Staying Close to the Lord

Intro: To stay close to the Lord requires being intentional *(Hebrews 2:1 ESV)*

1. There is a subtle current that flows away from God
2. We are called to fight, not float

MOVING AWAY FROM THE LORD *(Ruth 1:1-6 NLT)*

- Elimelech moved his whole family out of Israel
    1. They moved out of fear, not prayer
    2. Moab was a dark place
    3. The God of Israel was not respected or acknowledged
    4. The environment had to have taken a toll on the family - experienced big losses
- Keep moving toward the Lord
    1. When the pressure is on, stay with Him, or off, stay with Him
    2. Too easy to believe the lie that church, devotions, prayer are not making a difference ***(Matthew 7:24-27 NLT)***

LET GO AND ATTACH *(Ruth 1:14-18 NLT)*

- Ruth let go of her old life and attached to Naomi
    1. She also attached to the God of Israel - she changed allegiance
    2. She did not take what appeared to be the easier path of returning
    3. Ruth's letting go of Moab and stepping into the uncertain with Naomi was a faith step
- Letting go of our old life and attaching to God is the best long-term strategy
    1. A devotion to God impacts life in two realms ***(1 Timothy 4:8 NLT)***
    2. What we gain with the Lord is greater than what we leave behind

DEFINED BY LOSSES *(Ruth 1:19-22 NLT)*

- Naomi returned but allowed the losses to overshadow her life
    1. She had experienced great losses - husband and sons
    2. She blamed the Lord for her losses - renamed herself bitter
- Don't allow the losses in life to have the dominant voice
    1. Everyone experiences loss
    2. Defining life by the losses can cause bitterness
    3. With God, we always have something to be grateful for ***(Habakkuk 3:17-18 NLT)***