



Enough is our Concordia University Texas theme for the 2023-2024 academic year.

I have lived a relatively tragedy free life (Pastor Jake here!) Most of my family members live into their 90s. Nothing super life threatening has happened to me. Ok, I was diagnosed with epilepsy in middle school, but I ended up growing out of the seizures by high school. On one end I feel guilty for not having a harder life. Yet on the other hand I feel really grateful. Over time, as I lean into that gratefulness, God has called me into a life of walking with people and serving those who have had different life experiences than me. The hope that I wish to show others walking through tough times is that God our Father is bigger than our circumstances, even when the world is falling apart!

Each of us has our own unique experiences, circumstances, and stories. The story of Ruth is one of those stories found in the Old Testament of tragedy leading to triumph.

NOTES: _____

READ
Ruth 1:3-5; 8-9, 15-17 and answer these questions:

- 1. Naomi lost everything, her sons and her husband. What tragedies have you faced in your life?
- 2. Ruth lost her husband, and in this society, her identity and status would have been shaken. What stands out most about her response to this tragedy? (verses 15-17)
- 3. Ruth’s newfound faith in the Lord guided her big decision to go with Naomi. What is your reaction to this dedication to her mother-in-law and to the Lord?
- 4. Ruth was looking to also help Naomi through her tragedy of losing so many family members by going with her and being close to her. How have you experienced opportunities to help others through tough times?

ENOUGH

WEEK 3

- BIGGER THAN -
TRAGEDIES

³ Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. ⁹ May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

¹⁵ "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her." ¹⁶ But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

- Ruth 1:3-5; 8-9, 15-17

NOTES: _____

Where did Ruth turn when tragedy struck? Ruth turned to God. She realized that God was faithful to provide relationships of care and trust through Naomi, provisions of food each day from the heavens, and even redemption through a relative of her deceased husband named Boaz. Boaz marries Ruth, becoming her kinsman-redeemer, meaning he helped restore honor and respect to their name in the community. God showed himself faithful to provide.

Where can you turn when tragedy strikes? God is the one who took on the greatest tragedy of all by sending His Son Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Yet the good news is that three days later, Jesus triumphed. God the Father knew what He was going to do. God had an expected big plan the whole time even though it seemed shockingly unexpected to those closest to Jesus. God raised Jesus from the grave and Jesus lives forever triumphantly as the King of the world.

Twenty-two years ago this September 11th, the world stood still living through the tragedy of terrorist causing the death of 2,996 people and injuring thousands more. As hard as that day, months and years ahead were for so many, it was beautiful to see humans helping humans during the tragedy to find community, care, and help.

At Concordia, your fellow teammates, professors, staff, students, friends, alumni, ministers, and counselors can be a great living witness of Jesus' love and care in times of tragedy. This summer at the unexpected tragic death of student athlete Melvin Molina who was in a car accident, it was amazing to watch the soccer coaches come together to care for the soccer team. And the soccer players come together as a community to support each other. In the midst of this big tragedy, we cling to the promise that God is bigger than our circumstances. Christ was glorified as the hundreds of people who attended Melvin's funeral/memorial services, heard the redemption story of Jesus and the good news that Melvin knew that God's grace was enough for him.

What tragedy might you face this semester or sometime in your lifetime? Hopefully, God-willing, nothing. Yet sometimes we bear crosses of unexpected pain, sorrow, and sadness. If tragedy ever struck, or you find that your life ends up being pretty tragedy free, always remember, **God our Father is bigger than our circumstances, even when our world is falling**

PRAYER:

Thank you God for your bigger, better plans for our lives. Thank you for loving us enough to die for us! Help us to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ! Quiet our anxious hearts as we pray the prayer you taught your disciples to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.