

# un·compromising faith

IN THE DAYS OF THE JUDGES

SERMON TITLE: Cultivating a Willingness for Whatever

DATE: May 8, 2022

SCRIPTURE: Ruth 3

PASTOR: Charlie Boyd

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The days of the judges were not happy and hopeful. They were dark and despairing. Israel was called to be a holy people – faithful to their God and showing the nations his power and love. Sadly, rather than bless the nations, Israel became like the nations. They bowed to idols and embraced pagan lifestyles. In short, they compromised. As the last line in Judges puts it: “Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” Thus, these stories serve as both a warning and an invitation to us. They warn us against conforming to cultural narratives and they invite us to hope in the face of despair. They ask us, “What does it mean to have an uncompromising faith in a faithful God?”

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## **SERMON SUMMARY**

I think it's safe to say that none of us like to wait. We don't like waiting in long lines or in traffic (Especially, that five seconds when the light changes from red to green and the car in front of us just sits there!) We don't like waiting in a doctor's office to hear the results of a medical test that could be a significant turning point in our lives. And, we don't like waiting on God—waiting on God to work, to help, to answer prayer, or to show us the next step. We just don't like waiting. But the truth is, the Christian life is essentially a life of waiting. Waiting tests our integrity. Waiting builds our faith. How so? Waiting builds our faith “if” we have the firm conviction that while we are waiting, God is working. And nowhere is this more clear than at the end of episode 3 of our story in the book of Ruth.

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## **SERMON SCREENSHOTS & KEY POINTS**

How do you respond when you really want something so bad you can taste it? It's so close you can almost touch it. You might even believe God wants you to have it, but there's an obstacle in the path and you're forced to wait. How does that make you feel? What do you do?

Review from last week...

In Episode 3, Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi are all exercising uncompromising faith. What does that look like?

First, uncompromising faith is seen in Boaz', Naomi's, and Ruth's integrity. Integrity is doing what is right even if it costs you.

Second, uncompromising faith is seen in their willingness to wait for “whatever.” Uncompromising faith means cultivating a willingness for “whatever”—resting in whatever God chooses to do or not do—and that is hard. It usually means sleepless nights and being tormented by “what-ifs.” It can mean worry, anxiety, stress, frustration, and anger, especially when the obstacle in your path is another person who seems to be blocking the way.

If you are in God's will today, you can't miss His will tomorrow.

One of the most difficult lessons we must learn as followers of Jesus is to wait on God to work out the next step. How do we learn that?

You have to have *foundational beliefs*—*core beliefs*—that anchor you to trust God with “whatever” outcome he has in mind for you. Core beliefs that convince you that His ways are always best. Here are what I call my “Core Beliefs.” I developed these years ago when I was a young pastor during a time when I felt stuck—during a time when I wanted things to happen that wasn't happening—during a time when there were obstacles in my path that I could not remove and those obstacles were creating stress and anxiety and frustration in my life. Once I put them on paper, I cannot begin to tell you how many times I've gone back to these Core Beliefs in my 35 years of ministry.

## Core Beliefs

**God is all-wise**—What God has allowed to come into my life has purpose and meaning. I may not understand it, but he does.

**God is all-powerful**—God is in control of all things. Nothing happens to me that he has not allowed.

God is all-loving—What He has allowed is for my ultimate good. It is His highest expression of love to me. Therefore, I can trust Him.

**God is all-satisfying**—I have what God wants me to have for my present growth and enjoyment. If I don't have something I want or think I need, it's because, in reality, I don't need it or God would provide it. He is enough.

What are your Core Beliefs? What are the about God and life and faith do you keep going back to that help you cultivate a willingness for whatever.

## COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

Begin by asking someone to retell the story in chp3 as if they were telling the story to a child or grandchild. (or, just read chapter 3)

### KNOW IT —

- What changes do you observe in Naomi since she returned to Bethlehem from Moab? How do you explain her newfound courage and determination to help Ruth?
- What did Naomi hope to accomplish by sending Ruth to the threshing floor?
- Why was it so risky? What were the risks in Ruth approaching Boaz the way she did?
- How did Ruth alter Naomi's plan?
- Why was Boaz not offended by Ruth's proposal?
- Where do we see Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi being comfortable waiting on whatever outcome God works out?

### UNDERSTAND IT —

- How does Boaz practice the spirit of the law and not just the letter of the law here?
- How do Naomi's and Ruth's growing relationship with Yahweh point us to the true source of courage and strength and guide our steps when addressing difficult situations in our lives?
- How are integrity and faith intertwined in this story?

### LIVE IT —

- Share a story from your life when it was really hard to wait on God to do something you really wanted Him to do.
- Read through Charlie's "Core Beliefs." How might these "core beliefs" help you rest in what God is doing or not doing in your life? How could they help you cultivate a willingness for whatever?

### SHARE IT —

- How would you explain what uncompromising faith means to someone who is waiting and hoping for a particular outcome in their life when it's not happening? How could you encourage them with this story?