It Doesn’t Really Matter

The day is etched in my memory. Rob and I at the time were raising five children. We were in our 20’s and 30’s and had busy lives with work and soccer practice and dance recitals so when I saw it I was shocked. I remember looking in the mirror in my car and there it was. A wrinkle on my face. A deep line that at the time I seemed way too young to have. Sounds funny that something as silly as that would leave a lasting impression. I can’t seem to recall what I had for lunch yesterday but that moment of finding a wrinkle is still lodged in my brain.

The reason that makes me laugh is because there is something inside of us that thinks growing older and getting wrinkles is for someone else. We assume we will always look like we did the day we graduated from high school. We look at people we knew 40 years ago and are surprised at how they don’t remotely resemble what they used to... but us? In that mirror we can’t imagine that we have changed as much as them but apparently we have. And the problem is that nobody really warned us that would happen. Nobody prepared us for what was coming.
That she could not possibly have seen at the time.

No matter what the cost.

No matter what pain I have to endure.

Then I'm all in.

God is constantly weaving your story into His story.

When you decide to follow Jesus – He is going to use YOU to be a part of that story - HIS STORY.

Sometimes a story needs pain in order to bring about good.

She missed out on the joy that could have been hers had she just recognized that her story was a part of God’s story.

They can have deep sorrow for loss and yet true joy because they know God has a purpose.
Ruth 1: 1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land.

2 The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there.
Ruth 1:3
3 Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons.

4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years.

5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 1:
6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread.
7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each to her mother’s house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

9 The Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.
10 And they said to her, “Surely we will return with you to your people.”

11 But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?
12 Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons,
13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands?

No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me!”

"As soon as I heard that (it had been her husband’s flight), I cried out 'No!' and crumpled to the floor. I spent the rest
of the day in my bedroom, huddled on my bed. I felt as though I literally needed to hold every atom of my body together, otherwise I’d fall apart."

"I didn’t break down crying hysterically or scream; God already was giving me an incredible peace."

She answered, "It is living in grief and in hope, which are both realities for me. When anxiety creeps in, I tell myself I’m not going to let that happen, because it won’t do any good. I can say, 'Poor me,' and get swallowed up by pity. Or I can say, 'I’m blessed...'".

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 And she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” 16 But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.

God had big plans for Ruth that Naomi did not know about..
Ruth 1:
19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

20 But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”

She missed out on the joy that could have been hers had she just recognized that her story was a part of God’s story.

I understand but you and I know that God is sovereign and we don’t know why God did not allow him to get elected. But by you acting this way you are hurting this man’s cause but even more importantly you are hurting the cause of Jesus.
Kay Arthur: Pain and tragedy are the proving grounds of our belief in this. So often you hear people say, “I was fine with God until He let that happen.”

Bitterness, resentment, spiritual self-destruction and defeat is the result when tragedy strikes and they cried “No God, no” then walked away from him because they wrongly thought of him only as a cosmic Santa Claus.

But other people going through the same kind of tragedy come through stronger than ever and more faithful than ever because they cling to the sovereignty of God.

“This family is so grateful to have had this blessing from God even for a fleeting time. The Derby family looks forward to being together in eternity with the Master and Shepherd...”
1 Corinthians 13:12
12 Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.
22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Mark 1:12
12 The Spirit then compelled Jesus to go into the wilderness,

Romans 8:14
14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Acts 8:29
29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and walk along beside the carriage.”

Ruth 2
1 Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech.

2 One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.” Naomi replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.”
3 So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.

Ruth 2:
19 “Where did you gather all this grain today?” Naomi asked. “Where did you work? May the LORD bless the one who helped you!” So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, “The man I worked with today is named Boaz.”
20 “May the LORD bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers.”

Ruth 3  One day Naomi said to Ruth, “My daughter, it’s time that I found a permanent home for you, so that you will be provided for.
2 Boaz is a close relative of ours, and he’s been very kind by letting you gather grain with his young women. Tonight he will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor.
3 Now do as I tell you—take a bath and put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes. Then go to the threshing floor, but don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating and drinking.
4 Be sure to notice where he lies down; then go and uncover his feet and lie down there. He will tell you what to do.”
5 “I will do everything you say,” Ruth replied.
6 So she went down to the threshing floor that night and followed the instructions of her mother-in-law.
7 After Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he lay down at the far end of the pile of grain and went to sleep. Then Ruth came quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.
8 Around midnight Boaz suddenly woke up and turned over. He was surprised to find a woman lying at his feet!
9 “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she replied. “Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer.”

10 “The LORD bless you, my daughter!” Boaz exclaimed. “You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor.

11 Now don’t worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman.

12 But while it’s true that I am one of your family redeemers, there is another man who is more closely related to you than I am.

13 Stay here tonight, and in the morning I will talk to him. If he is willing to redeem you, very well. Let him marry you. But if he is not willing, then as surely as the LORD lives, I will redeem you myself! Now lie down here until morning.”

Ruth 4
3 And Boaz said to the family redeemer, “You know Naomi, who came back from Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.
4 I thought I should speak to you about it so that you can redeem it if you wish. If you want the land, then buy it here in the presence of these witnesses. But if you don’t want it, let me know right away, because I am next in line to redeem it after you.” The man replied, “All right, I’ll redeem it.”
5 Then Boaz told him, “Of course, your purchase of the land from Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That way she can have children who will carry on her husband’s name and keep the land in the family.”
Matthew 1:1–17
1 This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a
descendant of David and of Abraham:
2 Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of
Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
5 Salmon was the father of Boaz (whose mother was
Rahab). Boaz was the father of Obed (whose mother was
Ruth). Obed was the father of Jesse.
6 Jesse was the father of King David. David was the father
of Solomon (whose mother was Bathsheba, the widow of
Uriah).
16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah.

When your life changes – always remember you are a part of
God’s story.

I KNOW GOD IS DOING SOMETHING.