

Ruth – Part 2
January 22, 2023
The Road of Providence
Ruth 2

Tony Evans said, “The book of Ruth shows how God can take messes and make miracles in order to advance His kingdom program, plan, and agenda.”

Look at the last verse of Ruth 1 - -

Verse 22 - - So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

They’re coming to Bethlehem in late April or early May - - right at the beginning of the barley harvest.

I. In the fields of Boaz (Ruth 2:1-3)

Read Ruth 2: 1-3:

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. ² And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” ³ So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

A. Introduction to Boaz (v. 1)

1. What do we know about Boaz?

- a. His name means “strength,” he was a “mighty man of wealth” and a “mighty man of the law”
- b. He was a kinsman of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech and from the House of Judah (as per the genealogies given in Ruth 4 and Matthew 1) - - This is important, as we will later see.
- c. Boaz is the hero of the story - - listen as the story unfolds at how humble, generous, proper, and compassionate he was to all he met

B. Ruth asked Naomi if she could “please” go to the field to glean (v. 2)

C. What is “gleaning?”



They did not have a welfare system, but a gleaning system, based on The Law of Gleaning as found in Leviticus 19:9-10 - - **SEE THE HANDOUT**

The Scripture basis for gleaning is Leviticus 19:9-10. - - God is concerned for the poor and He gave this law to the Israelites to encourage them (and ultimately us) to be concerned for the poor, as well. They didn't have a welfare system, they had a gleaning system.

It wasn't like "We'll collect it and give it to you." No! You have to work for it. No handouts. You maintain your dignity.

Ruth has every reason to be bitter after all she's gone through - - she lost her father-in-law and brother-in-law, she lost her husband, she made a long journey, she's in a foreign place to her - - yet she's untainted and not beaten down by the circumstances of life. What a wonderful attitude - - . The more we learn about Ruth, the more she resembles "the virtuous woman" of Proverbs 31 that Gene discussed last week.

- D. Naomi gave her approval and Ruth **"just happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz"** (v. 3) - - Do you think God had a hand in this?

J Vernon McGee supposed that as Ruth was walking down the road trying to decide which field to glean in, perhaps she hesitated a minute. Dr. McGee said, "I can imagine that the angels on the battlement of heaven looked over and held their breath. They said, "My, I hope she goes into the right field." She went into the right field alright. And I think all of heaven heaved a sigh of relief when she went into the fields of Boaz." He went on to say, "God is ruling and over-ruling throughout this story. For Ruth there was the element of uncertainty, but on the other side there was the providential dealing of Almighty God." God was (and IS) in control!

II. Boaz becomes aware of Ruth or **"boy meets girl"** (Ruth 2:4-16)

A. "Who is this girl?" (vv. 4-7)

⁴ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the LORD be with you." And they said to him, "May the LORD bless you."

⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" ⁶ The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

⁷ And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' Thus, she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while."

"Please," she said. We need to remember that word. "You can catch a lot more flies with honey than with vinegar." (Daniel 1:12 – Daniel said, "Please")

B. Then, Boaz & Ruth have their first conversation in the next 6 verses: (vv. 8-13):



Read Verses 8-13

⁸ Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids. ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not

to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw.”

¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” ¹¹ Boaz replied to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know. ¹² May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

¹³ Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

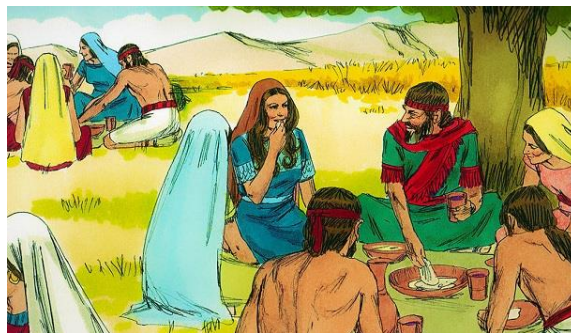
So, Boaz took matters in hand and instructed her not to go into any other fields, but to remain with his workers. The law said that a gleaner could go into any field, but he is making it as easy as possible for Ruth.

He has instructed his men to lay off her - - don't make a pass at Ruth. Just let her do her thing and go about your reaping. Boaz was protecting Ruth.

Matthew Henry:

“Woman was created from the rib of man to be beside him, not from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him.”

And it appears that Boaz had a healthy respect for women.



In the next 3 verses we witness their first date, so to speak. He invited her to lunch

Read Verses 14-16

¹⁴ And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So, she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left. ¹⁵ When she got up to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. ¹⁶ Also you are to purposely slip out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* so that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”

Boaz told his guys to give Ruth special treatment. Do you think Boaz is interested in her?

Notice how well he communicates with Ruth. There's no “game playing” going on - - just good healthy communications between a man and a woman.

Principle: Mature love is fostered in an atmosphere of good communications.

III. Naomi - - The Matchmaker (Ruth 2:17-23; 3:1-5)

A. “Wow! Where did you glean? Who took note of you?” (vv. 17-20a)

Read Verses 17-20 and let's see how the rest of the day went.

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. ¹⁸ She took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took it out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied. ¹⁹ Her mother-in-law then said to her, “Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed.” So, she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

²⁰ Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

{26 quarts - - enough to feed a working person for several weeks}

Naomi is coming around. Back in Chapter 1 she wanted the people of Bethlehem to refer to her as “Mara,” or “bitter.” And now, she realizes that Yahweh has NOT withdrawn his favor - - that He is much in control.

- B. “Boaz is one of our closest relatives” (vv. 20b - 21)

Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

SEE THE HANDOUT

Naomi informed Ruth that Boaz was one of their closest relatives, and she was alluding to the fact that he could serve in the role of “Kinsman-Redeemer.”

That is, that he could fulfill the law of levirate marriage, since Naomi’s sons were both deceased and she had no surviving sons. The Law of The Kinsman-Redeemer applied also to land that was part of the estate of the deceased husband.

Naomi knew that Ruth meeting Boaz was no “chance meeting,” that God’s hand was in it, and she saw this as an opportunity for Boaz to redeem Ruth, to buy her out of slavery to her impoverished circumstances and formally adopt her into God’s chosen family by marrying her.

We will discuss this more as the story develops, but this is exactly what Christ our Redeemer did for us when He bought us back from our slavery to sin. Through Him, we are forgiven, set free from sin, made new creations, and have a new relationship with God.

²¹ Then Ruth the Moabite said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

- C. “Remain in the field of Boaz” (vv. 22-23)

²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field.” ²³ So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Don't you just love the way Naomi is handling this? She sees what is going on and continues to work as a matchmaker.

What is really good to see here is that she doesn't fold her arms and say, **"Boaz could never be the husband to you that Mahlon was - - he couldn't hold a candle to my son."** She is blessing the idea!

IV. Takeaways from today's study in Ruth 2

A. God is concerned for the poor

Our Lord Jesus, like the Father, was concerned about the poor when He was on earth. In Mark 12: 41-45, it is recorded that Jesus noticed a poor widow whom He praised because He said she cast more into the treasury than all others, since she cast in all she had, even all her living. And we see that multiple times in the Gospels. As believers, what should be our reactions to what God is concerned about? No doubt, we should be very concerned as He is, especially as this would please him. Gladly enough, scriptures tell us that showing concern/ compassion to the poor/needful will earn us blessings and it will be well with us

B. God's providence, once again, can be seen in the life of Ruth as He lines up the timing, location, and various personalities and works all things together for good. We must recall that He is likewise working in our own lives. He is using us and our situations even today to accomplish His purpose. His providence should make every day a thrill for the child of God.

C. We should always be kind to others. Remember that old adage, "You can catch a lot more flies with honey than with vinegar." It goes along with one of the lessons we learned from Daniel, as well. Daniel had great success there in Babylon, even as an exile, because not only was "God granted him favor and compassion in the sight of the leadership there in Babylon," but he was (as Bert put it) civil in his dealings with others. We see that here in the lives of both Ruth and Boaz.

Ephesians 4:32 - Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another just as God in Christ has also forgiven you.

D. Mature love is fostered in an atmosphere of good communications.