

## Ruth 2:2-23 - Thursday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013

- Though we got only to verse one of chapter two last week we'll actually pick it up in verse two by at least reading verse one for the context.

Ruth 2 (1) There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz. (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." (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.

- Couple of thoughts here right out of the shoot, the first of which is related to something we looked at last week concerning the Lord's timing.  
- The reason being is because of what verse three says about how Ruth just happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.  
- Make no mistake about it, this is not happenstance, this is God's providence. By that I mean God's timing was perfect in her being there.

- In other words it was in God's perfect timing that He'd impressed upon Naomi's heart to move back to Bethlehem during the barley harvest.  
- Furthermore it was in God's perfect timing that He'd impress upon Ruth's heart to ask Naomi to go to the field and glean from the harvest.  
- And, for Ruth to glean from the harvest was perfectly in accordance with what is written in Leviticus chapter nineteen, verses nine and ten.

Leviticus 19:9-10 NKJV "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 a real "welfare" program for the poor, such that it would allow them to glean a harvest of whatever was left in the owner's field.  
- This wasn't just a handout. People could still work for their food, and they could do it in a way that would allow them to keep their dignity.  
- The reason I point this out is two-fold, first as it relates to Ruth not expecting something for nothing, and for Boaz on the heels of a famine.

- Let me explain, when Naomi heard the Lord was providing bread for His people back in Bethlehem, she didn't move expecting a handout.  
- This speaks to not only Naomi's character, but Ruth's character as well, especially given that she is a Moabitess and as such a Gentile.  
- It also speaks to the character of Boaz, who after a famine in the land would have been prone to harvest all the crops leaving none to reap.

- Here's what I'm thinking, Ruth happening to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, may indicate that other fields had nothing left.  
- In other words, by virtue of the fact that Boaz left crops to glean, out of obedience to God's Word, he would meet and then marry Ruth.  
- And, by virtue of the fact that Ruth didn't expect a handout and was willing to work, she would meet and then marry the kinsmen redeemer.

Charles Spurgeon – "These good women were not ashamed of honest and humble labor. They did not take to begging, or idling; but desired to eat the bread of industry. Ruth had been a wealthy lady, but she was not above working to support her mother and herself. ...It seemed to her a chance, but the hand of the Lord was in it, and directed her to the very best place to promote her future prosperity."

- By way of application here's the take-away from these first three verses, both the timing of God, and the Word of God are always perfect.  
- If we would but wait on God's timing, and be obedient to God's Word, we will see how He is able to make all things beautiful in His time.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 NKJV He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Psalms 27:13-14 NIV I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. (14) Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

(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!" (5) Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman *is* this?" (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."

- Here we have even further evidence of Boaz's godly character as seen by how he greets and treats the poor people gleanng from his field.  
- We also have even further evidence of Ruth's godly character as seen by how she responds to Boaz by pleading with him to let her glean.  
- The reason I say that is because technically and legally she had a right to glean in his field because of what we read in Leviticus 19:9-10.

(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. (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."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that it pictures us as it relates to our greater than Boaz, Jesus Himself.  
- Here's how I get there, like Boaz tells Ruth not go to another field, so too Jesus says to stay under the spout where His blessing comes out.  
- Just as Boaz tells Ruth to drink from the water he offers when she thirsts, so too does Jesus say drink from His water and we'll never thirst.

- There's something else here not so easily visible at first read related to what Ruth says to Boaz, or perhaps better said, what is not said.  
- Notice that she doesn't say anything at all concerning her lot in life. In other words, she doesn't say anything about her being left a widow.  
- The reason this is so striking to me is because she's not bitter, nor is she in anyway complaining about what's happened to her in her life.

(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?" (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." (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."

- I find it interesting that Boaz would not only take notice of her, but know so much about her and what she did for her mother-in-law Naomi.
- To me, this speaks to how it is that God will always take notice of the commitments and sacrifices we make for Him, in our following of Him.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that God is also rewarding her for not wanting others to take notice of all that had happened to her.

- I suppose it shouldn't come as any surprise when we see how kind and gracious Boaz was to her especially given that she was a foreigner.
- I'm of the belief that this is how we should be as mature Christians who've walked with the Lord for many years towards the young believer.

Charles Spurgeon - "Observe that he saluted her with words of tender encouragement; for this is precisely what I want all the elder Christians among you to do to those who are the counterparts of Ruth. . . . I want you to make a point of looking out the young converts, and speaking to them goodly words, and comfortable words, whereby they may be cheered and strengthened."

(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. (15) And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. (16) Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

- Can you imagine how special Ruth must have felt being invited as a reaper no less, to eat from the bread dipped in vinegar that he offered?
- Boaz even tells his men to let her glean from the sheaves after they are harvested and to purposely; let grain fall from the bundles for her.
- You sort of get the impression that God had, by design, given Ruth, even though she was a foreigner from Moab favor in the eyes of Boaz.

- The reason I point this out is because there's nothing in the narrative that would seem to indicate that Ruth was a stunningly beautiful lady.
- The significance in this is that the narrative actually seems to indicate that Boaz was attracted to Ruth for her inward character and humility.
- The lesson here becomes quite clear in how that it teaches us the vanity of outward beauty, as compared to the quality of inward character.

- I want to point out one more thing, before we get to verse seventeen, and it's found here in verse fourteen where it says she was satisfied.
- Here's what I'm thinking, only our greater than Boaz, Jesus, Who invites us to eat, can satisfy the needs of our hungry and thirsty souls.

Charles Spurgeon - 'She did eat, and was satisfied.' Your *head* shall be satisfied with the precious truth which Christ reveals; your *heart* shall be content with Jesus, as the altogether lovely object of affection; your *hope* shall be satisfied, for whom have you in heaven but Christ? Your *desire* shall be satiated, for what can even the hunger of your desire wish for more than 'to know Christ, and to be found in him.' You shall find Jesus fill your *conscience*, till it is at perfect peace; he shall fill your *judgment*, till you know the certainty of his teachings; he shall fill your *memory* with recollections of what he did, and fill your *imagination* with the prospects of what he is yet to do. You shall be 'satisfied.'

(17) So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. (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. (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." 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."

- First, it's important to note, an ephah of barley would be the equivalent of twenty-seven pounds of barley. No wonder she's flabbergasted.
- Naomi knows that someone had to take notice of Ruth and in so doing find favor with Ruth to come home with that much of a provision.
- It's for this reason that Naomi asks who it was that she had worked. Well, as it turns out, the man's name with whom she worked 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." (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.

- By the way, this is the first prayer we have recorded by Naomi. The reason I bring this up is it's not a prayer of repentance for bitterness.
- This is further evidence that just because she's the recipient of bitter affliction from the Lord doesn't mean she was bitter towards the Lord.
- I would suggest that Naomi is starting to connect the dots having seen the Lord's fingerprints on leading Ruth to their Kinsmen Redeemer.