

A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark skin and glasses, looking down at an open book she is holding. She is wearing a black top with gold beaded necklaces. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with light coming through. The title 'Being Ruth' is overlaid on the image, with 'Being' in a dark brown script font and 'Ruth' in a large, bold, blue serif font.

Being Ruth

*Pressing Through Life's Struggles
with Fearless Faith*

YVETTE R. BLAIR-LAVALLAIS

Being Ruth: Pressing Through Life's Struggles with Fearless Faith
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“This beautifully crafted resource has challenged me to the core of my being. Yvette Blair-Lavallais has managed to handle a familiar story, untangle its threads, and weave them into my own story in a profound way. Rarely have I encountered a book that traces the sisterhood of the faith so powerfully, from Naomi and Ruth to Sojourner Truth to my own life. This isn’t just a must-read, it’s a must re-read.”

Elizabeth Glass Turner, Associate Director of Community and Creative Development, World Methodist Evangelism

“Yvette’s vivid, practical, and contemporary style provides a fresh and encouraging look at the ancient story of Ruth. Readers, especially women, will walk away from this book with hope and encouragement that God will see them through their journey just as He did in this powerful and compelling story of our sister Ruth.”

Rev. Velda M. Turnley, Chief Encouragement & Empowerment Officer, Kingdom Impact Now Global Solutions, Staff Pastor, St. Luke Community UMC Dallas, TX

Being Ruth: Pressing Through Life’s Struggles with Fearless Faith is a book that is life changing. You will be moved to a place of applying your faith to the ongoing “midst of life” dynamics and the practice of a relevant faith. The interplay of Yvette’s life experiences and the rich content from the story of Ruth, create a reading experience that makes the book of Ruth truly come alive. It is a relevant text and book for those that face the many and varied struggles of everyday life.

Rev. Rezolia Johnson Roberson
Senior Pastor, Church of the Covenant
Arlington, TX

In *Being Ruth: Pressing Through Life's Struggles with Fearless Faith*, Yvette Blair-Lavallais takes the relationship between Ruth and Naomi from the pages of the Bible and makes their trials and triumphs applicable to contemporary times. Through the individual and collective stories of these courageous women, Yvette offers how relationship with God, especially during seasons of drought, unlocks the door of encouragement, hope and God's promise in your life. Whatever struggles you're facing, this book will help you to be restored.

Candance L. Greene

Founder, Cherishedflight Ministry
Baltimore, MD

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CHAPTER SIX

She Said Yes and Experienced God's Best

*"He said, "Who are you?" And she answered,
"I am Ruth, your servant."
— Ruth 3:9 —*

I believe that sometimes the biggest hurdle we must overcome is our fear of saying yes. We've been accustomed to hearing no for so long that it scares us to hear yes. Yes to happiness. Yes to success. Yes to goodness. Yes.

If you've heard God's calling on your life, then you probably know what it's like to be afraid to say yes. Whether God is calling you to be a pediatric nurse where your giftedness will help to heal babies and children, or God is calling you to be a certified public accountant where you will help people and companies to be fiscally healthy, there is a likelihood that saying yes to all that this entails comes with a resounding fear of saying yes.

And if you've ever wanted to say yes, but someone crushed it with a no, that makes it even more difficult to muster up the courage again to move forward in your calling.

In the spring of 2000, I was actively engaged in my church. I was involved in ministry, growing in my worship and prayer life, and finally paying attention to the nudging and prompting from God that it was time to take seriously the calling that God had on my life for ordained ministry. I remember scheduling a meeting with my senior pastor. I went into that meeting, filled with hope, hesitation and yet a strong willingness to finally say out loud beyond the perimeter of my living room, that God had called me to preach and I was ready to move forward.

And that's when my yes was crushed with a resounding no from my pastor, the person who was the shepherd and spiritual leader of the church where I had been a member for a few years. I still remember his response, because it has framed my ministry, and has caused me to walk with holy boldness in the midst of the naysayers: "God didn't call you into ministry. You heard God wrong. God doesn't call women. I suggest you go back and pray and ask what did God *really* say to you."

Really? Ouch!

I left that meeting crushed. I left that meeting second-guessing God. I left that meeting so deflated and puzzled. To be told that I heard God wrong was a response that I had never imagined in a thousand years.

I am confident, though, that God continued to say yes. God said yes when I applied to seminary many years later, and stepped into my calling. God said yes when I left a lucrative career as a regional vice president of communications and marketing for a well-known national non-profit that is dedicated to educating the community on their risks for heart disease and stroke. God said yes when I graduated magna cum laude from Southern Methodist University with my Master's Degree in Theological Studies and a concentration in church history. God said yes when I began serving full-time as a pastor in a denomination that didn't bat an eye or tell you how wrong you were for being a woman with a calling for pastoral leadership and a vision to help lead God's people from brokenness to wholeness.

I walked in holy boldness and God said yes every step of the way. Sure, those “yeses” came with some struggles, hurdles and doors to kick in and barriers to break down, but because God was saying yes, I knew that it didn’t matter if I heard a loud “no” along the way. I was confident that God would make a way for me to still fulfill my calling, share the Good News and usher people from those broken places to the healing and wholeness that God had waiting for them.

There is a “yes” in your life that God has already stamped with God’s approval.

And I am confident that there is a “yes” in your life that God has already stamped with God’s approval, that the Lord is waiting for you to respond to and walk in.

I believe that every woman has the capacity to embody the spirit of Ruth’s determination, grit and fearlessness. Her story is more than just a beautifully told illustration of finding her Boaz. It is a testimony of inspiration within the desperation of experiences that we all encounter. And more so, this story is permanently inked in the Bible as our push to hope, our push to dream, our push to keep pressing forward and to strive toward the “yes” that God has designed us for. It’s about the promise that awaits us when we make a faith decision to follow God. It’s about aligning ourselves in humility with God’s plan and purpose for our lives, and what it means to truly worship God in the midst of our difficult situations. Yes, it is so much more than just a woman finding the man of her dreams; it is about finding hope and wholeness after we’ve been scarred by some painful and heart-breaking experiences in life.

The only way for you to experience God’s best is to say yes.

The only way for you to experience God’s best is to say yes. And to press forward through the struggles with fearless faith.

You might not know it, but Ruth pressed through a major struggle that evening at the threshing floor. You recall from earlier, that the threshing floor was considered unsafe – especially

at night when those who were in charge were asleep. Boaz admonished Ruth to leave from there early in the morning so that no one would know that a woman had been there. I think this reasoning is two-fold: first, so that her reputation would not be unfairly tainted, since it could easily be broadcasted that some promiscuous activity had taken place between Ruth and Boaz; and second, so that it would not be assumed that the threshing floor became a place where women gleaners would

*We are walking
boldly, in the shadow
of prayer.*

rest from their labors at night and open themselves to unwanted attention.

If you read the text slowly, even aloud, you will notice this in 3:14, "...but {she} got up before one person could recognize another; for he {Boaz} said, 'it must not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.'"

Other people were there!

*You've been frozen in
fear and afraid to
stand on faith.*

Ruth managed to get to Boaz, boldly propose to him, and do so in a private moment while other people were there. God protected the private moment. God knew

the intentions and worthiness of Ruth's heart. God also knew the intentions and honor of Boaz's heart. This is to say that, sometimes we can find ourselves in the midst of what can be deemed an unsafe place, yet still experience the safety of God's

*You have the strength
and the capacity to walk
in holy boldness!*

provision. We can find ourselves in what others would view as a compromising situation, but press through it because we know that God knows we are not compromising

anything. We are not compromising our value, our worth, or our reputation. We are walking boldly, in the shadow of prayer, and doing what God has called us to do.

We are being like Ruth – pressing through life's struggles with fearless faith.

I've witnessed times when people are pressing through their struggles, and standing on faith, rather than standing fro-

zen in fear. There might be times when you've been frozen in fear and afraid to stand on faith. Hear these words: You have the strength and the capacity to walk in holy boldness! Don't be surprised, though, that others might not recognize your newly found strength. They will ask: Who are you! It's more so out of surprise and awe and less about your identity. In this text, in verse nine, Boaz asks a question: Who are you? He asks this of the Moabite woman. The foreigner. The widow. And then Ruth answers: I am Ruth, your servant.

This same conversation of few words can easily be applied to our talks with God. What if God were to ask today, "Who are you?" What would your response be? It's not that God is asking *who* you are in terms of your name or identity because God obviously knows that – God created you, and formed you in your mother's womb – so God already knows who you are. Rather, God is asking are you a prayer warrior? Are you a worshiper? Are you a person who worries? Are you more doubt-filled than faith-filled? God wants you to be able to see yourself through God's eyes. To see the dynamic and wonderfully made person that God designed you to be. Under all the muck and mire of disappointment, frustration, fear and "I'm so fed up and over this," that dynamic person is still there. Under the heap of "no" that you've heard for so long, that wonderfully made person is still there. Are you ready to tell God, "I am your servant?"

When confronted by Boaz, Ruth didn't cower in fear. She didn't lose her composure. She didn't lose sight of her purpose for being there. She answered Boaz with boldness. She answered the prominent leader with fierceness. She answered with a resounding sense of confidence in who she was and who she wanted to become. She was Ruth. The foreigner. The Moabite. The daughter-in-law of Naomi. But who she wanted to become was Boaz's wife. She was ready to leave her status of widow and upgrade it to wife.

Boaz accepted Ruth for who she was and embraced who she wanted to become, but he did not rush ahead and begin to

Every woman has the capacity to embody the spirit of Ruth's determination, grit and fearlessness. Her story is more than just a beautifully told illustration of finding her Boaz. It is a testimony of inspiration within the desperation of experiences that we all encounter. *Being Ruth: Pressing Through Life's Struggles with Fearless Faith* is about aligning ourselves with God's plan and purpose for our lives, and what it means to truly trust God in the midst of our difficult situations. Along this faith journey, there will be low moments that seek to set you back; but remember to use these moments to make your comeback! Get ready to walk with holy boldness into the harvest that God has for you.

"This beautifully crafted resource has challenged me to the core of my being. Rarely have I encountered a book that traces the sisterhood of the faith so powerfully, from Naomi and Ruth to Sojourner Truth to my own life. This isn't just a must-read, it's a must re-read."

Elizabeth Glass Turner, Associate Director of Community and Creative Development, World Methodist Evangelism



About the Author: Yvette R. Blair-Lavallais is a licensed pastor and elder in the Methodist Church. She is a 2017 fellow of Princeton Theological Seminary's Black Theology and Leadership Institute, and she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Master of Theological Studies degree from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. A sought-after speaker and Bible study teacher, Yvette is the founder of *Her Sister's Situation Ministry*, a safe place for women who are dealing with an issue or combination of circumstances at any given time, to come together and

heal. She spent 25 years in media, corporate communications, and public relations, including the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, before going into ministry full-time. She and her husband, the Rev. Carl Lavallais, live in Dallas.

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