



DATE May 28, 2017

SPEAKER David Smith

TITLE God's Favor

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.

David began today with the premise, "Faith is not denying hardship, but trusting in God's favor." The writer of Hebrews 11:1 expressed it as "...confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." In the midst of the struggle, we often don't see the silver lining. Yet we can have hope in God's love for us.

1. Describe a time in your life when you experienced God's favor. What connections can you draw between that experience and your faith?
2. Re-read Ruth Chapter 2. Make a list together of all of the ways God shows favor to Ruth and her family. What can we learn about God from this list?
3. Read Naomi's prayer in Ruth 1:8-9. Do you underestimate the power of prayer? If you answered yes, what do you think or know are the reasons? Share one or two life experiences when the power of prayer shaped the outcome.
4. David stated there is no such thing as chance with God. (Ruth 2:3) God has brought certain people in the path of our lives to bless us and to be blessed by us. What hindrances have we experienced to act on this? What are the results of following through in obedience in this?
5. In Ruth 2:8, Boaz demonstrated evidence of being a "safe" man in the way he carried himself with Ruth:
 - Understanding they belong to God
 - Caring for others' safety
 - Being generous
 - Praying others' flourish
 - Enforcing good boundaries
 - Providing comfort, kindness
 - Pointing others back to God
 - Encouraging godly character
 - Introducing people to safe people

What are some ways we can work on becoming safer in the way we carry ourselves? Give practical examples.

6. Early on in the message, David pointed out that relational blessings are far more valuable than material blessings as they are eternal. Are you living out your walk as a disciple of Jesus in such a way that relationships are of an ever increasing value to you? What are you willing to change so that they become more valuable, knowing that they will last into eternity?

As community groups, we "carry each other's burdens, and in this way...fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal 6:2) Make a special point this week to lift each other up in prayer and focus on God's past blessings as we face tomorrow's storms...and in this take hope!