 1-3 描述了摩押女子如何用异教膜拜引诱以色列人，败坏他们。

What went through Naomi's mind at the wedding ceremonies of her two sons?

不知在她两个儿子的婚礼上，拿俄米作何感想？

I truly rejoice that on this Canada Day weekend, I can serve my Christian sisters and brothers who do not look like me.

十分高兴在这个加拿大国庆日的周末，我能服侍看似和我长相迥异的基督徒兄弟姐妹。

I am honoured to call you friends 我很荣幸能称为你们为朋友，

– Jesus brings us together and in him there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave or free, male or female.

– 耶稣把我们招聚在一起，在他里面没有犹太人或外邦人，奴隶或自由人，男性或女性。

We are one in him. That's glorious.

我们在他里面合而为一，这是莫大的荣耀。

Yet, we still see prejudice and discrimination in our society.

可是，在我们的群体中仍能看到偏见和歧视。

Some here today have experienced prejudice, verbally targeted during COVID for example.

It's horrific!

今天在座的一些人就曾经历了偏见，例如在疫情期间出现了有针对性的出言不敬。这很可怕！

And then we come to the most desperate reality in Ruth 1. Naomi's two sons die.

然后，我们读到《路得记》第一章中最令人绝望的现实——拿俄米的两个儿子也死了。

In that time, women depended upon men for their livelihood and identity.

在那个时代，妇女是靠男子来维持生计和身份的。

With the deaths of her husband and two sons, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law are instantly at risk.

随着丈夫和两个儿子的死去，拿俄米和她的两个儿媳立时处于危机之中。

They become targets for abuse, exploitation, even trafficking.

他们成为被性侵、剥削，甚至贩卖的目标。

Their future is frightening. 他们的前景实在堪忧。

As I read this, I hear the plight of indigenous women in Canada, but also the plight of women globally.

读到此，我不仅能体会加拿大原住民妇女的困境，也能体会全球妇女的困境。

It's been said that the paramount moral challenge of the twenty-first century is the plight of women.

有人说，21 世纪最突出的道德挑战即是妇女的困境。

In the Book of Ruth, this moral challenge is in our face!

在《路得记》中，这种困境活生生地摆在我们面前！

So, why tell us this on this Canada Day weekend when we have so much to give thanks for?

若问我，你何必要在这加拿大国庆日周末对我们讲这些呢？我们有很多该感恩的事！

I want us to understand something profoundly theological.

原因是，我希望我们能从神学角度更透彻地明白一些事。

The Book of Ruth begins by telling us that all is not right in God's world.

《路得记》一开始就告诉我们，上帝的世界上并非万事大吉。

Canada is as broken as any other part of the world

加拿大和世界其它地方一样问题丛生

– perhaps in different ways, but still fundamentally because of human sin.

—表现形式许有不同，但从根本上讲，仍是因为人类的罪。

On this Canada Day weekend, it is right to confess our sin before God,

在这加拿大国庆日的周末，我们应在上帝面前认罪才是，

the sin of arrogance and indifference, 认狂妄、事不关己的罪，

the sin of prejudice and discrimination, 认偏见、歧视的罪，

the sin of neglect and apathy, 认忘记神、对神冷漠的罪，

the sin of moral decay and broken leadership. 认道德败坏、领导失当的罪。

The Book of Ruth reminds us not to ignore the reality of life around us.

《路得记》提醒我们，不要忽视我们周遭的生活现实。

But, as we continue through Ruth, there is another message:

但在我们继续读《路得记》时，还能读到另一个信息：

all is not right in God's world, but all is not lost in God's world.

在上帝的世界里并非天下太平，但在上帝的世界里却有希望。

We look at the Book of Ruth and identify the main characters: Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

我们看《路得记》可以发现几个主角——拿俄米、路得和波阿斯。

And as we follow the story, each in their own way will find the answer to their need.

随着这故事的进行，他们都会从自己的角度找到想要的答案。

But the Book of Ruth is really about God.

但事实上，《路得记》讲的是上帝的故事。

God sees this broken world, but never gives up on this broken world.

上帝悉知这个破碎的世界，却永远不会放弃这破碎的世界。

Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz will find the answer to their need – but because God is at work.

拿俄米、路得和波阿斯能找到他们想要的答案——只是因为神在作工。

See how this plays out in Ruth 1. 我们《路得记》第一章如何将这故事演绎出来。

News comes of the end of the famine in Israel.

有以色列饥荒缓解的消息传来。

Naomi decides to return to her home – Bethlehem.

拿俄米决定回归自己的家乡——伯利恒。

Her two daughters-in-law prepare to go with her.

她的两个儿媳妇准备和她同去。

This is too much for Naomi.

这对拿俄米来说实在太难了。

She cannot promise them a future.

她无法向他们承诺光明的未来。

And realistically, they have no future with Naomi.

事实上，她们和拿俄米在一起没有前途可言。

She will not have sons at her age for them to marry.

她这个年纪已无法再生儿子作她们的丈夫。

What's more, it seems both daughters-in-law couldn't have children anyway

何况看来两个媳妇也不能生育

– they'd been married for 10 years without bearing a child.

– 他们结婚 10 年也没有生出孩子来。

As one female commentator says: "Prospects for marriage in Bethlehem would be nil for a pagan girl who was certifiably barren."

正如一位女圣经注释者所言：“对一个被证明不生育的异教女子来说，在伯利恒结婚的可能会是零。”

It makes more sense for these Moabite women to return home.

两位摩押女子回娘家去才更合情合理。

And one does. But the other, Ruth, does not.

她们一个就是那样做的，而另一个，路得却没有。

And what happens next is the start of the turning of this story

接下来发生的事才是故事转折的开始

– the story moves from desperation to devotion.– 故事从绝望转向委身。

The hand of God begins to be seen. 我们开始看到上帝之手的作为。

One of the glorious things about the Book of Ruth that encourages me is how God's grace is seen in what seem like small, easily overlooked choices.

《路得记》鼓舞我的一件很了不起的事就是，上帝的恩典如何在看似微不足道、易被忽视的决定中显露出来。

On the grand scale of human perception of history, changes come because of momentous decisions by politicians, presidents, kings, and leaders.

在人类对历史的宏观概念中，变化总是随政治家、总统、国王和领袖的重大决定而来。

I mentioned that General Wolfe defeated the French in 1759;

前面提到英国的沃尔夫将军 1759 年打败了法国人；

his victory changed the balance of power in Canada.

他的得胜改变了加拿大的权力平衡。

Read any history book and it's the big events that attract attention.

无论你读哪本历史书，这都是引人注目的大事件。

But God's ways are different.但上帝的方式却不同。

Ruth reminds us that it is in the seemingly insignificant decisions of ordinary people that God's power is seen.

路得提醒我们，正是在普通人看似微不足道的决定中，才显出上帝的能力。

Most of you know that my wife and I adopted two wonderful children about eight years ago.

你们大多都知道，八年前我和妻子收养了两名非常好的孩子。

Before we knew our two children, we were given names and details of several children.

在认识我们的两个孩子之前，社工为我们提供过好几个孩子的名字及详情。

For one reason or another, our plans to adopt stalled.

由于这样那样的原因，我们的领养计划却没有进展。

So I asked the social worker a blunt question:

于是我直截了当地问了社工一个问题：

is it because we are Christians? 是不是因为我们是基督徒的原因？

She could not say yes or no, but her silence was deafening, if you understand.

她说不出是或不是，但她的沉默比言语的声音更响，你懂得的。

For several months, we no longer received profiles of children.

有几个月，我们不再收到待领养儿童的个人资料。

We were almost going to give up.我们几乎要放弃了。

But then our social worker presented us with the profile of two children.

但就在这时，社工向我们展示了两个孩子的个人资料。

We discovered that the boy, only 10 years old, had told his social worker that he wanted to be adopted by Christians.

我们得知，其中只有 10 岁的男孩告诉他的社工，他想让基督徒收养。

Instantly, our names rose to the top of the list of eligible people.

我们的名字立时上升到了合格人员名单的顶部。

And guess what, it is these two wonderful children whom we adopted.

你猜怎样，我们后来收养的正是这两个不可多得孩子。

All seemed lost for these two children and for us,

对于两个孩子和我们来说，曾一度希望全无，

but because of who we were and who he wanted as parents, God's sovereignty was clear.

但通过我们的身份和孩子希望要怎样的收养父母，上帝的至高掌管清楚地彰显出来。

We know God's plan – clearly!

我们清楚地知道了神的计划！

It is in the seemingly insignificant decisions of ordinary people that God's sovereign power is seen.

正是在普通人看似微不足道的决定中，上帝的至高权能显露无遗。

Be encouraged on this Canada Day weekend.

各位要在这加拿大国庆日的周末备受鼓舞。

Your decision to follow Jesus,

你之决定跟随耶稣，

to manner of your discipleship,

你如何作门徒，

how you reach out to others,

你如何待人接物，

the prayers you offer,

你献上的祷告，

your generous giving,

你慷慨的奉献，

a decision to pick up the phone and call someone or listening to someone in need,

你决定拿起电话，给某个身处困境的人打电话或听他们讲心里话，

taking the risk of following the prompting of the Holy Spirit, will change lives.

不惜一切跟随圣灵的感动，这能改变生命。

This is how God works.

这就是神作工的方式。

So, what turns the story in Ruth 1 from desperation to devotion?

那么，是什么让《路得记》第一章中的故事从绝望变成委身呢？

Ruth agrees to embrace a new citizenship.

是路得愿意接受以色列国民的身份。

She follows her grieving, desperate mother-in-law into whatever the future holds.

她跟随了悲哀、绝望中的婆婆，不计前途如何。

In a world that's morally dysfunctional,

在一个道德功能失调的世界里，

Ruth – a foreigner, a woman, a pagan – shows loyal devotion – true discipleship.

路得作为一个外邦人，一个女子，一个异教徒，却表现出忠诚的委身，即真正的门徒精神。

This is what Ruth says in Ruth 1:16-17:

这便是路得在《路得记》1: 16-17 中说的话：

“Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you.

“不要催我回去不跟随你。

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay.

你往哪里去，我也往那里去；你在哪里住宿，我也在那里住宿；

Your people will be my people and your God my God.

你的国就是我的国，你的神就是我的神。

Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried.

你在哪里死，我也在那里死，也葬在那里。

May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.”

除非死能使你我相离！不然，愿耶和華重重地降罚与我。”

What's amazing is that Ruth's world has fallen apart and she's watched Naomi's world fall apart.

令人惊讶的是，路得的世界已分崩离析，她也看到拿俄米的世界分崩离析。

Yet, she sees light, hope, purpose.

然而，她看到了光明、希望及人生的目的。

Naomi's God is her God.

因为拿俄米的神就是她的神。

Now isn't this the Gospel?

这难道不是福音吗？

Even though everything can look dark

即使一切都看起来很悲观

– maybe impossible challenges in family, at home, with friends, at work, in school

– 也有家庭关系、家里、与朋友、工作上、学校中，难以对付的挑战

– the choice remains to follow Jesus.

正确选择永远是跟随耶稣。

He does not change.

他不会改变。

All is not right in God's world, but all is not lost in God's world.

在上帝的世界里并非天下太平，但在上帝的世界里希望尚存。

He is still at work.

他仍在作工。

All he asks is that we trust him.

他要求于我们的只是信靠他。

One thousand years after Ruth, a man died on a cross.

在路得身后一千年，耶稣基督死在了十字架上。

This man's earthly father was a direct descendent of Ruth's.

他在地上的父亲正是路得的直系后裔。

He faced temptation, but he never caved to temptation.

他曾面对诱惑，却从未屈从于诱惑。

Opposition came, but he stood firm.

抗拒来了，他仍站立得稳。

Friends deserted him, but he continued alone on his path.

朋友们离弃他，他仍特立独行，继续走自己的路。

Enemies mocked him, but he prayed for their forgiveness.

仇敌嘲笑他，他却为他们祈求宽恕。

Death tried to consume him, but...

死亡企图吞噬他，可是……

In John 4:34, this man made a statement of devotion similar to Ruth's:

在约翰福音 4: 34 中，此人做了个类似于路得的委身宣告：

“My food,” he said, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.”

他说：“我的食物是遵行差我来的那位的旨意，完成他的工作。”

Jesus followed the sovereign plan of his Heavenly Father.

耶稣遵行的是他天上的父的至高主权计划。

Nothing would get in his way.

没有什么能阻挡他。

He died for you and me.

他为你、为我而死，

And by his death, we are saved.

你我因他受死而得救。

You see, God chose the foolishness of the cross to redeem the world.

你看，神宁选择以十字架的愚拙来救赎世人。

This is always his way.

这从来都是他的道路。

It is the weak things in this world that God uses to shame the strong, and the foolish things to shame the wise (1 Corinthians 1:27).

“上帝却拣选了世上愚拙的，叫有智慧的羞愧；又拣选了世上软弱的，叫那强壮的羞愧”（林前 1: 27）。

Ruth chose the way of devotion, no matter the cost.

路得选择了委身之路，不惜代价。

Jesus chose the way of the cross, no matter the cost.

耶稣选择了十字架之路，不惜代价。

Both made the decision to follow the Father's plan.

他们都委身遵从了天父的计划。

And what seemed insignificant – a commitment to a grieving mother-in-law, a crucifixion on a cross – changed the world.

对哀伤的婆婆做出承诺和被钉十字架，这两件看似微不足道的事却改变了世界。

I came to Canada in 2001.

我 2001 年来到加拿大。

I came as an immigrant, a foreigner.

来时我是移民，是外国人，

Now Canada is my home.

而今，加拿大就是我的家园。

Canada brings me great joy – not least the friends I have in you.

加拿大带给了我莫大的欢喜——尤其你们这些我的朋友。

But Canada still wrestles with its past, its brokenness, and, sadly, spiritual decay.

但加拿大仍在与她的过去、她的破碎及可悲的属灵衰落角力。

Canada needs people like Ruth who can see beyond the pain of the moment and look to Jesus Christ.

加拿大需要像路得这样的人，能越过当下的痛苦，仰望耶稣基督。

Canada needs people who see a fresh move of God's Spirit.

加拿大需要随时明白圣灵感动的人。

Canada needs those who not only sing “God keep our land glorious and free” but live in the freedom of God and the joy of the Gospel.

加拿大需要不只会唱“上帝保佑我们国家的荣耀与自由”，也能生活在上帝的自由与福音之喜乐中的人。

All is not right, but all is not lost – it never is with God.

世上处处问题丛生，但在基督里永远有盼望——对上帝而言，永远如此。