

Ruth 2

Good morning and welcome to Calvary Chapel, we're glad you came to worship with us this morning. Would you please turn in your Bible's to Ruth 2?

Now it's been a couple of weeks since we started Ruth, so let's spend a few minutes reminding ourselves of what happened in our last study.

When famine struck the area of Bethlehem during the period of the judges, a man named Elimelech loaded up his family and took off for greener pasture, and moved his Hebrew family to Moab. But Moab was a pagan place – a lost land full of idolatrous people.

If you remember during the Exodus God brought His people, the Hebrews, through the land of Moab into the promised land. It was never God's will for His people to backtrack and backslide into Moab.

During the famine, Elimelech should've hunkered down and trusted God, instead he leaned on his own understanding and moved his wife and two sons to Moab.

So as time went on in Moab, when it came time for Elimelech's two sons to marry, their only options were Moabite women. One of the sons married Orpah. The other son married Ruth.

Tragically, we learn in chapter 1 v 3 that Elimelech had moved to Moab to save his family, yet shortly after he arrives, he dies. Then to make matters worse, his two sons also die. His poor wife, Naomi, is left to deal with unfathomable grief.

After burying her husband and 2 sons, Naomi, and one of her daughters-in-law, Ruth, pack their bags and move back to

Bethlehem. These two women arrive homeless and hopeless. This is a desperate scene.

So in chapter 2 the focus shifts away from what happened in Moab, and focuses upon the events of Naomi's daughter in law, a widow herself, named Ruth.

And it's important to remember that in chapter 1 we saw that Ruth converts to faith in Naomi's God. She says to her mother-in-law in

Ruth 1:16 16 But Ruth said:

"Entreat me not to leave you,

Or to turn back from following after you;

For wherever you go, I will go;

And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;

Your people shall be my people,

And your God, my God.

The title of this morning's message is REDEEMED

LET'S PRAY

In 1989, a sports fantasy movie was released called Field of Dreams **SHOW PIC**

You may have seen it. It revolves an Iowa farmer who begins the quest of turning an ordinary cornfield into a place where dreams come true. **CLOSE PIC**

But long before Kevin Costner starred in this movie, there was another field of dreams in the town of Bethlehem. This field of dreams is not fictional, for God saves a family on the verge of annihilation. God works miraculously and graciously to restore a hope shattered by rebellion. And it all foreshadows what happens

in Bethlehem years later, when a child is born. And through that Child God redeems a world broken by sin...

But before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, we see God's redemption in the barley fields of a man named Boaz.

1 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. Here we're introduced to the Hebrew heartthrob of the story, a man named Boaz... The name "Boaz" means "in him is strength."

As we'll see in our study, Boaz was a kind, gentle, Godly man. And on top of that he was wealthy, he was a large landowner, and... he was single. Boaz was a bachelor.

And what makes his appearance even more dramatic is that Boaz was a relative. And as the story unfolds, we'll see Boaz will play the role of the Hebrew "Goel" or "kinsmen redeemer."

According to Deuteronomy 25 it was the obligation of the nearest family member to marry a widowed wife, and sire a child to preserve the limb on the family tree. This is why the first words in chapter 2, **"There was a relative of Naomi's husband..."** tip us off, that God is up to something special.

Not only will a woman meet a man, but a disgraced family is about to be restored.

I'm sure when Ruth left Moab to stay by Naomi's side she believed she had sacrificed her best opportunity for remarriage in order to stay loyal to her mother-in-law. Yet against all odds, God is going to bless Ruth with the man of her dreams.

Remember, Naomi, the MIL, and Ruth, the DIL, came to Bethlehem dirt poor. And you can bet they're hungry. They need food.

2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” Ruth has no idea who the “him” she references here might be. She’s just gonna join the labor pool and work her assigned field, and that’s how they’re going to get food.

Now if you remember from our study in Leviticus, God commanded farmers in Israel that they weren’t to completely harvest their fields. **Leviticus 19:9 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.’**

This was how God commanded welfare to work in ancient Israel. Rather than passing out checks and food stamps – a needy person had to put forth some effort. Farmers were not to completely harvest their fields, so the poor and needy could come and glean the remains for themselves.

This was a wonderful way of helping the poor. It directed the farmers to have a generous heart, and it commanded the poor to be active and work for their food — and a way for them to provide for their own needs with dignity.

3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.”

Notice the wording, “she happened...” Ruth had gone out with the day-laborers. She had no idea who owned the field in which she worked, but God did.

In light of God's sovereignty nothing ever just "happens." God is on the throne!

Ruth has no idea, but God is directing her steps.

4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!"

And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!" Apparently, Boaz was not only a wealthy Hebrew hunk, but also a good boss. He loved to bless His employees, and they loved to return the blessing.

This gives us a glimpse of the heart and character of Boaz. Apparently, his workers loved him and had a good relationship with him.

You can often times tell the real character of a person in authority by seeing how they relate to their staff and by how the staff thinks of their boss.

So here in chapter 2 they are in the harvest season, and harvest is crunch time in the barley business. Boaz, like every good boss, wants to do an on-site inspection. But it's not the work that catches his eye, it's a worker

5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" Before Boaz ever has a conversation with Ruth, before they even meet, in fact before Ruth even knows that Boaz exists – Boaz sees her!

Boaz picks Ruth out of the crowd, takes the initiative, and inquires of Ruth.

And this is how we came to Jesus! When we accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we were poor in spirit, hungry and desperate. We were a lot like Ruth!

Before any of us ever came to Christ, Jesus noticed us first.

Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

God chose us before the foundation of the world.

That means when Jesus went to the cross, He had me and you in mind.

When I was born my dad loved me, but he didn't have a choice. **SHOW PIC** He wasn't able to browse the maternity ward and pick out a kid. He couldn't say-'well that one looks like he's gonna be big and strong, I'll take that one'. **CLOSE PIC**

Rather the nurse handed me over, and he was stuck. But my dad loved me just the same.

God on the other hand, had a choice. He knew the mistakes we'd make. He saw our sin. He knew our history in advance. Yet God still chose us!

This is why Boaz is an OT picture, or an OT type of Jesus.

Think for a moment, how do think Ruth looked when Boaz first spotted her? **SHOW PIC**

She'd been working the fields. She was hot and sweaty. She stunk. Ruth had dirt smudges on her face. Her hands were probably cut and bleeding from rummaging in the stalks. She was a mess. **CLOSE PIC**

When Ruth first saw Boaz, she couldn't run to the restroom to freshen up, or do her hair, or spritz on some perfume. Ruth probably looked like the back side of a muddy shovel, yet as we're about to see Boaz loved her anyway.

Folks no matter what you've done, what sins you've committed, how dirty and filthy your heart may be, Jesus will forgive your sin so long as you put your trust in Him!

6-7

6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house." So this field supervisor told Boaz of Ruth's submissive attitude. And not only that, but Ruth was a hard worker-she busted her butt!

Notice the detail-Ruth may not have known it, but she was being watched closely. The supervisor was looking at what kind of job Ruth did and he was impressed with her work.

And the fact that she did a good job was important, because it made a good impression on Boaz.

Folks, as Christians we are also being watched, we are often times under inspection. Christians should have the reputation of being the absolute best employees at their jobs. Why?

Colossians 3: 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. It doesn't matter who your boss is, or how bad your boss or company is. We're to do our work unto God.

Now Boaz talks to Ruth

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women." The young women here would be

Boaz's female field workers, who tied together the cut stalks of grain. Boaz told Ruth to stay close to them, so she would be well taken care of.

9 Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." Here's the first sexual harassment policy in corporate history. Boaz the boss makes sure his employees understand this girl is off-limits.

Notice that Boaz not only gives Ruth protection, Boaz also orders provision for her.

Usually someone who was gleaning of the harvest would fetch water for the hired-hands. But Boaz turns it around. Boaz orders his workers to draw plenty of water for Ruth.

Take a moment and notice all Boaz does for Ruth...

She's given the privilege of joining Boaz' gleaners. Next Boaz gives her protection. Finally he allows Ruth to drink from the water the workers draw from the well. Ruth has hit the jackpot!

Yet there's just one requirement... She can only glean from Boaz's field.

If Ruth wanders off to another man's farm, if she starts to glean from other fields, she forfeits Boaz' privilege and protection and provision.

And the same is true for Christians. This is why we're commanded by Jesus to "abide in Christ."

Because of Jesus we've been given privilege, protection, and provision – but there's on condition. The object of our faith has to be exclusively Jesus.

Satan will tempt us with everything he can in this world to make the grass in another field outside of Christ look more tempting. Satan will use wolves in sheep's clothing to lure us away. Let's make sure we stay in Christ.

10 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" In a typical sign of respect, Ruth bowed low to the person in authority. Ruth is showing Boaz the customary sign of respect. Ruth wants to know why Boaz is heaping such kindness upon her.

In the dating game Ruth didn't have much going for her. Think of all the baggage she brought with her! She's a foreigner. She's no longer a virgin. She's a little older, and poor, and needy, and dirty. And to top it off, there's Naomi... Ruth is packaged with a bitter old lady for a mother-in-law.

Ruth is shocked, perhaps even dumbfounded- why would Boaz be interested in her?

And I've asked myself the same question countless times about my relationship with Jesus. Why would Jesus love me enough to die a hideous death He didn't deserve - for sins that were never His fault. Why would He do it for me?

And the answer is just as simple as it is confounding... The only answer is amazing grace!

I hope this week you take some time and ponder God's grace toward us. Because when we do, somehow the problems in this world just don't seem as intense as they once did.

Let's read verse 10 one more time

10 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

Ruth’s attitude was wonderful. Some of us would be tempted to say, “Well it’s about time someone noticed! I’ve been working hard all day. Now God will give me the blessings that I deserve.”

We never see Ruth asking why all the hard things have come upon her in life. Instead, she asks why this good thing has come.

Our perspective shouldn’t be ‘why has this difficult thing happened to me, rather why does any good thing happen to me at all!’

11-12

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12 The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” Despite all of the hardship and adversity she had faced in her life, Ruth had come to trust almighty God. And look at Boaz’s description of her faith at the end of verse 12. The imagery is that of a baby bird snuggling under the comforting and protective wings of their mother.

We see this imagery throughout the Bible. **Ps 36:7**

How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!

Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.

Jesus cried out in **Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!**

If you've been running from God, just stop. Rest under the protection of His wings.

13 Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants." Boaz treated Ruth as if she belonged. That's the beauty of Christ-no matter your background, talents or personality, when you trust in Jesus you belong to the family of God!

Although we're reading of an agrarian society, and it can be tough sometimes for us to relate, some things haven't changed in 2,000 years. For instance, you know a romance is brewing when the guy takes the girl to dinner. That's what happens in verse 14

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. For Boaz to invite Ruth to his table was an incredibly gracious gesture. Jews were usually forbidden to break bread with Gentiles because eating together was a sign of oneness. An invitation to eat spoke of acceptance.

This poor, hungry and despondent woman named Ruth ate and was satisfied, because she responded to the gracious invitation of Boaz. She wasn't one of the reapers, but she sat beside the reapers and ate as if she was one of them and she ate and was satisfied. All she had to do was accept the invitation!

15 And when she rose up to glean, (going back to work) Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. This was another extraordinary blessing. Rather than glean from the leftovers, Ruth has first crack at the harvest. She’s no longer sorting through trampled down grain; she’s walking off with the best of the crop. And as if that weren’t enough, Boaz commands...

16 Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.” Ruth is not only invited to glean the best of the crop, but the other harvesters make it easy on her. They’re ordered to drop grain in her path. Ruth is being lavished right now!

And our Lord Jesus is just as lavish in His love toward us. Spend time with Him. Study His Word, and you’ll walk away with treasures the HS has for you by Him speaking words especially for you. Promises will jump off the page, straight into your heart. The Holy Spirit personalizes the blessings

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. This was about a five-and-one-half gallon tub of barley — a wonderful day’s work to people who had nothing.

18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. We continue to get insight into Ruth’s heart. Notice she shares her meal with Naomi.

After we spend time with Jesus, in His word, and we’re filled, we too need to share what we’ve received! We gotta spread the bread!

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.” Pause here...Naomi is stunned-she realizes all the grain Ruth brings her is a miraculous portion.

...19 So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.” As mentioned in the beginning of our study, Boaz was what the Hebrews called a “Goel” or “relative redeemer.”

In Hebrew culture there were obligations among family. A victims nearest relative had specific duties... If a brother lost his land, the Goel could redeem it, or buy it back...

If a brother fell into slavery, the Goel could purchase his freedom... If a relative was murdered, who needed the police? The Goel hunted down the killer, and avenged his brother’s death...

And as previously mentioned, if a man died, his brother – or closet kin - was obligated to marry the widow and sire a son to carry on the family name. These were the duties of a Goel. And Naomi knows Boaz is Goel. And as if this news isn’t exciting enough...

21-23

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’”

22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people

do not meet you in any other field.” 23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law. Now if we were writing this story, we’d have Ruth and Boaz head to the alter the next day to tie the knot! But at the moment, Boaz has his hands full. It’s harvest time. He’s got a lot of work to do. He needs to get the grain in the barn before the first frost. It’s not the right time for the nuptials. Ruth is going to have to wait...

Naomi tells her daughter-in-law to stay in Boaz’ fields, work diligently at the task at hand, and be content to glean from His crop. And through all of this Ruth has to exercise faith and patience. And isn’t this what God is asking us to do today? To be busy about our father’s business with whatever time we have remaining on earth?

The book of Ruth is much more than a romance about an ancient couple in a far away town called Bethlehem.

This story is amazingly relevant. Ruth is a picture of the Church - a Gentile bride. We happened into a field owned by Jesus. He loves us. He’s poured out His blessings on us. Our responsibility is to stay put and do the work He’s called us to do.

And just as Ruth is a picture of the church, Boaz is clearly a picture Jesus. You see the Bible tells us there’s a wedding in the coming for every one of us... **Revelation 19 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

9 Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

But until God calls all believers home, Jesus is supervising a great harvest of souls. It's when the harvest is done; then Jesus returns for us, and the wedding party begins

This is an important concept because Jesus Christ is our Goel. We're bankrupt. Like Ruth and Naomi, we have nothing. But there is One who is wealthy. There is One who stands in strength. He is our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ.