



# *Growing Closer to God*

Changing Lives



*“...they keep saying that they love me and want to marry me.  
But how can they love me when they don't even know who I am?”*

*Catherine Zeta Jones, 1997*





# *Growing Closer to God*

Changing Lives

*Recognize My Methods*



# I Need to Get Closer to God: Ruth

## Theme: **Conquering Alienation**

- I feel totally distanced from this strange religion
- This is not a culture I recognize



# Ruth: The Disenfranchised

## Ruth:

- Widowed

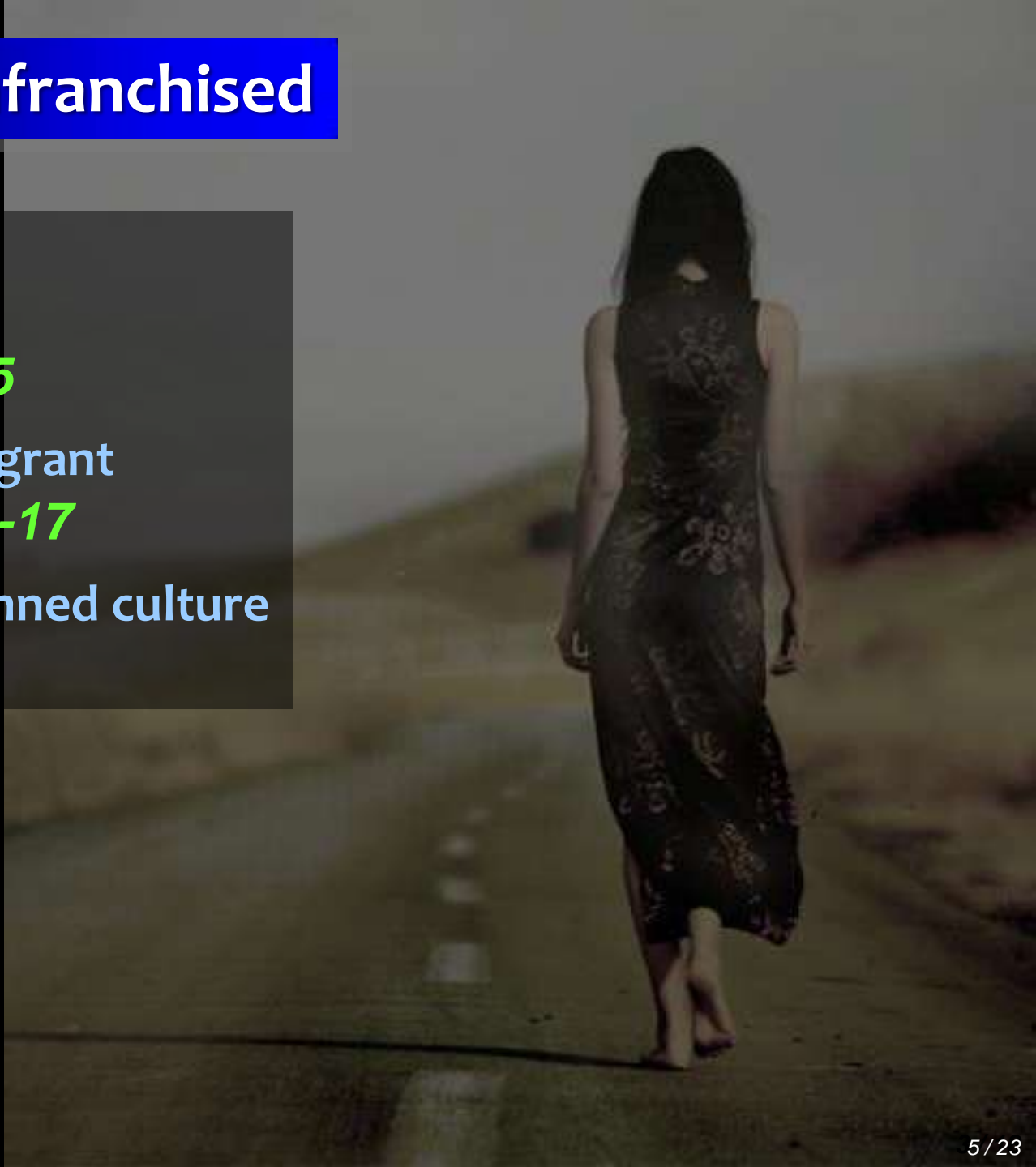
*Ruth 1:4-5*

- A foreign immigrant

*Ruth 1:16-17*

- Moabite: a shunned culture

*Deut 23:3*



# Approach in the Night

*When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet. **Ruth 3:7-8***

What was Ruth doing?



# “Under Your Wings”

*“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.”*

*Ruth 3:9, NIV*

Hebrew: כַּנָּף ‘Kanaph’



*“I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.”*

*Ruth 3:9, KJV*

*“I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”* *Ruth 3:9, NKJV*

# The Act of Covering

**“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.”**

**Ruth 3:9**

A known engagement custom

**“...when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you,” declares the Sovereign LORD, ‘and you became mine...’”**

**Ezek 16:8**





# UnCover, ReCover

*Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. Ruth 3:7*

*“Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer.” Ruth 3:9*

An attractive symmetry is played out in the Hebrew text

Hebrew: Ga-la

גלה

<= opposites =>

גאל

Hebrew: Ga'al

English: Un-cover

English: Re-cover

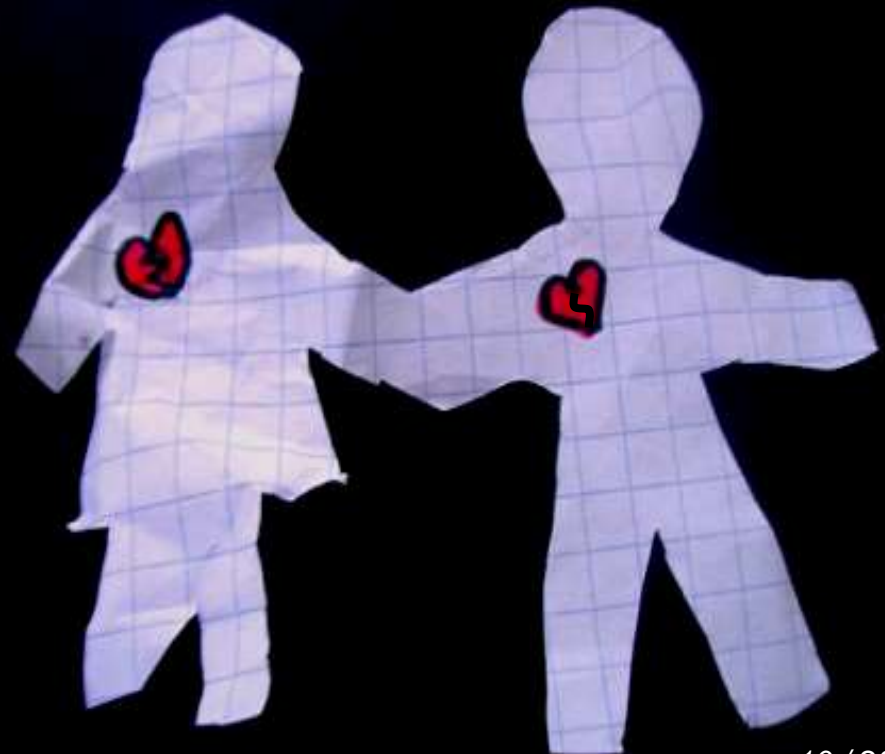


# Empathy

Part of you is Uncovered when I am Uncovered

*God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them* **Ex 2:24-25**

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* **Rom 8:22-23**



# Growing Closer to God

Ruth is responding to a comment of Boaz, months earlier

*Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband... May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Ruth 2:11-12*

What pair of “wings” was Boaz referencing?

## Boaz' Reference: The Mercy Seat



*And you shall make two cherubim of gold... at the two ends of the mercy seat... And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings. Ex 25:18-20*

The wings indicated the focal point of God's mercy

# Growing Closer to God

*“The LORD bless you, my daughter,” [Boaz] replied. “This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor.”*

*Ruth 3:10*

First kindness was Ruth not favouring younger men  
What is this ‘greater kindness’ she has shown to Boaz?

# Growing Closer to God

A close-up photograph of a pink rose in full bloom, with its petals fully unfurled. The rose is positioned on the right side of the frame. Below the rose, its reflection is clearly visible in a body of water, creating a symmetrical image. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the vibrant pink of the flower.

Boaz to Ruth: “You have come to take refuge under the wings of the God of Israel”

*Ruth 2:12, paraphrase*

Ruth to Boaz: “Can I (I can) find refuge beneath your wings?”

*Ruth 3:7-9, paraphrase*

Ruth implies that Boaz reflects the image of God:  
Boaz is a coverer

**This is the second kindness; the greater kindness**

*“I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from the town records. Today you are witnesses!”* **Ruth 4:9-10**



**Boaz ‘resurrects’ Mahlon**

**Growing Closer to God  
has tangible results**

# Time Passes...

*Boaz the father of Obed,  
whose mother was Ruth,  
Obed the father of Jesse,  
and Jesse the father of  
King David. **Matt 1:5-6***



# David Learns from Ruth (Great-Grandmother)

*“Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings.” Ps 17:7-8*

*“How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings.” Ps 36:7*

*“I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.” Ps 61:4*

David loves this (personal family) metaphor & uses it in 7 Psalms

*“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children.” Dt 6:6-7*

# Amputating Saul's Robe

Fleeing from Saul: *“Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.” Ps 57:1*

*Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 1 Sam 24:4-5*

David amputated Saul's 'wings': the symbol of Saul's ability to reflect God in granting shelter / covering. This is what cuts David to the heart.

Don't deprive others of a chance to show mercy

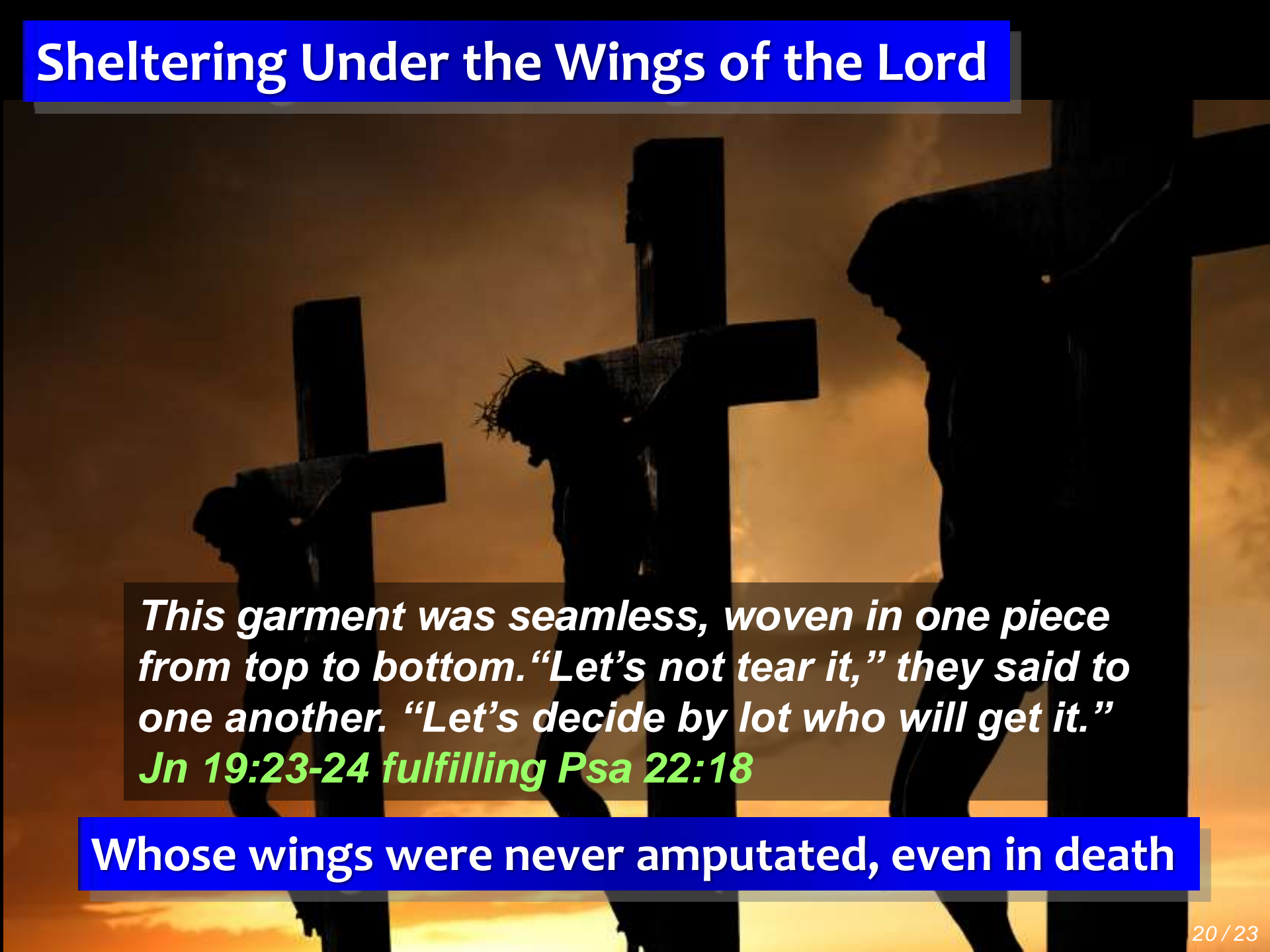
# Sheltering Under the Wings of the Lord

*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”*

**Mt 23:37**



# Sheltering Under the Wings of the Lord

The background of the slide features three dark silhouettes of crosses against a bright, orange-hued sunset sky. The central cross is the most prominent, with a figure on it. The other two crosses are positioned to the left and right, slightly behind the central one.

*This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”*  
*Jn 19:23-24 fulfilling Psa 22:18*

**Whose wings were never amputated, even in death**



Verb describes God's desire  
to shelter His young

*As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so the LORD alone led [Israel] **Dt 32:11-12***

*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. **Gen 1:2***

# Growing Closer to God



*Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

**Is 40:30-31**

## Metaphor

**We ascend to Heaven  
– i.e. learn to fly –  
by spreading our wings**

## Translation

**We grow closer to God  
– i.e. develop His character –  
by our provision of mercy**

# Ruth Grows Closer to God

- Ruth, as Boaz, recognizes God's patterns (Sheltering Wings)
  - their different cultures are overcome by the commonality
- Ruth imprints her experiences with God on her children
  - her legacy even educates King David, her great-grandson
- The abstract literary beauty of the Sheltering Wings has a concrete meaning: We grow closer to God by providing mercy

**Increase  
in mercy**





# *Growing Closer to God*

**Changing Lives**

*Trust My Strength*

