

# Sermon Note: Whole Faith

## Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

### Introduction

Last week, we began our series **Standing on the Shoulders of Giants** by hearing Jesus remind his disciples that even a small seed of faith can sustain a legacy. This week, we turn to stories that show how faith becomes whole when it is shared. In the Gospel of Luke, ten people are healed, but only one—a Samaritan—returns to give thanks. In the story of Ruth, loyalty and love weave an outsider into Israel's story and turn loss into new life. Both moments reveal that faith deepens through gratitude, prayer, and the simple acts of caring for one another. Wholeness grows wherever people choose to belong—to God, to each other, and to the generations yet to come.

### Illustration Videos

Content Note: Contains strong language (expletives in the crowd chant and one line from Roy). Use caution when viewing in mixed-age groups.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwYv1vrJ\\_J4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwYv1vrJ_J4)

In this clip from *Ted Lasso* (Season 2, Episode 5, “Rainbow,” 2021), Roy Kent finally accepts the call to return to the game he loves, stepping onto the pitch to join the coaching staff.

### Why This Video?

Roy's return feels both comic and charged with meaning. Everything about the scene—the awkward ticket moment, the roar of the crowd, his simple answer, “You had me at ‘coach’ ”—shows a person stepping back into relationship after holding himself apart. We see a man whose identity shifts from isolation to connection, from critique to participation. The response is filled with affection: the crowd's chant and the response of players and former team-mates. It is a tangible reminder that community can be both messy and redemptive. Roy finds that all he needs to do to belong is show up. This clip captures the moment someone chooses to rejoin the people and the work who make them whole.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. What emotions do you notice as Roy navigates his way back onto the pitch—from the ticket counter to the roar of the crowd? How does his determination show through the chaos?
2. The crowd's chant is loud, imperfect... and affectionate. How does this messy welcome affirm Roy's return and reveal what this moment means—both for him and for them?
3. What do you imagine it took for Roy to decide to come back? What might have changed in him (or around him) to make his return possible?
4. When people have been away from a community or a calling, what helps them feel ready to rejoin it?
5. How do you see the players and coaches respond to Roy? What does their reaction say about memory, forgiveness, or respect?

6. The scene turns a public spectacle into something deeply personal. Where do you see vulnerability in Roy, even beneath his bravado?
7. What does this clip suggest about how community can both challenge and heal us?
8. The final line—“You had me at ‘coach’”—carries humor and sincerity. How does that balance capture the way relationships can restore meaning?

### **Ruth 4:9-17 (NRSVue)**

<sup>9</sup>Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have acquired from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. <sup>10</sup>I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, to maintain the dead man’s name on his inheritance, in order that the name of the dead may not be cut off from his kindred and from the gate of his native place; today you are witnesses.” <sup>11</sup>Then all the people who were at the gate, along with the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you produce children in Ephrathah and bestow a name in Bethlehem; <sup>12</sup>and, through the children that the Lord will give you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

<sup>13</sup>So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son. <sup>14</sup>Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin, and may his name be renowned in Israel! <sup>15</sup>He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.”

<sup>16</sup>Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom and became his nurse. <sup>17</sup>The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

### **Luke 17:11-19 (CEB)**

<sup>11</sup>On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup>As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, <sup>13</sup>they raised their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, show us mercy!”

<sup>14</sup>When Jesus saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they left, they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup>One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. <sup>16</sup>He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. <sup>17</sup>Jesus replied, “Weren’t ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? <sup>18</sup>No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Get up and go. Your faith has healed you.”

### **Scripture Study Questions**

1. In the beginning of the passage from Luke, Jesus is walking between Samaria and Galilee—a borderland. What does it mean that Jesus is in a borderland? Who lives in today’s borderlands—geographically, socially, politically, or spiritually?

2. In verse 14, Jesus tells the ten to go show themselves to the priests before they are healed. What kind of faith does it take to move before seeing change? What does this say about healing as an ongoing process rather than a single event? How might institutional religion (symbolized by the priest) be both gatekeeper and validator of belonging?
3. In verses 15–16, one of those healed—a Samaritan—turns back to praise God and thank Jesus. What is the power of turning back and claiming your voice? How is this act of praise also an act of resistance? What does it mean that the “outsider” is the only one who fully recognizes what has happened?
4. In verses 17–19, Jesus tells the Samaritan, “Your faith has made you well.” The Greek word *sozo* can mean healed, saved, or liberated. What does it mean that Jesus gives public affirmation to this man? Where do we see God’s liberation breaking through traditional boundaries?
5. In both Luke and in our own lives, what does it mean to be seen by Jesus when the world keeps you at a distance? Have you ever felt overlooked, judged, or kept on the margins—socially, spiritually, or emotionally? What might healing look like in that space?
6. As we think about the Samaritan’s response, why is it sometimes hard to return and face our healing, to give thanks, or to tell our story? What holds us back from acknowledging what we’ve survived, how we’ve grown, or who helped us?
7. In Ruth 4:9–17, Ruth and Naomi experience restoration that includes the wider community. In what ways is their story also one of being seen, named, and restored to belonging?
8. Ruth’s faithfulness gives rise to a legacy she could not have imagined. How does her story help us see gratitude as something larger than words—something that creates a future?
9. If you were to “turn back” today, as the Samaritan leper did—or reach forward, as Ruth did—what would you want to say and to whom? What truth, gratitude, or hope would you speak if you knew someone was listening?

### **Additional (Optional) Questions**

1. In Luke, who was the only person who returned to thank Jesus, and what was his background?
2. What did Jesus say to the one who returned to thank him?
3. Do you remember other stories from scripture that involve Samaritans? What do you know about them and about how Samaritans and Jewish communities interacted during Jesus’ time?
4. What do you think the Samaritan’s return to Jesus might teach about gratitude and faith?
5. Think of a time you received something important but didn’t express thanks. What do you think would have been different if you had expressed your gratitude right away?
6. How do we see gratitude connected to faith in Luke’s story? What might Jesus be teaching about how gratitude strengthens our relationship with God and with others?
7. In Ruth’s story, blessing flows through ordinary care and loyalty. Where do you see that kind of everyday faithfulness building community today?
8. If you were to design a simple ritual or practice of gratitude in your community or church, what would it look like?

### **Weekly Action**

This week, let gratitude move beyond words. Begin by naming one person whose kindness or faith helped shape you, and include them in your prayers. Then find a small way to serve within community—write a note of encouragement, join someone in their work, or help meet a shared need. Ruth’s care for Naomi and the

Samaritan's return to give thanks both show that faith becomes whole when it's lived together. Ask yourself: How can my gratitude strengthen the community that strengthens me?

### **Prayer**

God of mercy, you meet us in the in-between places—before healing is complete, before the journey is done. You see us when others turn away. You call us whole before the world does. Teach us to notice grace, to give thanks without hesitation, and to join you in making wholeness real for others. Amen.

*Disclosure: This Sermon Note was created by LJUMC staff with resources from Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church and with the support of AI tools.*