

7.14/15.18, Pastor Jordan Gades, Ruth 4

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

During this past couple of weeks I have been to try and go through and remember and catalogue and process all the things that happened at the National Youth Gathering. There was just so much to hear, so much to see, so much to do. I've think after talking about the trip I can now hit most of the highlights in a quick 5 minutes but if I had to dive deeper I think I could go on for the 5 days. So much happened under the umbrella of this mantra of THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING. We Talked about how Call, Hope, Love, Grace change everything. I'm going to share one story from the trip that for me that demonstrated this so perfectly.

During our service day in Houston, we did 2 other service days in Galveston, all 3 of these days in 95 degree heat and 90 percent humidity. But anyway, our day of service was at a warehouse of Keep Texas Beautiful, which is a part of the nationwide organization, Keep America Beautiful. There warehouse supplied other groups everything that they would need to do service projects. Tools, equipment, plans; all at no cost. The thing was they need our help. The staff of 3 were planning and supplying for 600 to 700 projects a year and they were all almost brand new staff. The longest had been there 6 months the warehouse was a complete mess left behind from the previous managers. They had water damage from Harvey that hadn't gotten taken care of as well just piles of basically junk that had to be gone through. They couldn't keep up. I saw all our youth work their incredibly hard with amazing attitudes. We did a lot! But before us they had all these groups needing them and just couldn't deal with the mess at the same

time. The Manager, her manager name was Jo, at some point in her first month had broken down and just prayed, “Dear God please send us 50 people to help with this because we can’t do it.” So a little while later the Gathering staff contacted her and asked if she could help outfit some other gathering projects. She said of course and they ended up supplying tools for 8 other projects for the gathering. So after they make these plans she asks the gathering coordinators, well you got all these kids coming do you have a few extra? We could really use the help. And they said well no, we don’t, But if we can find a few we’ll let you know. So while later jo gets this call from the gathering coordinators, and they tell her, so we found a group that can help you, but the thing is it’s like 50 people, can you use that many?

We got to talk to these amazing people and to get to know them a little bit. We got to be the answer to their prayers. We got to be a part of the change that changes everything. We got

to be a part of God amazing redemptive work in the world. And that amazing work is going on here and now and that work stretches all the way back in time to the fall because it was there for Ruth as well.

Today we heard the happy ending of Ruth and Naomi's tale. We got to hear God's redemptive powers at work. Out of pain and sorrow, out of emptiness come fullness, joy, and new life. Out of **Ruth the Moabite's** tale continues the line of the promise of God in the covenant that God made with Abraham. This promise that continues through King David and all the way to Jesus the Christ, born of Mary. God is at work always and dwells within all circumstances. This is our God. Always working to change everything.

That even includes us right now. When come to know our God more, and we lean more and more upon our God we learn this simple truth. It's never too late for anything.

Never too late to be changed, never too late to change, never too late to bless or receive a blessing, to give or receive joy and healing, to bring hope and this change to all people. That's an incredible lesson that Naomi and Ruth Learned. But just as important as keeping the hope of change when things crumble and it's never too early either. To keep that hope either.

At the Gathering, each night at the Mass Gatherings the 3 Emcees would guides us through the night. One of the three, Joy Emeneoyo, shared a little bit of her life story. Her Parents are from Nigeria but she has struggled with her faith at points in life but now it has become her source of strength in her life. She is a senior in high school from Colorado sharing this in front of 30,000 of her peers and mentors. And I have this very vivid memory of her speaking. Making change and changing the world through her faith and she says "and I know that someday I'm going to be a part of that change" And you know she get a huge round of applause, but I couldn't help but be

thinking, someday, someday what is she talking about. Today. What she must mean is today, and if not then she should know beyond a shadow of a doubt. It's not someday its today. Does she not see what she just did, what she is doing?

Is that us today? Doing the work and God has called us to do in Grace and Love and we keep thinking someday I'll make that change, be a part of that change? It's today, it's today because God Loves you, the real honest to goodness you, today, just as you are. It's today because is changing you and working through you whether you know it or not.

On last story, probably. So I get back home after the trip, and I collapse from exhaustion; but that next day, we're going to the store as a family, my wife and I and the 2 girls in the back. And my wife are just talking in the front when out of nowhere my 4 year old just breaks out with "I want my life to make a difference, I want my life to make a change." and she just keeps singing that over and over for a few minutes.

My daughter has heard that song once in her life and it was from our youth rocking out that Sunday morning before we left for our trip. 2 weeks later that bit of fun and sharing of the faith has left a mark and inspired my daughter and far many more people than I know about. All of you out there, You all are a part of this change.

This Change that our God offers and working on our world, it's in the big things and in the little. This change is about restoration and redemption. Our God, rich in Love, Hope, and Grace, changes everything