

## Ruth's confession of faith (ii) (Quality: Very good)

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] . . . . .

. . Most of you will remember that we looked at these verses last Tuesday evening, and our attention was principally directed to the earlier clauses of this 16th verse.

As we came to the conclusion of our discourse, we were beginning to make a comment or two upon the last phrases, Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.

We find in the expressions in these verses the desires of the people of God, those that are quickened by his Spirit.

Ruth was a confessed stranger. She had been brought, or was to be brought, into the land of Israel where God dwelt and manifested himself in a way that he did not manifest himself among other nations.

[ 1 : 5 4 ] She had evidently been the subject of the internal working of the Spirit of God. Though it may seem strange to some that Naomi should have gone down to Moab during the famine which was upon her own land, and subsequently suffered much loss, her husband and her two sons, Yet, we may see the overflowing providence in this, that God had a purpose of love and mercy toward a Moabitess.

In these days, it was a rare thing for anyone to be blessed of God outside of Israel.

The Jews were particularly, shall I say, proud of this point, that God favoured them, and yet did not favour other nations in the same way.

You will remember that when the Lord highlighted the Gentiles, that is, those other than the Jews, when he highlighted in his teaching that the Gentiles had been saved and the Lord had appeared unto them, such as Naaman the Syrian, Then, the people were in a rage.

We find that Ruth would come into this category. Moab was a proud nation. And delighted in their pride.

[ 3 : 4 0 ] To think that God should have had purposes of love and mercy toward a woman there, is wonderful for us to bear in mind and to think upon.

It may be with some of you that you could truly say that being in the world, having no knowledge of the truth, yet God, in his mysterious way, caused such and such circumstances to arise, that you came in contact with one that feared God, and was impressed by what you saw.

Ruth saw Naomi in the time of adversity. Now, adversity will prove very often how real our religion is. Many people may be quite happy to profess to be religious or Christians when all goes well.

But the proof of our religion being founded on a good foundation is in the day of adversity, when they are brought to consider how great and glorious God is, how he will, in the day of adversity, prove that which he has given to us in the day of prosperity.

But to come to the last clauses in this 16th verse, there is wrought in the heart of this woman a determination.

[ 5 : 20 ] Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. We ask ourselves at this point as to whether such a determination has been wrought by the Spirit of God in our hearts.

Do we feel that the people with whom we worship this morning may be said to be of the people of God?

Do we feel drawn towards one another as we have seen that God has been with them of a truth? And because we have seen this, then there has been this desire wrought in our own hearts, thy people shall be my people.

But what does this mean? The people of God have always been as the offscouring of the earth.

They have always been despised and rejected of men, as was their master. They have always been looked down upon and regarded as narrow, bigoted, and so on.

[ 6 : 37 ] And yet, is there that wrought by the Spirit of God that has promoted this desire in our hearts, thy people shall be my people?

What did Ruth see? What had Naomi said to her? One would judge that Naomi's life was not only in what she did, but what she had said to Ruth.

Evidently, she had become a mother in Israel. And it was observable that in Naomi's life there was something real.

It is good if we are attracted to those that fear God because we believe that there is something real in their profession that they make.

I believe one of the sad reasons for the declension in the churches, professed churches and chapels in our land and in the world has been occasioned by the ungodly observing so much hypocrisy in those churches and chapels.

[ 7 : 54 ] And it is a very sad comment that is sometimes heard, if that's religion, I want nothing more to do with it. May we ever be so careful that we might not come under such a condemnation.

If we ever should, it should fill us with shame and confusion of face and seek unto the Lord that we should be delivered from such a case.

It is good for us to bear this point in mind too, that people will watch to see whether we give forth the evidences of being the people of God.

Now this is not something that is brought about by what we may do naturally. It didn't matter what Peter did with all his attempts to deny his association with the Lord Jesus Christ, but the answer to him on one occasion was, thy speech berate thee.

It was not possible for Peter to disguise himself in such a way that he could not, that he disassociated himself with the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 9 : 25 ] And so it is with the people of God. You may sometimes feel that you are worldly and the people must see that you are wealthy and you are like one of themselves.

But, if the spirit of grace is in you, they will see something which perhaps you cannot see. That there is that which will prevent you from going to some excesses sometimes.

Now, Naomi was in a land which was filled with idolatry and the environment could only be calculated to bring the life of God in her soul very low.

Even so, there was that. The life of God in the soul that never really died, could not die. And therefore, Ruth, living closely to her, was able to observe that she feared God.

Now, we should be conscious of this. that we may take heed to our steps, that we may, not only before the church, but before the world, in our families, and so on, so walk that they should see that God hath put a distinction between us and the Egyptians.

[ 10 : 52 ] Surely, if we fear God, then, we shall desire to be separate. we shall not desire to try and identify ourselves with the world as far as we can.

It will be painful for any person to be separate from the ungodly. It will be difficult sometimes for us to say no when we are invited to their friendship and to be partakers of their deeds.

but the fear of God in the soul will cause us to stand. If we should fall, oh, what will happen then? Will we not turn unto the throne of grace?

we may fall down. We may have nothing to say silent before God because of our sin but God will look down upon us and though others may not see the secret sign of our religion yet we shall know about it and God will know about it and it is possible that one or two others may know about it.

Now, Ruth says here thy people shall be my people. How could you speak with such confidence?

[ 12 : 14 ] Is it not the result of God's work? It is only when we can feel and observe God's work that we can speak with certainty. Thy people shall be my people.

God has wrought in me that which he has wrought in you and therefore if God has kept you till this day he also will keep me.

Thy people a chosen people a chosen generation thy people shall be my people.

Now, the people of God are blessed above many. Very few realize it. Do we realize that we are blessed above many? if we are the people of God?

We are. How favored we are if we should turn to the word of God day by day. Many don't do this at all.

[ 13 : 17 ] How favored we are if we should seek unto the Lord in the morning to pay our vows unto the Most High to seek for his help and blessing upon us during the day.

And how favored we are if we should give thanks at night for all the mercies of the day. Now then, surely, if Naomi was walking in a right way there would be things like this that Ruth would take notice of.

she was not brought up to worship God to seek unto God for help and furthermore to pray that she might have the same religion that Naomi had and that she might be able to give thanks unto God.

Thy people shall be my people. What a blessing it is to feel attracted to God's people.

Now we need to be honest about this. Are we attracted to God's people? Do we wish to be with them more? Or do we wish to be with them no more than we do?

[ 14 : 30 ] Or do we wish to be with them less than we are? Why is it that we find those that gather whenever the doors are open in the house of God?

Is it not because they feel that this people shall be my people? And therefore whenever opportunity presents itself, I wish to be with those people.

Now you see, we can hardly say, this people shall be my people if we only meet them occasionally. And we know there are other occasions when they meet together, but we are not there with them.

Therefore, can we say, this people shall be my people? Would not we be in danger of being accused of hypocrisy by saying, well, your actions don't go with your words.

You say that this people shall be my people, but you don't very often seek to be in the presence of those people, seek to be where those people are.

[ 15 : 39 ] You don't convince by your attitude that you are desirous of looking into the word of God. What are they doing? What are thy people doing?

Are they cleaning clothes to Christ? Are they seeking after him daily? Are they imploring, as we have sung in our hymn just now, descend from heaven immortal dove, stoop down and take us on thy wings and mount and bear us far above the reach of these inferior things?

Then, if we are saying, thy people shall be my people, we are after the same things and we are finding in our souls that our hearts might be lifted up above these inferior things of time, that we might be able to meet with them.

With them numbered may I be now and through eternity. Such must surely be in the heart of those that can honestly say with Ruth here, thy people shall be my people.

They shall be my people because they love the same things that strange though it is, I find that I love.

[ 17 : 00 ] Now, in the second chapter, in the eleventh verse, we read something which gives us an opening as to what evidently had taken place in Ruth's heart.

And Boaz answered and said unto her, it hath fully been showed thee all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband.

And how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity and art come unto a people which thou knowest not heretofore.

How can we find a people that we have known not heretofore, except it be by the gracious discovery made by God to our spirits.

Now you see what it necessitated. Her actions spoke louder than words. We read earlier in this first chapter of Orpah going back.

[ 18 : 07 ] But she had made a similar profession of cleaving to Naomi, but Ruth claimed unto her when Orpah went back.

And it was at some cost. This leaving her father and her mother and the land of nativity. It was at some cost.

We look at it though a little more deeply than just of what may be superficial. In a way of speaking everyone that is born again of the spirit has to leave their father and their mother and the land of their nativity.

We shall not be able to get to heaven on our father's religion or our mother's religion or even on our land's religion. And in that sense we've got to leave them all.

Now Ruth had done this. A radical change had been brought in her heart. But you may say, ah, it was all right for Ruth, but my father, my mother, they were godly people.

[ 19 : 20 ] But you've still got to forsake them. And God will see to it that you do. Not forsake them, ah, ah, necessarily in a natural way, because we have our ties and necessarily, ah, we will, ah, have an interest up to a point.

And we would wish to do good unto them as life in us. But when it comes to the things of God, when it comes to thy people shall be my people, we have to leave father and mother.

We remember the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said, whoso will be my disciple must leave his father and his mother, his sister and his brother, and so on.

Now you see, the intention there is not so much as to leave them physically, but to leave them in spirit. And cleave unto the people of God.

The Lord recompense thy work, and the full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Now we get a significant point with regard to Ruth cleaving unto Naomi saying, thy people shall be my people.

[ 20 : 57 ] She had come to trust under the same wings that her mother-in-law trusted. they that dwell in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty.

It may well have been, if we may regard it according to the analogy of Christian experience, that Ruth had observed how God had watched over Naomi in the day of her adversity.

How he had preserved her, and delivered her, and been round about her, and kept her, looking up and keeping on.

thy people shall be my people. There was a fullness of heart in Ruth's desire here, a fullness of heart.

Now, we may ask ourselves, are we full-hearted when we say, this people shall be my people? You see, we live in a day, and doubtless this has been so in a generations past, when there are those whilst appearing to identify themselves with the people of God, yet are not slow to criticise the people of God.

[ 22 : 28 ] Now, if we should be in a place like that, we can hardly say that we are full-hearted in making this confession with Ruth, thy people shall be my people.

In the full flush of the early conversion of a person, how wonderful the people of God are.

I'm sure some of us with myself can go back to those early days and there then we saw the people of God as the scripture describes them.

There was nothing wrong with them. We could only see Christ in them. We couldn't see all their faults and their failings. They were the salt of the earth. They were the blessed of the most high.

And therefore if any should criticize them that would disturb us very much. We were determined in our desire this people shall be my people.

[ 23 : 32 ] They are blessed of God. And so we may remember the precious words in the book of Numbers seeing the shadow and the wings of God over this people where he says how shall I curse whom God hath not cursed.

The Lord hath given commandment to bless and he hath blessed and I cannot reverse it. I cannot reverse it.

What an attraction that will be. Thy people shall be my people. But we come on to the next point and thy God my God.

The scriptures declare concerning the household of faith that God is in the midst of them. Now this is worth considering.

God is in the midst of them. And so we think of the scripture the Lord will be round about his people.

[ 24 : 47 ] He will be round about them as a wall of fire and the glory in the midst. The glory in the midst. Now is that not true?

And thy God my God. We look at the people of God. Are we attracted to the people of God because God is in the midst of them. And his glory is seen in the midst of them.

We look at it like this. He is in the midst of them because he is in the midst of everyone every individual. since Christ is formed in their heart the hope of glory.

And wherever the people of God are joined together in unity of spirit it is as they observe Jesus Christ formed in one another. God is in the midst of them.

This is displayed sometimes in the church of God when we feel at the public prayer meetings an affinity an agreement to the prayers of our brethren.

[ 26 : 07 ] Have we not felt on such an occasion that God is in the midst of us because what is confessed and sought for and the thanks it is given all come within the same desires and thoughts of our own soul.

We say God's in the man and we feel that God is in us because we can so fully concur and say a hearty amen to the expressions that are put up to the God of heaven.

God is God God is in the people and thy God my God and God is in the midst of her when one and another may be able to tell forth what God has done for their souls.

Now this is good. It is good when we can tell what God has done for our souls. Because of the low state of things today it is quite rare and this will sadden the godly to hear others telling what God has done for their souls.

If we are lively and active in the things of God it should not be beyond us to be able to say what God has done in our souls since last Lord's Day.

[ 27 : 45 ] Have there been some down sittings? Have there been some depressions? Have there been some confessions of sin? Have there been some reproofs from God?

On the other hand has there been some comforting word? Has there been something that has strengthened our spirit? Have we felt God to be merciful and gracious?

Then shall we not tell forth to the honour and glory of God these things? And will it not then be discovered God is in the midst of her?

God is in the midst of the church of God. God is in the midst of the people of God. And how joyful it is and pleasant it is when one and another is able to tell forth what God has done for their souls.

God you will notice maybe you did notice in our reading that when Boaz met the reapers he said the Lord be with you and they answered the Lord bless thee.

[ 28 : 55 ] It would be good if we got back to this kind of language when we met one another in the streets or whatever it might be. We are too earth bound.

the Lord be with you what better salutation the Lord bless thee what better reply now you see if you begin like that it may well be that it will lead you on to speak of something that God has done for you spoken to you this is the standard a scriptural standard that we want to come to it is not good enough for us to say well the Lord hasn't visited me for a long time we ought to be terribly serious about it and deeply concerned is there no portion of the scripture that we have read that has been precious to our soul upon which we have thought about which we can speak to the honour and glory of God that will convince that God is in the midst of her that he will help her and if you may say well I don't know that I dare speak of anything

I might be brought to confusion God will help her and that right early thy people shall be my people and thy God my God have you ever found I'm sure some of you have the experience of one telling out what God has done for their souls immediately there is a spirit of worship which comes into your heart you listen you thank God as well you bless God that one has been able to tell you what God has done and has come in these words the Lord be with you what shall we say as he has been with me surely this is the spirit which is a true benefit to the prosperity of the church of the living God and thy God my God what shall we see in this last expression what was the God of Naomi he was the God that rules on high and thunders when he pleads he was the almighty and sovereign God he was God that gave no account of his matters and yet he was God that did all things well and therefore

Ruth expresses herself and thy God my God do we desire to worship and to have the eternal God for our God can we see that there is a great benefit in believing in the sovereignty of God sovereign ruler of the skies ever gracious ever wise all my times shall ever be ordered by thy firm decree so distinct from the God of this world who sets forth the weak elements of luck and chance and fortune and so we get people engaging in all kinds of superstitious actions believing that that will have an effect upon the events that come upon them but Ruth had left the God that she worshipped down in Moab and she had left everything behind and she came to worship the true God and she believed that God ordered all things after the counsel of his own will and she believed that he could only do well she would certainly concur with what we sometimes sing he is too wise to her and oh too good to be unkind and if we can see that in our lives when affliction abides us when temptation surround us he is too wise to her and oh too good to be unkind now as God opens the eyes of his children they will see how necessary these things have been necessary very necessary these things have been to bring them into a right and exercise state of mind before God we find concerning

Israel in the time of the judges that the the Lord did not remove all their the opposing nations out of their sight and the reason is given only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war at the least such as before knew nothing thereof and then the names of the nations are recorded and followed by this and they were to prove Israel by them to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the Lord which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses so we may wonder in our day why the Lord allows this and that and the other to come into our lives now we have the answer in the word of

[ 35 : 15 ] God it is to prove us to prove us the children of Israel were led about in the wilderness to humble them and to prove them and that they might know what was in their heart whether they would serve the Lord God or no now we can perhaps come to this point again and thy people shall be my people and thy God my God because Ruth might say these people God proves and therefore since he proves them there is something in their religion that stands when it is proved if we have a religion that is not proved then when we most need it it will fail us now God proves his people has proved his people in all ages how good it is if one of the reasons you can give for saying now this people shall be my people and their God my God is because

God proves them and then we go on to this because God humbles them and also because God makes them to know what is in their heart and God makes them to know their failings and God makes them to see how poor they are and yet though they may sometimes feel poor and forgot yet their God their own God changes not there are two sides that are seen when the people of God come to this point that thy people shall be my people and thy God my God they see that God proves them they also see that God is unchangeable I am the Lord I change not therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed we would say this carefully as God proves his people so his people are proving God what do we know about the faithfulness of God has that not been discovered then we have proved it behold his patience lengthened out to them that from him rose and we proved God we proved

God in respect to what the scriptures speak about him now we may speak about the doctrine God is unchangeable the same yesterday and today and forever as God proved it that you can look at the people of God and you can say well now these are the people that God proves he proves what they are and he proves also what he is that he is unchangeable now he doesn't we don't go outside of ourselves but we look inside of ourselves are you fully assured and settled in this matter that God is unchangeable unchangeable in his person unchangeable in his thoughts I know the thoughts I think towards you thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end I will not alter the thing that has gone out of my mouth and in the day of adversity if God has brought you to feel your sinfulness that God should surely alter the thing that has gone out of his mouth that he should cast off his people we look into the word of

God and we say concerning the children of Israel that surely God cast them off look at those that fell in the wilderness thousands upon thousands were they not God's people they were God's people as a nation but here is the distinguishing point he will not cast off his people whom he foreknew now that makes all the difference between Israel as a nation and the elect that were in that nation for not all Israel are of Israel and God will never cast off any of his people whom he foreknew for whom he foreknew them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son and whom he did predestinate them he also called and whom he called them he also justified and whom he justified them he also glorified this people thy people shall be my people and thy

God my God for God is faithful faithful is he who calleth you who also will do it certainly bring you safely to the end of your journey and lend your soul above a long eternity to spend in singing God is love do you see the people of God and the God of the people in this light and so you see that those people are secure they are secure through and in and by the covenant made with David's Lord before the sinner fell a God that speaks and gives assurances that he has secured these people so that they shall not perish but they shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation are you afraid because of everything in this world that directs your attention to insecurity in the present day it may seem that we are living in the day of insecurity people may try to say that we are living in the days of security that the state is taking care of everything but when you look at it how this has affected matters that at one time would never be questioned and that was at one time considered secure a job was considered secure today it cannot be so said but we look beyond this present scene because this present scene however insecure it may turn out to be is only for time it is not for eternity now what the people of God are concerned about is eternity and this was expressed in our opening hymn when thou my righteous judge shall come to take thy people thy ransomed people home shall I among them stand shall such a worthless worm as I who sometimes am afraid to die be found at thy right hand now are we afraid to die not everybody is afraid to die some of the wicked are not afraid to die but sometimes the people of God are afraid to die you may say well how astonishing that is fancy the people of

[ 43 : 36 ] God being afraid to die well when is it it is when they cannot see their title clear to mansions in the sky but when they came then every fear vanishes and they wipe their weeping eyes how do we know that our names are written in heaven how do we know that we are secure God that was worshipped by Naomi was a God of truth and a God that communicated the psalmist says he will speak and he will speak peace unto his people it's good when we feel the presence and the feeling of peace and he speaks it we need

God to speak it because there is such a thing as a false peace and some people have died in a false peace now God is the judge of that matter but we are deeply concerned that the weather ours is a peace which will last you will remember doubtless that when the Lord Jesus was a street in the ship as it was tossed up and down on the sea and the disciples awoke him and said carest thou not that we perish he arose and he spoke and he spoke he spoke peace he said peace be still and there was a great calm we look at this in a spiritual experience because there's not one of the people of God I'm sure but at some time or other even if it isn't often the case with them when they feel tossed with tempest and not comforted now it's no use depending upon a feeling of peace creeping over you but you want God to speak peace peace and you will know this because looking at this same incident the Lord said peace be still and there was a great calm there wasn't a thing that moved it was an absolute meal pond now that's peace from God when your experience has been changed in a moment it wasn't my saviour it wasn't my saviour the Lord stood in the ship and he said peace peace and immediately there was a great calm now when



God does that in your soul and in mine well we secure we're secure and what do we do we worship God and those that were in the ship they say who is this that even the wind and the waves are both in we've proved how difficult it is for any to control the wind and the waves how much havoc the wind has sometimes caused and some of us may know what it's done inside of us and the wickedness as it's raised up inside of us so it was that the call upon God that he would be merciful unto us and keep us back from uttering that which is in our hearts brought about by the wind again the Lord spoke do we see things along these lines thy people shall be my people and thy

God my God because in the midst of them the Lord goes up with a shout and in words of authority he just says this peace peace be still and the spirit is calm and then we fall down and worship God because we know that none could speak to our ruffled spirit ruffled temper and immediately immediately there's a great time see sometimes if a person gets upset we hear the expression well we'll leave them for a bit until they calm down now that's a natural way of looking at things and we know very often if we let them calm down that they will do eventually now if you have a different experience than that that you calm down immediately immediately because

God has brought in your heart shall we start in connection with this God people you'll be my people and that thy God my God because God is able to do that which is supernatural supernatural and that is to speak peace but it gives a great count and God is faithful in all we we think oh how much reason we have to bless God if when our faith is tried we should say to another entreat me not to leave thee entreat me not to leave thee for thy people shall be my people and there thy

[ 50 : 06 ] God my God because there is a different dealing here and there is security here and there is certainty here and there are these words he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation he led them forth forth and yet forth out of their trials and as he proved them so he sustained them and as he taught them so he blessed them and as he blessed them so he established them in the presently and they were able to say God is with us God is with us of a truth amen