

Our Relationship with the Poor Ruth #3 (2:1-23)

I. Introduction

A. "Act 2" also divides into three scenes.

<u>Verses</u>	<u>Characters</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Action</u>
2:1-3	Naomi and Ruth	Naomi's House	Naomi Accepts Ruth's Plan
2:4-17	Ruth and Boaz and workers	Boaz's Field	Public encounter between Ruth and Boaz
2:18-23	Naomi and Ruth	Naomi's House	Naomi and Ruth Debrief

II. Naomi and Ruth

A. Naomi mentions Boaz (vs. 1)

Boaz is mentioned three other times in genealogies: I Chron. 2:11-12, Matt. 1:5 and Luke 3:32

Note: Israelites were described by four indicators: people or nation, tribe, clan and their father's house.

1. A relative on her husband's side
2. A man of worth (prominent and noble)
3. A family member (a GOEL -kinsman redeemer who has the responsibility and means to redeem Ruth. See Lev. 25:23-34, Jer. 32:7)

Perhaps a widower

B. Ruth (The Moabitess) Asks for permission to go glean (vs.2-3)

She seems to be aware of the OT principles dealing with the poor and/or the immigrant.

1. Lev. 25:23- The land belongs to the Lord.
2. Lev. 19:9-10-The covenantal obligation of landowners...Leave some for the poor: GLEANING.
3. Lev. 19:33-Care for the immigrant (GER-foreigners living in Israel)
4. Deut. 14:28-29-Special offering for the GER, the fatherless and widows: THIRD YEAR TITHES
5. Deut. 15:11-Be openhanded/generous.

III. Boaz Arrives from Bethlehem

(v. 4) He greets his workers warmly, quoting scripture (Num. 6)

(v. 5-6) He gets a report from his foreman about Ruth (She is a hard worker).

(v. 8) He calls Ruth, “my daughter” and begins to give her good advice.

1. Only glean from my fields
2. Stay around the girls that are working for me.
3. I have instructed the men to leave you alone.
4. Feel free to drink from my water jars.

(v. 10-11) Ruth responds in humility and Boaz compliments her character.

(v. 14) He invites her to lunch.

She would have been eating with the men, dipping into the same bowl of a sour sauce made from spoiled wine.

(v. 15) Boaz gives some instructions to his workers on how to make it easier on Ruth.

(17) Ruth gathers an EPHAH: maybe 20-30 lbs. of barley. Enough to feed two people for about a week.

IV. **Ruth explains everything to Naomi (v. 18-23)**

**She gleaned throughout the barley and wheat harvest, from April until June. During those 7 weeks, they would pick up the sheaves left on the ground, beat the stocks, then collect the kernels and carry it all home, a formidable job.

V. **So what?**

“Giving material assistance to the poor is a central ethical principle in the Bible which applies to both individuals and communities. The Torah (OT) establishes a social safety net for the poor. Israel’s prophets frequently spoke out on behalf of the poor (Jer. 22:16). Jesus offered explicit instructions on what His disciples should do with the possessions they renounced to follow Him: sell them and give alms to the poor (Luke 12:32-34, Mark 10:21).” (American Bible Society)

Principles from God’s Word for Dealing with People in Need:

#1. Whatever we have is a gift from the Lord-Be Grateful

- A. It all belongs to Him.
I Cor. 4:7
- B. It all belongs to Him even when we work hard for it.
Deut. 8:17-18

#2. God’s People are Responsible for Helping the Poor-It is Part of Our Job

Lev. 25:35-36 “If one of your countrymen becomes poor and is unable to support himself among you, help him as you would an alien or temporary resident so he can continue to live among you. Do not take interest of any kind from him but fear your God so that your countryman may continue to live among you.”

Deut. 24:14 “Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns.”

Prov. 31:9 “Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

James 2:15-16 “Supposed a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?’”

Luke 6:30 “Give to everyone who asks you...”

#3 Unjust Treatment of the Poor is an Act of Disrespect to the Lord-Notice the Implications

Prov. 14:31 “He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”

Prov. 28:27 “He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses.”

#4. God loves a Cheerful Giver-Watch Your Attitude

Deut. 15:7-11

II Cor. 9:6-8

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Discussion Questions

1. What do we learn about the character of Boaz? Ruth?
2. Which verse most clearly spoke to you about our responsibility to care for the poor and disadvantaged? What responsibility do the poor or disadvantaged have?
3. Do you think verse 3-4 is a chance meeting? Have you ever experienced God leading or intervening in your life? What did that teach you about God?
4. Have you ever felt like Ruth sitting outside the group? How can we demonstrate love and care like Boaz did for Ruth in our own world?

Personal Reflections

1. Do you think Ruth exemplifies the character of Christ at any time? If so, how?
2. Look at Leviticus 23:22, why does Ruth or Naomi think they can go to the fields? What risk might she be taking in doing this?
3. Ruth was being observed as she worked. Do you ever think about how people watch you work and how it represents your faith?
4. How might we practice generosity like Boaz?
5. Did this lesson make you uncomfortable at all? If so, what might be a next step for you as you pursue becoming a “cheerful giver?”