



KAURIHOHORE / KAMO CO-OPERATING PARISH

kaurichurch.methodist.org.nz

kaurichurch@gmail.com

(09) 946 0813

59 Apotu Road, Kaurihohore



Sunday 17 August 2025 – Pentecost 10

The service today has been prepared by Jane Garrick,
one of our Lay Preachers

Welcome to our service this morning.

In working together on our shared mission, we commit to seven core values:

***Togetherness, Humility, Curiosity, Love, Inclusiveness, Justice,
Sustainability.***

Curiosity: we are committed to a life of learning, questioning, and exploring
the mystery of God, Jesus, and the Bible.

Welcome

We are continuing our exploration of the book of Ruth. Chapter 3 teaches us about the power of faithfulness, courage, and hope. In the face of uncertainty and societal norms, Ruth and Naomi dared to trust God for redemption. This chapter encourages us to have faith and to take bold actions, even when we face seemingly insurmountable odds. It also encourages us to enter the Rest of God, as we stand still and see His purposes come to pass.

Call to Worship

Come, let us come, let us sing to the Lord!

Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;

For in God alone do we Trust

He is our Provider, our Strength and our Hope; the great God,

We are the sheep of His pasture

He feeds and cares for us. He gives us Rest.

It is good for us to be in the House of the Lord

We come to worship with our whole hearts.

Amen

Mission Statement: Sharing God's love, creating hope, working for justice.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we come to You just as we are, knowing that we fall short in many ways. We choose to put our lives into Your hands today. Help us to trust You with all our hearts.

We often do not understand what is happening around us and in us but help us to not lean on what we think is happening and instead lean into You.

We acknowledge Your goodness in our lives and know that as we continue to walk daily, hourly with You, that You will make our paths straight.

Amen

Hymn WOV 531: Trust and Obey

by John H Sammis

1. When we walk with the Lord
in the light of his word,
what a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will,
he abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

*Trust and obey, for there's no other way
to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

2. Not a burden we bear,
not a sorrow we share,
but our toil he doth richly repay;
not a grief or a loss,
not a frown or a cross,
but is blest if we trust and obey.

Refrain:

3. But we never can prove
the delights of his love
until all on the altar we lay;
for the favour he shows,
for the joy he bestows,
are for them who will trust and obey.

Refrain:

4. Then in fellowship sweet
we will sit at his feet,
or we'll walk by his side in the way;
what he says we will do,
where he sends we will go;
never fear, only trust and obey.

Refrain:

Responsive Psalm - A Psalm of David.

From Psalm 37 The Heritage of the Righteous

Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

**We will trust in the Lord and do good;
Dwelling in the land, and feeding on His faithfulness.**

Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

**We commit our way to the Lord,
Trusting also in Him,
For He shall bring it to pass.**

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

We rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;

Those who wait on the Lord,
They shall inherit the earth.
For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more.

**He is our strength in time of trouble;
The Lord shall help and deliver us.**

The Lord knows the days of the upright,
And their inheritance shall be forever.
They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

He does not forsake His saints;

Wait on the Lord,
And keep His way,

**He shall deliver us from the wicked,
And save us,
Because we trust in Him. Amen**

The Lord's Prayer *(Feel free to pray your own version)*

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass
against us.
Lead us not into temptation but
deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
Now and forever.
Amen.**

Hymn CMP 50: [Be Still For the Presence of the Lord](#) *David J Evans*

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found we stand on holy ground
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.
2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around
He burns with holy fire, with splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight our radiant King of light
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.
3. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace
No work too hard for Him, in faith receive from Him
Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

Reading – Ruth, Chapter 3 *(page 411)*

Reflection

Have you been enjoying our series on the book of Ruth this month? So far, we have heard from Kimberley about Naomi's dark night of the soul in chapter 1 – how we too need to be honest before God, acknowledging, so often like the Psalmist did, our real feelings to Him. As we do this, He is ever faithful to so work in our lives and circumstances to bring us through to the place of blessing. After all, there is nothing we can hide from Him – He knows us better than we know ourselves.

Eleanor last week encouraged us to become vessels of blessing to others – Boaz is our example here in his caring for the poor. And like Naomi and Ruth we too can find protection, help, security and hope, even in times of tragedy, in the God who is at work in our lives and who loves us.

There are some wonderful themes in this short and apparently simple story that have endured through the ages – the faithfulness of God, courage, hope, loyalty, obedience, trust, integrity... the list goes on. All these have relevance to us today – we can learn so much from this beautiful book that was written over 3000 years ago! That is the wonderful nature of the Bible; its relevance to us today.

So, what can we learn from chapter 3? This is the chapter centred around what happens between Ruth and Boaz on the threshing floor at the end of the harvest. We remember that up until now Ruth and Naomi have been well provided for through Ruth's gleanings in Boaz's fields. Perhaps they have been able to put some grain aside for the winter, but their situation could very well become precarious in the following months. Naomi doesn't want a repeat of her dark night of the soul. It is therefore wise of her to consider their future, and particularly Ruth's situation. In the first verse of chapter 3 Naomi says, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?"

The plan that Naomi comes up with is for Ruth to go to the threshing floor and, in the middle of the night, ask Boaz to marry her. This was a culturally honourable thing for Ruth to do at the time as Boaz was believed to be the closest Kinsman Redeemer in the family (or so Naomi believed at the time). Remember the role of the Kinsman Redeemer in those days was for a close male relative to act on behalf of a needy or endangered relative according to the customary Jewish laws.

The plot of this chapter is quite straightforward but there are two important ideas that I would like to explore today.... Trust and Rest.

Trust is the firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something. We trust the chair that we are going to sit on to not collapse beneath us. We trust in the integrity of the person who shakes our hand in a deal (or so we did in the old days). I have a clear picture in my mind of my toddler daughter many years ago leaping into a swimming pool because she trusted that her Dad would catch her.

Around 1855, when Charles Blondin, an acrobat & tightrope walker, claimed he could walk from one side of the Niagara Falls to the other on a rope, some people thought it was impossible. But crowds came and paid to watch him make the attempt. Before crossing he asked the crowd "Do you believe I can walk across to the other side?" The crowd yelled "we believe!" He said, "Do you believe I can cross with a man on my back?" The crowd yelled "we believe!"

“So,” Blondin said, “Who will volunteer to take the trip on my back?” You could have heard a pin drop. Finally, one man raised his hand and said, “I will!” and he climbed on Blondin’s back & the two crossed Niagara together. The man was Harry Colcord, Blondin’s manager. He knew Blondin through and through and confidently trusted in his strength and ability.

Biblical trust is having strong confidence in God. It is not the same as faith. It is rather what we do because of the faith we have been given. We know that God is love; therefore, we trust Him to care for us and help us in our difficulties. This means trusting in God and His promises in all circumstances, even when the evidence seems to be to the contrary. We might feel we are on that tightrope above the raging waters... Think of Job who was a righteous and Godly man. Even Satan acknowledged this before the throne of God. But the interesting question arises – does Job only love and trust God because of all the blessings given to him by God? What do you think? Are we like that? To what extent do we love and trust God through our circumstances? What happens when we get sick or a loved one dies? Can we, like Job, still worship God with a pure heart and proclaim, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord!” That’s a challenge.

Ruth operates in trust. Because she trusts Naomi, she trusts in the advice Naomi gives her. She has a choice here – to take to heart what she is being told or not. We too have choices in our daily lives as to whether we are going to hear the voice of God and His instructions. Will we trust Him with all our hearts or waver or do our own thing anyway? Ruth does not have a hesitant wavering trust, but a bold and confident one. She is secure in Naomi’s love and wisdom. This means she can then act boldly based on that security. “All that you say to me I will do,” she says.

This involves careful preparation and listening to Naomi’s detailed instructions. She is to wash, anoint herself with oil and put on her best garment. When she arrives at the threshing floor, she is to not make herself known, but to note the place Boaz lies down to sleep. Then, when he is asleep, she is to uncover his feet and lie down.

This was a risky business. So much could go wrong. Remember that Ruth is a foreigner, a Moabite woman. In spite of the fact that she has thoroughly converted to Judaism and that Boaz has been kind to her, her undertaking is still hazardous. Nevertheless, she is bold and acts quietly but confidently, trusting Naomi and her instructions. Ruth’s mission is successful. Boaz acts honourably in this situation, choosing to bless and affirm Ruth as a virtuous woman.

Returning home to Naomi in the morning, Ruth reports back all that Boaz has done for her. Naomi's response is interesting. She says to Ruth "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out." And so, the women settle down to wait the outcome of Boaz's talk with the elders and the nearer kinsman redeemer.

And this is where we come to our discussion of the concept of rest... rest in the Biblical sense. It's not a passive thing at all, but rather an active attitude that combines with trust to wait on God, His timing and His outcomes. There is nothing more that Naomi or Ruth can do. The matter is in Boaz's hands. Indeed, we know that the matter is in God's hands, as He has been working behind the scenes in all the characters and situations to refine them and bring them into His purposes. Remember that Ruth and Boaz are to become the grandparents of King David and that through their line, will come the Messiah, Jesus. Yes, God is definitely at work in this story.

So Ruth is told to sit still and wait. I'm reminded of Exodus 14 and the words of Moses to the Israelites who were facing the ire of the pursuing Egyptians. "Stand still!" he commands them, "and see the salvation of the Lord!" The miracle of the parting of the Red Sea then happens.

We get to places in our own lives when there is nothing more we can do, and we have to "let go and let God" work. Whilst it is hard to let go of the reins of our lives and trust God to work things out, when we are able to fully enter that place of rest in God, we find refreshing and equipping for the journey ahead. It is not easy to do but we can do it. The writer of the book of Hebrews encourages us in chapter 4: "There remains," he says "a rest for the people of God... Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest." What does this look like for us?

It is a place of peace. Perhaps it looks like choosing to take our hands off and putting whatever it is into God's hands. We have to remember to keep it there, though, and not take it back! Some years ago, I needed to make a decision about whether to move towns. I prayed often and long about what to do – I really wanted to know if it was God's idea or not, but as a result, I became very confused. The more I tried to seek clarity, the more bewildered I became. There was a striving within me. As I learnt to rest in the process, letting the decision go and not taking it back, I was able to come to a place of peace and trust in God. Consequently, the decision fell into place and everything worked out wonderfully.

Proverbs chapter 3 verse 5 encourages us to “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.” Psalm 37 which we have read responsively earlier in the service is also worth meditating on. “Trust in the Lord and do good,” the Psalmist says, “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”

This is what Ruth, Naomi and Boaz were able to do in each of their own ways. Our journeys will look different to theirs, but the principles remain true. May we be able to fully enter the Peace of God as we walk in faith, trusting in His goodness, whatever is happening to us or around us.

As a poet once wrote:

Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee,
Trust Him when thy strength is small,
Trust Him when to simply trust Him
Seems the hardest thing of all.
Trust Him, He is ever faithful,
Trust Him, for His will is best,
Trust Him, for the heart of Jesus
Is the only place of rest.

Amen

Video presentation [O Rest in the Lord](#) (Congregation stay seated)

Mendelssohn, performed by Chet Valley Churches

Offering Dedication

Loving God, we offer our gifts to You as a symbol of our trust in Your provision. Even when we cannot see the future, we know You hold it in Your hands. We give our offerings today as an act of faith, trusting that You will use them according to Your best will.

Help us to remember that everything we have comes from You. May this offering be used to further Your work and bring others into the light of Your love. Amen

Community Time – Celebrations, Notices etc

Prayers for Others

Loving God, thank You for Your love and mercies – that You are at work in our lives.

Thank You that You have given us faith, even if it is as small as a mustard seed.

Help me to trust You and rest in You.

We pray for our families and loved ones, for their well-being.... Be with them.

Help them to trust You and rest in You.

We pray for those who are sick and hurting in many ways – children in hospital, the elderly in care, those in broken relationships... Minister Your love and grace to them.

Help them to trust You and rest in You.

We pray for all those who are affected by conflicts around the world... May the Prince of Peace become a beacon of light and hope.

Help them to trust You and rest in You. Amen.

Hymn HFTC 373: [What A Friend We Have In Jesus](#)

1. What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2. Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3. Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Jesus is our mighty Saviour:
He will listen to prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he will enfold you;
and his love will shield you there.

Blessing

Sung Amen x 3

An unknown poet wrote the following lines:

*Rest in the Lord, my soul;
Commit to Him thy way
What to thy sight seems dark as night
To Him is bright as day.*

*Rest in the Lord, my soul;
He planned for thee thy life
Brings fruit from rain, brings good from pain,
And peace and joy from strife.*

*Rest in the Lord, my soul:
This fretting weakens thee,
Why not be still, accept His will?
Thou shalt His glory see.*

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