

zRuth  
Caversham Baptist  
13.3.16

### **Message - Decisions**

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Naomi, the grieving widow and mother then hears that the famine in Israel has broken. She heads back to Bethlehem with her two daughters in law. But at some point in the journey she tries to send them back. Orpah decides to return, Ruth won't have a bar of it.

In Bethlehem Naomi receives a tremendous welcome, and Ruth the foreigner is shown great generosity and respect. She meets up with her husband's relative Boaz. And she goes to be with him one night and surprise, surprise, Boaz chooses not to sleep with her.

Boaz then follows the constitution and the closer guardian redeemer is offered the chance to take over Elimelek's property. He decides not to, Boaz decides to, accepting Elimelek's property which included Ruth who he takes to be his wife. She becomes pregnant and has a son called Obed. And he becomes the father of Jesse, who becomes the father of King David. Whose family line ascends to Jesus.

Many decisions. Much pain. And celebration.

### **Good decision #1 - marrying Diane**

I pondered some of my good decisions. The time came to ask Diane to marry me. I sat in the car up the end of Paraita road for a long time umming and aahing whether to or not. Diane's Dad's work was there, and it took a while to pluck up the courage and go in and ask him.

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With huge anxiety I guess it was, we talked to Paul Windsor and Charles Hewlett and found ourselves on the Pastoral Leadership track in 2006. I was a very grumpy pastoral leadership student. I didn't know what to do with myself. I couldn't see myself doing this role. The church I was assigned to didn't know what to do with me. And at the end of the year Carey didn't know what to do with me. And one option was to go and do something else like beach mission. All that kept me was that call, I knew this was what God wanted. It was just hard to accept.

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Coming to Dunedin has been a good decision! I didn't appreciate that coming here was something of a homecoming. You see my grandmother, my dad's mum comes from here. She grew up in Ravensbourne and most probably followed her sisters to St Hildas. Reynell was the surname - a hybrid of Reynolds perhaps? Wally took the funeral of my Uncle in Fulton Home two years before we got here. I never met him.

But my family ties go back further, to my great, great grandparents on my mother's side. They were the first European landowners in the hill country southeast of Milton at Mt Misery. There their children were foundation pupils at the Southbridge School, that changed its name to Moneymore School in 1947.

I've never had a mountain in my whakapapa. While growing up in Ashburton, Mt Hutt never really felt right. Mt Somers I had no connection with. So it's with some delight that I have now a place that I can call mine. Even if the English name is Misery!

So landing the plane (in conclusion). Decisions involve head and heart. Talking to wise others helps. Taking time to be alone talking with God is vital. These two help head and heart to combine. Hopefully as Christians we seek what is right by God, not just by our own interests.

This verse bothered me.

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I want to challenge the belief that God causes bad things to happen to fit with His plan. I've been thinking about this a lot lately. Ruth and Orpah's husbands die so that Ruth could return with Naomi and marry Boaz so that their child could be the grandfather of David, the descendant of Jesus. I don't believe bad things happen as part of God's plan, or will.

Those of you who have lost children, or had tragedy strike in unexpected ways find the idea of the justice of God painful. And rightly so. But what if in the grace and mercy of God, God gives us freedom to get things right, and get things wrong. What if God in His ultimate wisdom allows things to go wrong, because he's not a meddling and controlling God. What if God in keeping His hands off things on earth allows us to make good decisions, leaves sin and evil and death to run its course. In the end God has the victory. We cower from suffering. But suffering is part of life now. This is why we hope for the new earth.

We have a wonderful freedom to make decisions. It's great to be in God's will. And I look at the three decisions and wonder what God would have done if I'd said no to any? How free would I have felt? Would God have accepted my freedom to choose something else? How desperate are we to follow Jesus?

Are we like Ruth who follows the God of Naomi, or Orpah who heads back home?

Pray

This song has been meaningful to Diane and me these last few months. It fits well here. Enjoy it.  
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"Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)"

You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
My faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now

So I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
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[6x]

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever You would call me  
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger  
In the presence of my Saviour

Oh, Jesus, you're my God!

I will call upon Your name  
Keep my eyes above the waves  
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**Benediction**

You are the people of God, gifted with dreams and visions.  
Upon you rests the grace of God like flames of fire.  
Love and serve the Lord in the strength of the Spirit.

May the deep peace of Christ be with you,  
The strong arms of God sustain you,  
And the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you in every way. Amen.

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And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
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And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
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And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
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And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise  
My soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now

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