

# **“God has a plan”**

**By Al Reid**

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## **Readings:**

### **Jeremiah 29:11**

Life can be hard. I am often overwhelmed with what is going on in the world and in my life. Some days I don't really want to get out of bed. I find the winter particularly difficult. Some days I grumble a lot (ask my wife)! Do you have days like that?

Have Faith! God has a Plan!

I want to share Three Stories that help us to understand how God's Plans differ from our Plans.

### **Story #1: The Book of Ruth (Summary from Gemini)**

The Book of Ruth is a powerful narrative of loyalty, providence, and redemption set during the time of the Judges. It begins with a famine in Bethlehem, leading Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, to migrate to Moab with their two sons. After the death of Elimelech and eventually both sons also die, Naomi is left with her two Moabite daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

When Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem, she encourages both young women to stay in their homeland of Moab, where they might find security and new husbands. This leads to a difficult decision for the two young women. Naomi insists that God has abandoned her and that they have no future going with her to Bethlehem.

Initially, both women weep and protest. However, after further urging from Naomi, Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and turns back. She makes the logical choice and returns to her people. In contrast, Ruth "clung to Naomi," uttering the famous vow: *"Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God."*

Back in Bethlehem, the two women are destitute. To provide for them, Ruth utilizes the ancient custom of **gleaning**, picking up leftover grain in the fields (pause – explain). She happens upon the field of **Boaz**, a wealthy relative of Naomi. Impressed by Ruth's reputation for hard work and her devotion to her mother-in-law, Boaz offers her protection and gives her extra grain. Naomi recognizes Boaz as a **kinsman-redeemer**—a relative with the legal right and responsibility to preserve the family's land and name (explain). Following Naomi's advice, Ruth approaches Boaz at the threshing floor during the night. In a symbolic act of requesting marriage and protection, she asks him to "spread the corner

of his garment" over her. Boaz is moved by her character but notes there is a closer relative who has the first right of redemption.

In a legal assembly at the city gate, Boaz skillfully negotiates with the closer relative. When the man declines to marry Ruth, Boaz publicly commits to redeeming Elimelech's property and taking Ruth as his wife.

The book concludes with the birth of Ruth and Boaz's son, **Obed**. This brings restoration to Naomi, who had once claimed the Lord had made her life bitter. The narrative's significance is sealed by the closing genealogy: Obed becomes the father of Jesse, who is the father of **King David**. Ruth, a foreigner from an enemy nation (Moab), is ultimately woven into the direct lineage of the **Messiah**, proving that faith and trust in God's Plans may exceed our wildest expectations.

What about Orpah? Remember her? She was the daughter-in-law that turned back. She made the practical choice. Was that God's Plan for her? We aren't told. Was she being selfish? Did she seek God's will for her life? I hope so!?

Summary:

1. God has a Plan
2. His Plan is to redeem the world (save us)
3. God's Schedule spans centuries (generations)

4. We have a role to play:

Naomi, Ruth & Boaz roles are clear

God's plan for a Messiah would take centuries

Orpah turned back – was that God's Plan?

### **Story #2 Movie "Bruce Almighty":**

The Up Devotional by Matthew Ruttan (April 7, 2026)

Jim Carey was in a movie called Bruce Almighty (have they seen this?). Jim Carey played Bruce, and God was played by Morgan Freeman (good choice!).

In short, Bruce complained to God that He wasn't doing his job very well. So, in a kind of cosmic experiment, God gave his powers to Bruce to see if he could do any better. He got to spend several days with all of God's powers. (Only in the movies!)

As you can imagine, it didn't go very well. Bruce started to use his new powers to advance his own selfish agenda. He got himself better clothes. He schemed to have a co-worker demoted and himself promoted. He also did things to improve the romance in his life!

Although things seemed to initially improve in his personal life, that didn't last for very long. Plus, things in the wider world were quickly deteriorating.

Over time, Bruce realized the error of his ways. Things only started getting better when he brought his life back into alignment with the kinds of things God wanted—like helping a poor guy on the street, like being honest with his wife, like putting others first, and like actually trusting God to know what's best.

Summary:

- 5. Let Go and Let God (Trust in God's Goodness)
- 6. Love Everyone (family, strangers even our enemies!)

**Story #3:**

Presbyterian Daily Devotional - Vincent Walter  
(April 7, 2019)

Time is a continuum of the past, the present, and the future. We can learn from things that happened in the past, but we can never return to relive the past. It is history!

We spend much time and effort trying to influence the future. It is good to plan ahead, but it is easy to fall into the trap of worrying about things that we can't control.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:34** – Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NIV)

All we ever have is the present, and that is where we should always be willing to take action.

Vincent had a niece who is an experienced doctor. Some time ago, when discussing a heart problem that He had, she said, "It is life-limiting but not life-threatening." She was telling Vincent to be positive and active and not to worry about things that he couldn't control. At every age, we have challenges, but today — in the present — it is our challenge to actively show our love for God by demonstrating love for others.

Summary:

7. Today is all you have! (do what you can with what you have).

Summary: Put it all Together (Ask the Congregation to recall these?):

- ✓ God has a Plan & His Plan is Best
- ✓ We don't know God's Schedule
- ✓ Trust God
- ✓ Today is all you Have
- ✓ Love Others Today!

Prayer (Read Together with the Congregation):

Presbyterian Daily Devotional - Lynne Phipps (April 7, 2022)

God, we thank You that we can count on You. Sometimes, when things go terribly wrong, when things blow apart, we wonder if You care. We wonder if You are even there, for amidst such times, we often cannot sense Your presence. Yet, by faith, may we choose to trust and believe that You are with us, as You have promised always to be. Lighten our load, and strengthen our hearts, that we may be able to move through the darkness until the light of Your love and presence becomes apparent once again. In Christ's name, we give You honour and glory and praise. Amen.