

MESSAGE TRANSCRIPT //

MOTHER'S DAY AT TRADERS POINT | 2024

TIANA SPENCER | MAY 12, 2024

Aaron Brockett Video

Happy Mother's Day. I'm so excited to welcome our guest speaker for today. Tiana Spencer is a gifted Bible teacher, speaker, and writer originally from San Diego, California. She's been teaching God's Word and discipling others for over 25 years. Tiana has a passion for seeing people transformed spiritually, heal emotionally, and live purposefully for the glory of God. She graduated from Biola University with a degree in Biblical Studies and is in the process of obtaining a certificate in Spiritual Formation from Fuller Theological Seminary.

She and her husband, Brandon, have three beautiful daughters and currently reside in Wake Forest, North Carolina. It's an honor to have her here with us. So would you please welcome to the stage, Tiana Spencer.

Tiana Spencer

Good morning Traders Point. Happy Mother's Day to those in the room who are celebrating. I'm so glad to be here. I believe my first time in Indiana is when I came a long time ago. You guys have a lot of turn abouts—like those turn around things in the street. In Cali we don't have that. We just have four-way stops.

I was like, "Why aren't they just doing four-way stop signs? Why is everyone...?" It was just so confusing to me, but I made it. I made it through. I was just trying to get to Target. Lord have mercy.

So, anyway, my name is Tiana. Yes, I was born and raised in San Diego. We just moved to North Carolina about six weeks ago. So we're brand new to east coast time. And before that we were pastoring at a church for the last 10 years in Los Angeles. L A and North Carolina are completely different, completely different. We love it. It's the best thing we ever did.

Why we moved there—we do not know why we moved there. We still do not know. And that is honestly the truth. God had just dropped bread crumbs on us to move to North Carolina. We had no family, no friends, no job, nothing. He just said, "Go." We didn't get a chance to look at the place. We just packed up our life and we moved there. It's the best thing that we have ever done for our family so far. So, we are grateful.



It's a very short flight to you guys. So, I'm thankful to be here.

Let me say, on Mother's Day, it's obviously a hard day. We've spoken to that here. And because I have a story of suffering, I've had Lupus for 20 years, a lot of suffering in my life, it's hard for me to sit in this day without sitting in the tension of all that it means for all of the people in the room.

And so, today, as I was praying, "Lord what should we share about," He just kept brining my mind to this woman, a mother who lost everything and how God met her in that. And I want to talk about her today because I believe that her story can encourage us. Not because we will have the same ending but because we do serve the same God. Amen? Let me tell you all something. You all can talk to me. Okay. You don't scare me. I grew up in a black church, that's what we do. So, I'm going to stay the quiet. Okay? You all can talk to me. Alright? Alright.

So, we're talking about Ruth—the story of Ruth and Naomi. You guys are familiar with the story. You know Naomi and her husband and her two sons and their wives. They moved to a foreign land because there was a famine at home. And while they were there, Naomi's sons and her husband, they all die. She becomes a widow and loses two children at the same time.

So, she becomes very depressed and she decides to return back. She feels very forgotten by God. She feels very alone. Not seen. She decides to return back home and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, goes with her.

Now, remember she had at this point—nothing. Naomi had nothing to her name. She would have nothing because she had no heirs, and she had no husband. In that day if you didn't have no husband, you had nothing. You needed a man. That's not our testimony today. Right sisters? But, back then that was the story. They needed a man to have anything. Right? So this is a really big deal.

She needed what is called a kinsman redeemer. Someone who would come and take Ruth on as a wife so that their future would be secure. So, she meets a man named Boaz. You've all heard about Boaz. Boaz marries Ruth and brings us to where we are in this text, here in the passage, which commentaries say this is officially their wedding moment in front of all of these people.

Here's what Boaz says. Verse 10:

"I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man's name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today.

“All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem.

“May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the Lord will give you by this young woman. Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the Lord granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son.”

Verse 14:

“The women said to Naomi,” listen to this: “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.’

“Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became a mother to him. The neighbor women said, ‘A son has been born to Naomi,’ and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.” Ruth 4:10-17 (CSB)

So, we see in this scene, they are having this wedding and all of the people were there and they just began to declare what it is really like these prophetic prayers over Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. And these prophetic prayers over Ruth and Boaz, specifically that they would be fruitful and be used mightily for God’s kingdom and how they would kind of sum those up.

And then we get to these prophetic prayers for Naomi. And this is where I want to sit today because these prayers really tell us a lot about who our God was to her and who our God is to us: that He’s a redeemer, that He’s a restorer, and He’s a sustainer.

You see, in this journey we’re seeing, watching a group of people, they go from famine to fullness, from famine to fullness. We’re watching this journey. So, just like the people prayed over them, I want to pray these prophetic prayers over you all today.

I don’t know what you’re coming into this room with, I don’t know what your story is in relation to Mother’s Day or not related to Mother’s Day. But, I want to pray these prayers over you today because even though this is the end of their famine, some of us are still in the middle of ours. And so three things I’m praying over you today: I’m praying that you would know that God is a redeemer, I’m praying that you would know your God is a restorer, and I’m praying you would know that your God is a sustainer.

Let me pray.



God, I thank You for this room. God, you know what's in it. I don't know what's in this room. But, God, you have given this word for this room. So, I pray that You would take this word and you would divide this word up and you would spread it amongst Your children in which ever ways they need. Speak, O Lord. Your children are listening. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

He is our redeemer

The first thing we learn about God, the first thing we learn from this story is God is a redeemer. He's a redeemer. Listen to what the verse says. It says over to Naomi:

"Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you without a family redeemer today." Ruth 4:14a (CSB)

This is what was said over her at the end of all that she's been through—Naomi. He has not left you without. He's been faithful to you. He's seen you. He's provided for you. God has not left you without.

She was a woman who God did not leave without when the world tried to strip everything away. When death tried to take everything away. When her pain and her trauma tried to take everything away.

She is not known for what she lost but for how God made up for it. The woman who God did not leave without. Isn't that beautiful? Her story was redeemed. The famine ended. Boaz came. Provision was given. Her redeemer was born. And that's beautiful.

But I want to talk this morning to a perspective, to those who are still waiting. I want to talk to those whose redeemer has yet to come. Your problem has yet to be solved. Your situation has yet to change.

I want to talk to them because we talked about them coming from famine to fullness. And here's what I want you to know. I believe fullness is coming for everybody in this room. Everybody in this room I believe fullness is coming whether in this life or the next, fullness is coming. Restoration is coming. Redemption is coming to every story. To every story.

But, what if it's already here too? What if fullness is coming and fullness is here right now in the middle of your story whatever it is? Because I honestly believe that it is. Because when they were proclaiming this over Naomi, they were speaking the obvious. Right? They knew. They saw God come through. And now they see this baby and now they can say, "Wow, He did not leave you without a redeemer."

But I wonder, spiritually, if anyone was speaking this over her before this moment, "He hasn't left you. He hasn't left you. He's going to redeem you soon."

Here's what I want to propose. In a lot of ways this statement was true of her whether Boaz came into the picture or not. Throughout Ruth and Naomi's life—I'm being really careful here, but I want you to hear that even in famine, fullness was available to her. She had the opportunity, they both had the opportunity to experience both famine and fullness at the same time. But they were just accessing one of them.

Now, here's the deal. I'm not talking about a form of spiritual bypassing where you are ignoring your famine and only claiming fullness. I'm not saying that. She was in a very real famine, very real consequences. So, I'm not talking about a time of spiritual bypassing, but what I am talking about is a time of spiritual awakening where you can begin to sit in your famine from a place of fullness. Sitting in your famine while accessing fullness at the same time.

Here's the deal. Famines come and go. But everybody in this room, if you're not in one, you just came out of one, or you're going into one. Famines come and go. This is what it is to live in a fallen world. So, if life is going to hit if my story or my joy or my peace or my sanity and is connected to what I'm experiencing or not experiencing in this life, then I'm in trouble. You know?

Paul says, "I've learned to be content in what?" All circumstances. "I've learned to be content in all circumstances." Why? He said, "I know the secret. I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. I can do all things."

He's saying what? "I've learned who I am. I've learned who I possess. I've learned who I am. And so, even in a jail cell, Paul is saying, "I can have peace. Even in a jail cell I can have joy. Even though I am facing death, I can have hope."

Why? Because Paul was not depending on what was happening around him. Paul was depending on what was happening in him. You see the difference? He's depending on what is happening in him because the situation could change at any moment, but he was depending on what was happening...

Here's the question I want to ask you this morning. What is happening in you? What is happening in you? Right now. In the middle of your story. In the middle of your pain. I need you to know your redeemer has not left you. Even right now in your famine, redemption is still yours.

But, you see, our problem is that we often equate redemption with deliverance, And the two are not the same. Are you with me? You see, when we sit in our own famines, we can fall into this mindset that, "In order for God to redeem this thing, He has to deliver me from it." That's not true.



You need to hear me say to you that the redemption of your story does not always equal deliverance from your circumstance. Your story can be redeemed and your situation not change a bit. It can be redeemed and the situation not change a bit.

Why? Because your story can be redeemed the moment you take it back from the narrative of the enemy. Even if something has not changed if you take back the narrative of the enemy...

Here's the deal. One of the things famine tries to do is it tries to tell us a story about ourselves and a story about our God. Whenever we go through hard times, Satan tries to tell the story that we have been forgotten, that we are not loved, that God does not care, that, "God is mad at me." Am I the only person in the room who those thoughts start coming to whenever I go through hard times? It starts to tell us a story.

So, the enemy, what he's doing is, he is using famine to attempt to destroy our attachment to God and our trust in God. Because he knows the redemption of our story begins and ends with us believing, fully knowing, that we believe in God's love for us and His goodness toward us. Because if I believe in God's love for me, and that He is working all things together for my good, then that means when famine comes, I am not hopeless. I'm just in process.

You see that? I'm on my way to the good that He is working out for me. You are on your way to the good that He is working out for you. Because that's just the kind of God that He is.

So the sooner we begin to believe that the story, the story that the enemy is trying to feed us in our famine, that we are forgotten—that's redeemed. I know that I am not forgotten. I know I'm in process. I know my God loves me. I know He is seeing this thing through.

I don't understand everything about it. I hate Lupus. I don't understand why. I hate it. I believe God hates it too. And at the same time I know He loves me. I know He hasn't forsaken me. And I've had to walk this line of trying to get my story back because, man, the enemy has tried to take me out physically and spiritually for almost 20 years now. The battle of my life.

And I have had moments of where I want nothing to do with God and moments where I was praising Him from my hospital bed. There are moments where God had helped me to be fully redeemed and see Him in my story, that I am not hopeless. I'm just in process. I'm just in process.

So, here's the deal. I'm going to tell you that before I leave this floor, I need you to know that your God is working it out for you. Do not let the enemy make you convinced that He doesn't love you and He doesn't see you. He's going to try to destroy that attachment. I can tell you that He loves you and you might not even fully believe it because you're living in your own lie.

Can I tell you something practically that has helped me in this area? Yes. Thank you. I'm going to go to neuroscience really quick and then I'll be back to Jesus. One second. Let me tell you how this happens.

When you study the brain, you study neuroscience, there's a secure attachment you learn that develops relational joy in your life. So, there was a study done at UCLA where Doctor Allen Schore, who was a pioneer in this area, talked about the importance of joy for healthy brain development.

He discovered how the human brain develops in a person through joy and attachment. Dr. Schore defined joy, relationally, it's someone who is glad to be with me and being the sparkle in someone's eye. If you are a sparkle in someone's eye, you experience that, especially formatively growing up, it registers as a secure attachment that I am loved and known by this person.

Do you know that there was a study done that kids who are not delighted in, it actually registered as a form of trauma in them, just because they were not the delight and the sparkle in someone's eyes. So, here's the deal. Secure attachment develops through relational joy and delight with people. You need to know that we take that same brain to God. Right?

Doctor Jim Wilder, he's a neuro theologian and he says this:

"Joy is the foundation for a secure bond with God. When I trust that God is happy to be with me and is smiling at me, this joy naturally removes fear from the relationship." Dr. Jim Wilder, Joyful Journey

Our identity is built and formed by joy bonded relationships. The identity center in our brain grows in response to joy, which helps us act like ourselves in situations. Meaning I get more secure in who I am and whose I am when I experience joy with God.

So, in his book—stay with me—Joyful Journey, this is what he says:

When we keep practicing gratitude with God, our brain remembers what our connection with Him was like, making it easier for us to find our way back to Him. Gratitude is the first step to building joy into our lives and helps us experience a more consistent attachment with God.

Isn't that crazy? Isn't that wild how God has wired our brains and that science is just catching up to Scripture? Because God has been telling us all along what you think about matters. Paul told us. Right? Think on these things. Take every thought captive. What we think about matters. So, say you're practically thinking about joy with God, it actually creates a secure attachment with Him. You believe that He loves you. So, let me tell you how this changed my life. I've been doing this practice called practicing non-verbal gratitude for, I don't know, a couple of years now. And it just has been so amazing.

Here's the deal. Practically, you get memories (you know, how many memories you want, start with five memories). The only category, the only rule is that in these memories you have to be aware of sensations in your body as you relive them and you have to feel some sort of connection to God in that memory. Some sort of connection to God in that memory. So, these two are involved and it helps to engage with the right side of your brain.

Here's the deal. Whatever they tell you, sit for five minutes three times a day for 30 days and just think on those memories. Close your eyes and relive those moments in your body where you actually felt loved. The peace of God. Being seen by God. And relive them over and over again.

I do this every day now. And it has drastically changed my relationship with the Lord because I have actually cautioned myself to remember and meditate on who He's been to me.

To where, if Lupus can tell me many things, what it cannot tell me is that my God has forsaken me. Lupus can tell me a lot of stuff but what it cannot do is convince me my God does not love me. I know He loves me. I know He loves me because I've seen Him do it before.

And what this is it's really giving you is a memory of when God showed up so that you have the faith to trust Him again. That's what it is doing. You're sealing it in your mind because what you think about matters.

So, practically, if you are in a situation where you are struggling to believe in the true love of God, the goodness of God, and the faithfulness of God, you need to know He is following you.

Maybe take some time and meditate on what you know of Him. When have you seen Him come through? When did you experience His faithfulness? When has He been good to you? What about if we give more time to that than we do the fear? Amen?



See, your situation... Things like this can redeem the narrative of your situation. Even though they have not changed physically in my body, my narrative is, "God has not forsaken me. I'm in process. Lupus does not have eternal life. It's going to be gone one day."

You need to know that depression does not have eternal life. Your season does not have eternal life. It's going to be gone. We are all in process to something better. Somebody say, "Better is coming." Because the reality is your story has already been redeemed when Jesus died on the cross. It has already been redeemed. You are already victorious.

That does not change the pain that it feels to go through it. But sitting and reminding yourself of the goodness of God, it will at least help you to maintain this while life is doing what it does. Okay?

He is your Redeemer. I'm praying that you would know that. You don't have to get to the end of this story for it to be redeemed. He can redeem your peace right now. He can redeem your joy right now. You can experience fullness in famine even right now, because it is not about what is happening around you, it's about what is happening in you. Amen?

Alright. Next point. God is our redeemer and:
He is our restorer

It says in this verse:

"May his name become well known in Israel. He will renew your life...." Ruth 4:14b-15a (CSB)

The other word is also restore in Hebrew. So, this word restore conveys a basic meaning of moving back to a point of departure. It's a return to go back to do again. It's essentially that God will go back to this point where life departed and give it back to you. That's the idea here of restoration.

So, this prophetic promise in Naomi is that through this baby, God is going to restore her life. Can you imagine Naomi seeing this baby and realizing what this means for her? Just take a moment and put yourself in this story. Realize what this means for her as she is holding this baby.

What was once taken from her is now secured for her. The life that was once taken from her is now secure for her. The provision that was once taken from her is now secure for her. The promise that felt at one time was taken from her is now secure for her. And after everything that she has been through, she now, through this baby is rewarded with a feeling that it's all going to be okay.

Isn't that what we all want to know? You're sitting here in this room right now, in your story, and you just want to know, "Is it all going to be okay?" Naomi got to feel that feeling. And it was a beautiful ending to a hard life and a hard story.

But sitting in that story, I'm bringing my cynic into the room. My brain goes, "Well, that's beautiful and all, but what if Obed dies?" Is she not worried about that? You see, because, yeah, we know. Tiana, in this Scripture it says he didn't die. We know. You read the next verse. Obed is the father of Jesse, the grandfather of David who became the greatest king of Israel. And the point of what we see in Scripture is the story ends well for Naomi.

But here's the deal. She didn't know that in that moment. You get that? She didn't know that in that moment. She didn't know if this new promise of restoration could once again be taken from her.

So, we're sitting in this story with Naomi in real time, I've got questions. What if Obed dies? What if Boaz dies? Is there another kinsman redeemer? There are questions there. Because reality is, a redeemer could die at any point.

And since that is the case, how would you ever relax even in God provision? How would you relax even in His provision? Especially if you come from a background of traumatic things happening to you.

I have a story of trauma. It is hard for me to relax in God's goodness, His provision. You see, if I was Naomi, I could imagine myself having a hard time not waiting for the other shoe to drop. Anybody else in the room? A hard time. "Yes, God's given us this baby. Yes, God, You've given us Boaz. But, God, You've given before. I don't doubt that You can give. My problem is that I'm also very well acquainted with You taking away." I want to talk for a moment to those of you in the room who are very well acquainted with God taking away, with God allowing things to be taken away. I want to talk to those who are currently holding their blessing and at the same time afraid to let themselves fully receive it.

Is that anybody in the room? Because history tells you that's too dangerous. History tells you it is too dangerous to fully receive it so you will not let yourself. Trauma tells you, "Don't hold on to that. Do not believe in too much good. Yeah, things are peaceful now, but just wait. It's only a matter of time."

That has been my story. Things are good but I'm waiting for when the next hospital is coming. The next flare is coming. Just wait.



So, what happens is we find ourselves unable to fully receive the goodness of God, unable to let ourselves sit in what has been given because we are constantly waiting for it to be taken. Am I the only one? I'm constantly waiting for it to be taken.

Can I just encourage all of us, including myself, that is not how God wants us to live. It's not how He wants us to live. And even though we know that, it is terrifying to even think about doing this the other way. Why? Because I feel more safe not getting my hopes up. I'm not even going to plan for good things. I'm not even going to plan for this health to stick around long. I'm not even going to plan. Something bad will come around the corner. I'm not even thinking about it. I'm not getting my hopes up. I have lived like that. I used live like that so much.

So, what we end up doing is we stay enslaved to the past and we let that disrupt our present. You see, the temptation is to go back to what is familiar even if God is doing a new thing, "I am used to this." Even if God is doing a new thing, we go back to what is familiar, go back to what is comfortable, even if it's enslaving us.

Think about the children of Israel whose bodies were set free from captivity, but whose minds kept going back to captivity as a contingency plan. If things got too hard or God took a little bit longer than they wanted, they cried, "Lord, did You bring us out here to kill us? Take us back to Egypt. At least we were fed. At least we had a place to sleep. At least we knew what to expect. At least we weren't in pain. Yes, it was brutal but at least it was familiar." What they were saying is, "God, I'd rather be a slave to my past than have to trust You with my future."

So many of us live the same way, "I'm not even going to believe You for good. I'm not even going to trust what's happening. I'm not going to trust in the future. I'm not going to trust in the good in the present because I'm not even going to set myself up for disappointment."

You see going back to a state of dysfunction was an option because it was easier to do that than to endure the process of God burning that out of them. It was easier to go back than to endure the process of God bringing them in to all that He had for them. And it's hard to learn how to trust God when all you've been is disappointed. When it feels like it is hard to believe for good. This is not something easy that you can just tie a bow on. I'm not in any way making this easy. It is difficult to do. And yet, it's what He wants for us.

But, here's the truth about the human condition. If we're not careful, the familiarity of our pain can keep us from living in the fullness of God's healing. I'm going to say that one more time. If we're not careful, the familiarity of our pain can keep us from living in the fullness of God's healing.

So, church, what we have to do is learn how to live in the safety of the moment. Learn how to live in the gift of the present because doing the opposite is only hurting ourselves and it's denying ourselves the very thing He is trying to gift to us. So, let me go back to the brain really quick. The brain is designed to sense danger and it goes into a flight or fight mode. Right? It does that so that if a bear comes after you, you need to adrenaline to get out of there. It releases a stress hormone that gives you the ability to get you to safety.

Some of us grew up in homes where we stayed in fight or flight mode. And then we get into adulthood and our brain is still in fight or flight mode. Listen. I know where all of the exits are today. Okay? I'm looking at everybody who is suspect right now. Okay? So, I'm saying I've had to learn, I'm learning how to put my guard down. Right? You said you were on guard, but what happens is your brain stays in fight or flight mode.

Some of you, maybe you didn't grow up with trauma, but you had something really traumatic happen to you in your adulthood and you're in fight or flight mode. As long as your brain stays in fight or flight mode, it's releasing these stress hormones and the more the stress hormones get released, you know they cause stroke, heart attack, high blood pressure—so many other things.

The translation is, when you cannot learn to relax into what is, that's when you end up harming what is, meaning a lot of us, we've gotten to safety, but our brain is still back to the place where we are not safe. If you cannot learn to relax into the present, you actually end up harming the present. Does this make sense?

So, healing emotional trauma is getting to actual safety and retraining your brain and body to live in the gift of safety. That's what it is. It's learning to savor the gift of safety. Just like it is for our body, I believe for our spirit our souls and we have to learn how to live in the gift of safety. Some of us, we need to train ourselves how to live in the goodness of God, regardless of what has happened in our past because He's trying to gift us something right now.

Can I tell you this? The last year of my life and learning how to see the goodness of God... I used to see it as a tease. It's just here and the next thing is coming. But now, as I've gotten more healing I see it as a grace.

But, God, this life is hard. And right now, in this room, You are restoring and renewing me for whatever may come. So, the next thing is coming. Life is... We live in a fallen world. Right?

But now I see these moments of goodness as His grace and I've learned to sit in them and just receive. My husband and I went to Oregon a few years back. We did a vacation.



It was a slow vacation and we did no Ubers, didn't rent a car. We rode a bus everywhere. So, it took forever to get anywhere. And we just read books. And we relaxed. We just wanted to get out of time.

Well, everyone told us if we're going to Oregon we have to go see the Multnomah Falls. You have to go see the Multnomah Falls. I hated Multnomah Falls. I hated it. But everyone told me, "Go." So we went. And everybody and their mom was there. It was insane.

My husband and I are like this meme I saw. Don't you hate when you go out to public and the public has the nerve to be there? That's me and my husband, "What are all of you all doing here on my vacation? I came to see the falls and why are you all here?" I was frustrated. And then there were the fires. So the pines were burned down. You couldn't even get to the falls. I was like, "Get me out of here. I'm so done with this place." So, we just got back on the bus. We didn't know where we were going. We were like, "Let's just ride." And then we saw this stop. So we said, "Let's get off at this stop." So we got off at the stop, this place is called Cascade Locks. And it was unreal. As soon as we stepped off of the bus it was like we stepped into God's presence. It was still. It was great. It was quiet. It was the kind of place where your soul just immediately settles. I remember we went to this bridge and we just stood there. As soon as we got there this wind just came and refreshed us. It literally felt like the breath of God, just sitting and refreshing. We didn't even talk while we were there. My husband and I, we were just in awe. And we were still. It was the juxtaposition of coming from the pace of the falls to Cascade Locks, the peace of it, it just was unreal.

Was this moment going to end? Yeah. Was I going back to the craziness of my kids? Yeah, I was. But this moment, we just stayed. So much so, it is planted, it is burning in my brain. It is one of my joy memories that I go back to almost daily. It's sitting at the Cascade Locks, and the experience of just the goodness of God. If I let myself just be present it is burned into me right now. So, I can easily go back and access that moment. So many of us are like, "What if?" What if you just learn to receive whatever good God is doing in this season? It's not a tease. It's a refreshing. It's a restoring. It's not something you have to guard against, but it's something that you are supposed to fully lean into. We were trying to buy a house a few years back. And we hadn't bought a house for a while. We were so excited. We bought it around January. In December we put our payment down. We thought we would be moving in in March. We were so excited. We were going down every week in hard hats, picked out the kid's school. We were watching the thing get built from the ground up. We were in it. We were planning the girl's rooms and decorating, All of that stuff.

And then February came and we found out there was a mistake on the paperwork and we could no longer get the house—a month before move day. We were devastated. It was like, "What in the world?" So, as the year progressed and we were getting back to

the anniversary of when we were buying, in December, I started to get a little anxious, I'm like, "Ahh, I'm feeling it. The grief that we felt last year."

It was crazy because once December hit, without even thinking, my body—all it felt was the joy of planning with my kids. I just remembered how happy we were and how peaceful we were.

I remember I was driving and just smiling and I was like, "Wait. I thought I was going to feel grief." But, as I just let myself receive, I was not actually feeling the grief in that moment, I was feeling the joy. I was feeling the joy. God did something. And even though the house was taken away, what He did in me never can be.

Church, we have to learn how to save the safety, the gift of goodness of God in the moment, not when our pasts rob us of it. Because at some point some of us are not trusting in the goodness of God because it feels dangerous to do so.

So, just let me really quick tell you what has helped me and then I'm going to go to the last point. It's that I used to journal through my trauma. That means I asked God, "God, when did I stop believing in You? God, when did I lose faith? When did I start to doubt Your goodness?" And as God would bring memories to mind, I would just journal through the whole story as if I was telling it to somebody right now, every detail, "God, show me where You were. God, show me where You were."

I have done this with people. I have with myself. And I can't tell you how beautiful it is when God begins to connect the dots. Because He does it. He connects the dots. And see, we can look at Ruth and Naomi's story, we can read the whole story. We can be like, "Oh, well God did that. And when that happened, that led to this. And this led to that. And if that hadn't happened, that wouldn't have happened." We can do it with them. But, guess what? We serve the same God. He works the same way. So, we... Oftentimes... Those times when we've doubted Him because we only saw what we could see, what if we went back and said, "God, show me when I stopped trusting You. God, show me what You saw. God, show the truth to me."

This is so healing in my life. Because healing happens when you begin to see your story through the lens of your God and not just the lens of your pain.

Here's what we learn from Naomi. Even moments of restoration require trust. Trust in the moment. Trust to just let yourself experience the joy of safety. So, I am praying that you would know your God is a restorer, even though you've experienced loss that He's saving and restoring. And when He does, I pray that you will be able to fully receive. Amen?



The last thing and then I'm going home to my hotel. He's a redeemer. He's a restorer. And your God:

He is our sustainer

Listen. I just want to encourage you. Listen to what this verse says:

"He will...sustain you in your old age." Ruth 4:15b (CSB)

This word sustainer primarily means to hold like a vessel. In the present context it's taking on the meaning to supply, give sustenance necessary for physical survival.

So, this verse, commentaries say, is probably speaking of a deepest need for one's soul.

This prophetic being spoken over Naomi is that this redeemer will be your sustainer. He

will be your provider. He is the holder of everything that you need and will ever need to survive. It's like your future is now provided for. What a gift that is to Naomi.

And the beautiful thing is that through Jesus Christ God gives the same thing to us. You need to know today everything you need is in Him. Everything. And I'm talking to the person right now who feels such a lack that it has blinded you to the provision and the faithfulness and the goodness of your God. I'm telling you, everything you need is in Him. He is your sustainer.

But the lie of the enemy wants some of us in here to believe that God is holding out on us. Can I just encourage you? It's a lie from the pit of hell. He is not holding out on you.

He's building trust with Him. That's what He is doing. He's building trust in you.

We look at the children of Israel and God is giving them manna from heaven, and they were trying to take care of their future and store up more. And every time they did, what would happen? It would spoil. God said, "No, no, no. Don't worry about that. Just for today. Just for today."

What was He doing? He wasn't holding out on them. He was going to take care of them.

He was redeeming their story. He was restoring their story. He was going to do it.

But what was He doing? He wasn't holding out on them, He was building trust in Him.

He said, "Trust in Me today. I know you don't understand how I'm going to do it again. I know you don't understand how I'm going to redeem it. I know you don't understand how I'm going to restore it. But trust Me for today. Don't try to figure out the whole thing. I'm God. I'm good. You are My son. You are My daughter. I am your sustainer."

He is not holding out on you. He's building trust in you. So, will you trust Him now? And if you fail today, when you get up tomorrow just try again and trust. And in the next day try to trust.

I've seen Him be too good in my life. And I don't understand a lot of things about what's happened to me, but I do know He is worthy of my trust. He's always been worthy of my trust. And He's worthy of yours.

So, I pray that you would know that your God is a redeemer. Right now He's your redeemer of everything: peace, joy, hope it can be redeemed even if your situation hasn't changed.

And your God is a restorer. Hold on to everything good He does in your life. Don't wait for the other shoe to drop.

And your God is a sustainer. Everything that you need is in Him. You lack nothing. You're just waiting to receive everything. We're in process in that. So, let me pray for us.

God, I thank You for every story in this room. God, You know who in this room who needs to be reminded that You are a redeemer. God, You know who in this room who is struggling to find joy, who is struggling to find peace, who has lost all hope. God, would You tell them today, would You remind them that You are a redeemer, that You have not forgotten them. That they are not hopeless. They are just in process. God, would You seal it in them.

You know the persons in here, you've restored something and they are terrified to live in it. They are terrified to receive Your goodness because trust has been fractured somewhere. God, would You repair? God, would You show them where it's been fractured and, God, would You come in and heal the fracture so they can learn to live in the goodness of who You are.

And, God, you know, in this room, who needs to know that You are their sustainer, who are believing the lie of lack and that they've been forgotten and that You are holding out on them. God, would You show them You're building trust and You're the same God yesterday, today, and forever.

You're the same God who showed up for Ruth and Naomi. You're the same God who shows up for me in my body. You're the same God that is going to show up for them. And, God, would You seal that truth in them today.

We are Your children. We are seen by You. And we live in that truth for Your glory. In Jesus's name we pray. Amen.

