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| DATE | May 21, 2017 |
| SPEAKER | David Smith |
| TITLE | Necessary Endings; Exciting Beginnings |
| SERIES | It's easy to know what to do when life's going good, but when trouble hits, things can get cloudy. By looking at the story of Ruth, we'll learn how to put our hope in the Lord, storm after storm, and find the silver lining. |

Life is full of ups and downs, unexpected twists and turns; but, as we see in Ruth and Naomi's lives, God can lead us when we actively seek Him. He can turn painful endings into beautiful beginnings in our life.

1. Many psychological studies have been done and books written on motivation—what motivates people to make the decisions they do. What factors most commonly influence your decisions in your life—security, notoriety, satisfaction, affluence? How can you evaluate if your motivators are eternity-focused, and how can you change them if they're not?
2. In Ruth chapter 1, we learned that Naomi's sons married Moabites, which God commanded the Israelites not to do. How would you react if your child were dating someone who was a bad influence and was swaying him/her toward ungodliness? When is it proper for a parent to intercede and when should the child be allowed to follow their own decisions?
3. Read John 12:24-26. As Pastor David taught us, endings are necessary for fresh beginnings. How have you seen that a metaphoric "death" has led to the start of something new in someone's life? Is it possible to follow God without dying to yourself first, and why?
4. One of Pastor David's points was "You don't relate well to God apart from his people." Our culture values independence, to the point that we romanticize the "lone wolf." Think of a time in your life when community with other believers was essential to your growth, healing, or overcoming an obstacle. How would the situation have turned out differently had you attempted to go it alone? Have you had the opposite experience, and tried to deal with something apart from the support of the church? What difference does it make when you seek the support of trusted Christian friends?
5. Read Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 14:3-4. How would you explain the concept of "resting in God" to a nonbeliever? In what ways can a person specifically practice this act of resting? How does it differ from basic unwinding from stress or mind-clearing meditation?
6. What impedes your ability to trust God? Are you bitter against Him, blaming Him for something in your life? Are you wondering why He hasn't fixed certain painful circumstances in your life? Consider what events in your life have led you to question God. Has He provided a silver lining to those events?

Revisit Pastor David's closing questions from the sermon: "What do you need to walk away from? What bad in your life needs to end?" If you've not yet spent time in prayer considering these questions, take some time to come up with answers and action plans for bringing about endings.