

Ruth – Part 3
January 29, 2023
A Match Made in Heaven
Ruth 3

Last Week's Lesson – Review:

Ruth “just happened” to have stopped in the field of Boaz and Boaz stopped by the field and “just happened” to have taken notice of Ruth.

From the human viewpoint, these were just happenstances. From God's viewpoint, they were something else. We know that God is ordering the events of this universe, and nothing can come to a child of God without His permission.

In Chapter 2 Ruth and Boaz had lunch together in the field and spent time getting to know each other, and Boaz made several commitments to her:

1. **Job security** - - “Do not glean in another field; remain with my reapers” (vv. 8-9)
 2. **Protection** - - “I commanded my men to not touch you” (v. 9)
 3. **Special Treatment**
 - a. “Drink water my servants draw - - you don't have to draw your own water” (v. 9)
 - b. “Eat with my people” (v. 14)
 - c. Boaz' servants were commanded to leave grain in the field for her to glean (v. 15) and to purposely slip out some grain from the bundles they had reaped (v. 16)
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Our Lesson for Today:

- I. Naomi counsels Ruth (Ruth 3:1-5)

¹Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?”

- A. Ruth was not claiming what she had a right to, so Naomi decides to have a little talk with her - - to enlighten her with regard to the customs and laws of her new people.

She said here, “Shouldn't I be a good mother-in-law to you and make sure that you and your future are taken care of?”

Naomi is very practical and very busy trying to get Ruth and Boaz together.

² Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he winnows barley at the threshing floor tonight.

Naomi & Ruth arrived in Bethlehem from Moab at “the beginning of the barley harvest,” which would have been late April or early May. And now, it’s harvest time, so it’s between late June and mid-July. So, Ruth has worked hard in the fields of Boaz for about 2 months - - and she and Boaz have had about 2 months to get to know each other.

Maybe she thought Ruth, being younger, was prettier or healthier and had more to offer Boaz than she did. Bert suggested that life had been very hard on Naomi - - it had taken its toll, and maybe she just felt that Ruth had a better chance.

Regardless, she was seeking security for her daughter-in-law, Ruth.

- B.** We’ve come to the time immediately after the barley is harvested - - the time when winnowing takes place, that is, **separating the chaff from the barley.**

Let’s look at how this was done in ancient Israel.



Winnowing Rake or Fan & Scoop



Winnowing

(Separating the Chaff from the Barley)



Threshing Floor

They would take a 5-pronged winnowing rake (or fan), scoop up the barley and throw it up into the air in this elevated location, and let the wind and gravity take care of the rest. The wind would blow away the chaff and the kernels of barley would fall down to the ground. Because they needed the prevailing evening winds, they would usually do this in the evening when the wind was greatest.

Then, after they had winnowed the grain, they would have a feast in the evening celebrating all that they had collected. There was a huge pile or several huge piles in the center of the floor, and the workers would sleep around the pile of barley **with their head at the center** and their feet sticking out like spokes on a wheel. This was to guard what they had collected because there were thieves and marauders - - they had to watch the stuff, so they slept with it. And oftentimes, their families would join them, camping around the perimeter of the threshing floor.

C. Look at what Naomi tells Ruth in Verse 3:

³ Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your *best* clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

She suggested that Ruth take a bath and put on some perfume- - good practical stuff if you're trying to get a man's attention. Make him look twice.

Consider Naomi - - With the death of her husband and two sons, she had dealt with unfathomable sorrow, grief, and deepening despair - - she even told people to call her "Mara"). But NOW, she appears to have broken the cycle by grasping hold of God's covenant commitment to His people to work for their good and His glory and she is experiencing God's goodness and continued faithfulness.

D. Here in Verse 4 is the part that's a little strange to us:

⁴It shall be when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you shall do."

Uncover his feet?

And Ruth replied to her in Verse 5:

⁵"All that you say, I will do."

Uncovering his feet in the middle of the night when the wind is blowing would cause his feet to get cold and he would awaken.

Also, to lay at someone's feet was an act of submission. It was going to open the door for Ruth to suggest that Boaz perform the role of the kinsman-redeemer or Go-El.

So, let's see how this all played-out on the threshing floor of Boaz.

- II. On the threshing floor (Ruth 3:6-13)
 - A. Verses 6-8

⁶So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸It happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative."



“Spread your covering over me” or “Take me under your wing” - - she’s suggesting that Boaz serve as her kinsman-redeemer - - she’s proposing marriage.

¹⁰ Then he said, “May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.

This passage seems to indicate that Boaz was an older gentleman, perhaps 45-50 years old, while Ruth is quite a bit younger. Consider that she had been married to Mahlon for 10 years when he died, so she likely came to Bethlehem in her late 20’s. So, there’s perhaps a 15 to 20 year difference in their ages.

He is commending her - - she could have gone after a lot of young men.

B. Boaz: “I will redeem you, my dear.” (vv 11-13)

¹¹ Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.

¹² Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning.”

KJV- V. 11b- for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. What are some synonyms for “virtuous?” (Moral, honorable, honest, righteous, good)

He told her that she’s a virtuous girl and he’s interested in her suggestion that he serve in the role of kinsman-redeemer, but there’s a closer relative.

He tells her in Verse 13 to lie down till morning and the next day he will get with the closer kinsman and see if he’s willing to redeem Ruth.

There’s nothing immoral going on here. He was simply telling her to pass the night there - - don’t get up and disturb everyone. She’s lying at his feet and there are others (even families) all around them.

III. The morning after “the proposal” on the threshing floor (Ruth 3:14-18)

A. Boaz offered her protection and generosity (Verses 14-15)

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ Again he said, “Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it.” So she held it, and he measured six *measures* of barley and laid *it* on her. Then she went into the city.

They arose early the next morning and Boaz instructed those on the threshing floor to keep quiet about Ruth coming to the threshing floor. He was telling them to not give people a chance to start gossiping.

He gave her 6 measures of barley - - NOT 6 ephahs, which would have weighed about 200 pounds. This was probably 6 seahs (where 1 seah = 1/3 ephah) (6 seahs of barley = **about 60-80 pounds**) of barley - - or about twice the amount she had previously gleaned in Ruth 2:17 (1 ephah = 26 quarts = enough for 1 working person for several weeks).

B. Naomi’s advice (Verses 16-18)

¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did it go, my daughter?” And she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ She said, “These six *measures* of barley he gave to me, for he said, ‘Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

¹⁸ Then she said, “Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today.”

Naomi must have been ecstatic. Her little scheme to have Ruth spruce-up and go the threshing floor had worked. She KNEW that the Lord was in this and that this guy Boaz was {a word we would use today} awesome.

Verse 18 - - Just sit still, my child - - you have done all that you can do and it’s up to Boaz now to do as he said he would do. The work of redemption is his alone at this point.

Here in Ruth, we have Ruth in need of a redeemer and Boaz going into town to complete the transaction, and Naomi telling her daughter-in-law basically to “**Sit still, your redemption is drawing near.**”

That's often the most difficult part of faith, is it not - - when no more action can be taken and nothing remains but to wait patiently for God to work out His will. Sometimes this is when doubts arise and anxiety creeps in. But we must wait on the Lord.

IV. Takeaways from today's study

- A. Boaz was the kind of man who made godly kindness a way of life, just as we are called to do. We need to make acts of kindness part of our routine - - they should be second nature to us. We should be on the lookout for such opportunities.
- B. Be willing to submit to the guidance of others, as Ruth did. Submission is a godly response to the counsel we receive from those we respect.
- C. Our study of Ruth has shown us how the Lord can breathe life into a situation that appears lifeless. He is a Restorer, a Rebuilder, a Reviver. Do you need to be "restored?" He wants to help you so much! He cares! He loves you!
- D. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. God saves us by His grace. We receive His grace when we put our faith in Christ as the One who died for our sins and rose from the dead on our behalf.
- E. Those in need of a Redeemer have only to believe.

Next week: A Kinsman Who Is Willing and Able to Redeem

Think about this for next week: Recalling the curse God placed on the Ammonites and Moabites in Deuteronomy 23:3, why would an upstanding devout Jew like Boaz be so interested in taking Ruth, a Moabitess, as his wife?