



Message Date: 20/09/2026 Lighthouse Meeting Date: 22/09/2026	Message Title: Rise and Glean: Steps to Overcoming Difficult Times Minister: Pastor Chuka Nwafor
Key Texts: Proverbs 24:10, Matthew 6:21, 2 Timothy 3:1, Ruth 2:2, Proverbs 22:29, Psalm 126:5	Sub Text:

Please read the entire document and bible texts before you begin to discuss and answer the related questions. This will help you grasp the overall context of the message, however, remember the bible is not a discussion book but a decision book. God honours and empowers your decisions not your discussions.

INTRODUCTION:

Difficult seasons reveal who we are and what we truly value. When pressure comes, some seek escape, some seek numbness, and tragically, some seek an end. But Ruth did something different, she picked up a sickle and walked into a field she had never worked before. The same famine, grief, and uncertainty confronted Naomi and Ruth, but their response reminds us: hardship may be shared, but our response is personal. Scripture warns that “*in the last days perilous times will come*” (2 Timothy 3:1). Hard times are not merely coming; they are already here. But Ruth’s story gives us more than sympathy for suffering; it gives us a blueprint for resilience. Tonight, we will uncover five decisions from Ruth’s life that turned widowhood and uncertainty into a future she could never have imagined. Sometimes resilience is simply picking up your sickle and taking the next step.

Point

Point 2: Pressure Will Come, Prepare, Don't Panic

Hardship can overwhelm the unprepared, but preparation builds the capacity to endure it.

Anything placed under sustained pressure can and would eventually buckle if no relief is in sight (Matthew 24:22 AMPC And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would endure and survive, but for the sake of the elect (God's chosen ones) those days will be shortened.).

When the external pressure exceeds the internal capacity the consequence is an internal implosion of both heart and mind which leads to a mental health crisis or breakdown. This external pressure can be progressive or instantaneous either way it can lead to a serious crisis or breakdown which could also be short term or longterm. The same principle applies to human

resilience. When external demands exceed a person's emotional, mental, physical, or spiritual capacity to cope, the result can be overwhelming.

We are not all affected by pressure in the same way. Everyone of us respond or react differently to different things depending on our background, upbringing, life histories and socio- religious and background. Scripture calls us to develop strength before the storm, not while we are already drowning in it. We must teach ourselves and our children how to face disappointment, loss, responsibility, conflict, and uncertainty before those realities arrive. Preparation is not fear of the storm; it is wisdom for when the storm comes.

Scripture Focus: *“But understand this, that in the last days perilous times will come.” 2 Timothy 3:1*

Digging Deep/Life Application: In what area of my life have I been avoiding the discipline of preparation, hoping that pressure simply will not come my way?

Point 3: Don't Overprotect, Release Them to GO

Protecting people from every difficulty can prevent them from developing the strength to face difficulty.

When Ruth asked to go into the fields, Naomi did not allow fear to paralyze her even though she clearly understood the significant risks involved. Ruth was a young, foreign widow entering an unfamiliar environment, yet Naomi released her to take responsibility and move forward. There is a kind of protection that strengthens, and there is a kind that weakens. When we remove every risk, solve every problem, and carry every responsibility for those we love, we may be protecting them from today's discomfort while preparing them for tomorrow's inability. Love does not always mean making the road easier. Sometimes love means giving people room to walk it, trusting God to guide them as they grow.

Scripture Focus: *“Naomi said, ‘Go, my daughter.’” Ruth 2:2*

Digging Deep/Life Application: Is there someone I love whom I am shielding from every difficulty, and could my “protection” be preventing the growth and resilience they need for what lies ahead?

Point 4: Get Up, Initiative Breaks the Cycle of Despair

Circumstances do not get to dictate your response; you must choose to rise.

Ruth could have remained at home, defined by everything she had lost, widowed, childless, and caring for a grieving mother-in-law with no visible future. But she refused to let her circumstances dictate her response. She chose to get up, take initiative, and move forward. Despair says, “There is nothing I can do.” Faith says, “What is the next step I can take?” Life does not change simply because we sit still and wait for circumstances to improve. Like the man at the pool of Bethesda, there comes a moment when we must respond to the opportunity

before us and rise. Sometimes the breakthrough begins not with a miracle falling from heaven, but with a decision on earth: “I will get up.”

Scripture Focus: *“Let me go to the field and glean grain.”* Ruth 2:2

Ruth 2 LASB - 2:2-3 Ruth made her home in a foreign land. Instead of depending on Naomi or waiting for good fortune to happen, she took initiative. She went to work. She was not afraid of admitting what she needed or working hard to get it. When Ruth went out to the fields, God provided for her. If you are waiting for God to provide, consider this: He may be waiting for you to humbly take the first step, trusting him to lead from there. How can you take action in your circumstances with a faith-filled and trusting heart? 2:7 Ruth’s task, though menial, tiring, and perhaps degrading, was done faithfully. What is your attitude when the task you have been given feels below your station? The task at hand may be all you can do, or it may be the work God wants you to do. Or, as in Ruth’s case, it may be a test of your character that will open new doors of opportunity. 2:8-9

Ruth took the initiative to provide for herself and Naomi, even though the situation could have been dangerous. There are times when tough work with little rest is our only option. Boaz noticed Ruth’s tenacity. In fact, he was so impressed with Ruth that he let her follow directly behind his harvesters in order to pick up the choicest grain that they dropped.

Ruth probably chose this field to gather grain randomly, but God knew exactly which field would lead her to cross paths with Boaz. And Ruth had to do her part as well. Had she considered herself too proud or embarrassed to work in the fields, accepting the charity of someone else, she would have missed the opportunity to meet Boaz, which would change her life and give her the honor of becoming the ancestor of a king and the Messiah. 2:10-12 Ruth’s life exhibited admirable qualities: She was hardworking, loving, kind, faithful, and brave. These qualities gained for her a good reputation because she displayed them consistently in all areas of her life. Her past actions were a report card by which others judged her. Wherever Ruth went or whatever she did, her character remained the same.

Digging Deep/Life Application: Am I waiting for my circumstances to change before I act, or am I willing to take one small, faithful step today, even though nothing around me has changed yet?

Point 5: Diligence in Difficulty Positions You for Favor

Faithful, excellent work in a difficult season can open doors you never expected.

Boaz noticed Ruth’s work ethic and diligence. She had worked arduously in the field, remained committed to the task, and carried herself with humility despite her difficult circumstances (Ruth 2:7, 11–12). She was not waiting for a better position before giving her best; she brought excellence to the position she had.

What began as gleaning in a field as a vulnerable foreign widow became part of a much greater story. Ruth could not see the significance of that ordinary day’s work, but God was using her faithfulness in an ordinary field to lead her into an extraordinary future. Do not take for

granted the little tasks and responsibilities you have because God watches and takes note just like Boaz did.

Do not despise the field simply because it is not yet the palace. Character formed in obscurity can prepare you for opportunities you cannot yet see.

Scripture Focus: *“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings.” Proverbs 22:29*

Digging Deep/Life Application: Am I working with excellence and integrity in my present season, or have I allowed difficulty to become an excuse for a poor attitude or half-hearted effort?

Conclusion

Difficult seasons do not mean God has abandoned you. Sometimes the very field you would rather avoid becomes the place where God begins to change your story. Ruth did not know that walking into Boaz’s field would alter the trajectory of her life or place her in the lineage of King David and ultimately Jesus Christ. She simply knew she could not remain where she was. She got up. She went to the field. She worked faithfully. And she trusted God with the outcome. That is the challenge before us. You may not be able to change your circumstances tonight, but you can choose your response. You can guard what you treasure. You can prepare for pressure. You can release others to grow. You can get up and take the next step. And you can remain diligent when nobody seems to notice. You may not know what is waiting in the field, but you will never discover it by staying home. So, whatever difficult season you are facing get up, go to your field, do what is in your hands, and trust God with what is beyond them.

Prayer Points

1. Lord, teach me to value what matters to You, so that my identity and peace do not collapse when material things are threatened or taken away.
2. Father, prepare my mind, spirit, and character now, so that when difficult seasons come, I will not be overcome by pressure but will remain anchored in You.
3. God, give me wisdom to know when to protect and when to release. Help me give those I love room to grow through responsibility, experience, and faith.
5. Father, help me remain faithful, excellent, and diligent in this difficult season. Let my character remain strong when circumstances are hard and use my faithfulness for purposes I cannot yet see.

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.” Psalm 126:5

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