

When Love Shows Up

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Ruth: Hidden Providence / Ruth 2

When we were moving to Brampton, we spent weeks looking for a house. It was during one of those seasons when every home seemed to go into a bidding war. Prices were sky-high, offers were flying in, and after a while, we started to get discouraged.

We were tired — tired of searching, tired of hearing, “Sorry, it sold.”

One day, our real estate agent said, “There’s one more place I’d like you to see.” We hadn’t even asked to see it — it wasn’t really what we had in mind. But we decided to give it a look.

When we got there, we found out the owners already had another offer — but they told us they wanted to sell it to us instead. They said they appreciated that we were a Christian family and that I was a pastor, they wanted to be a blessing to us and know their house was going to a family like theirs.

It wasn’t the house we had been dreaming about, but it was the home we needed.

It was in our budget, it was available, and it was where God placed us.

Looking back, I can see that even though it didn’t feel like a miracle, God’s faithful hand was quietly guiding us the whole time — through the waiting, the weariness, and the ordinary details.

And I’ve found that’s often how God works.

Not always in big, sweeping, miraculous moments — but in the everyday choices, in the ordinary decisions. God is quietly working.

And that's exactly what's happening in Ruth chapter 2.

Ruth doesn't experience any thunderbolts or angelic voices. She just gets up one morning and goes out to find food, simply because they need to eat.

But behind her steps, God's faithful love is quietly at work — guiding, providing, protecting, and redeeming.

I think that's what we're meant to see this morning.

We're meant to see God's faithful love — that His steadfast, covenant love is quietly at work in every detail of our lives.

That's the heartbeat of this chapter — and the big idea this morning:

God's faithful love is quietly at work in every aspect of our lives.

Look with me at [Ruth 2](#) this morning. We're going to be looking at the whole chapter, but I'll read verses 1–16 and verse 20.

(Read Scripture)

We read last week that Ruth's story unfolds “in the days when the judges ruled” — when everyone did what was right in their own eyes. It was a dark, chaotic time spiritually and morally.

At the end of chapter 1, Naomi returns home bitter and empty.

Within ten years:

- A famine forces them to leave Bethlehem.
- Naomi's husband, Elimelech, dies in Moab.
- Ruth marries Naomi's son, but both sons die soon after.

When Naomi finally returns to Bethlehem, she describes herself as “empty,” saying, “*The Lord has brought me back empty*” (1:21).

That background matters — because it helps us resist the temptation to think that God's love means we'll never face hardship, pain or loss.

God's love doesn't promise us that life will be easy.

But it does promise that His love will remain faithful *through* the hardship — in our suffering, in the face of loss, even when life feels empty.

And woven through Naomi's pain is a thread of God's **hesed** — His steadfast, covenant love.

We saw it back in chapter 1:8 when Naomi said to her daughters-in-law,

“May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.”

That word *kindly* is translated from the Hebrew *hesed* — God's covenant, faithful, steadfast love.

That's Naomi's prayer for Ruth in that moment: that she would experience the steadfast love of the Lord.

And we see it again here in chapter 2.

“May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead” (2:20).

There's that word again — *hesed* — the steadfast love that does not forsake the living or the dead.

God's *hesed*, His steadfast, faithful love, runs through the entire story of Ruth — and it runs through our lives too.

God's love shows up — but the truth is, it never really left.

It's always been there, leading, guiding, and directing the paths of Ruth and Naomi.

So, as we come into chapter 2, we find Ruth and Naomi back in Bethlehem — two widows, starting over.

They don't know what's next. They don't have a plan. They just know they need food.

And what we're about to see is that God's faithful love is already at work — not in the background, but in the details.

Because the first thing we see in this story is that:

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE GUIDES OUR STEPS

I see that in verses 1–3. Look there with me.

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." So, she set out 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 clan of Elimelech.

I love that phrase in verse 3 — *she happened to come*.

From Ruth's perspective, it was just another day. She just "happened" to go to this field.

But from God's perspective, every step she took was being guided by His faithful hand.

We're meant to see the irony here. It's written to sound like a coincidence, but the author wants us to feel the weight of it — this is no coincidence.

The pieces fit together because of what verse 1 tells us:

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

That might not sound like much at first, but that little detail is full of hope.

Ruth doesn't know it yet. Naomi doesn't know it yet. Boaz doesn't know it yet. But Boaz was a relative of Naomi's deceased husband, which made him a *kinsman-redeemer*.

In Israel's law, a kinsman-redeemer was a close relative who had both the **right** and the **responsibility** to step in and rescue a family member in need.

If someone fell into poverty or lost their land, the redeemer could *buy back* what was lost.

If a husband died, leaving a widow with no children, the redeemer could *marry her* to preserve the family line and protect her future.

It was God's way of building *redemption* right into the community of His people — so that no one would be left without hope, and every family had a path to restoration.

So, when we read that Boaz was “of the clan of Elimelech,” that's not just background information — that's the sound of hope breaking through Naomi's bitterness.

It's like a quiet whisper that God is already at work preparing redemption, even though no one can see it yet.

Boaz doesn't know it. Ruth doesn't know it. Naomi doesn't know it. But God is weaving their stories together. He is guiding their steps.

Think about it: Naomi and Ruth just *happen* to return to Bethlehem at harvest time.

Elimelech just *happens* to have a relative who lives there.

Ruth just *happens* to wander into his field.

And Boaz just *happens* to notice her.

Do you see it? Every “coincidence” is a thread in the fabric of God's providence. Every step Ruth takes into that field is guided by God's faithful love.

That's not coincidence — that's providence.

That's God's steadfast love, quietly at work in every detail, guiding Ruth right where she needed to be.

And then, at just the right time, Boaz arrives on the scene.

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" (vv. 4–5)

I've found that God often works like this — through ordinary means, ordinary decisions, everyday choices.

Most of the time, we don't recognize His hand in the moment.

Because the moments where He's most at work don't usually look like miracles. They look like Mondays.

Another shift at work. Another conversation. Another routine errand.

But if you've walked with the Lord long enough, you know — He does some of His best work on the most ordinary days.

We often want God to show His love in dramatic, unmistakable ways. But more often, He leads us through small steps.

Small choices. Small connections. What seem like accidents are often the very details of His covenant love directing our paths.

Maybe you've seen that in your own life — how God's hand quietly guided your steps.

Or maybe right now you can't see it. Maybe you're facing hardship, confusion, loss — and it feels like God's nowhere to be found.

Look closer.

Look at the small things.

And you'll begin to see that His faithful love has been guiding you all along.

And that's exactly what Ruth begins to see next.

As she takes each faithful step, God's love not only guides her — it *protects* her.

As Ruth takes each faithful step, God's love doesn't just *guide* her — it also *guards* her.

That's the second way we see God's faithful love at work here.

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE GUARDS OUR PATHS

I see that in how Boaz takes it upon himself to protect Ruth.

Boaz steps into the story as more than just a kind man; he becomes the instrument of God's faithful love watching over her.

Look with me at verses 8–9:

[Ruth 2:8–9 \(ESV\)](#)

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.”

Think about the danger two widows would have faced in ancient Israel.

In a deeply patriarchal society, without a husband or family name, they were left vulnerable — to poverty, to abuse, even to assault. Many widows were mistreated or ignored.

Now, the Old Testament Law did provide a way for the poor to survive.

Landowners were commanded to leave the edges of their fields unharvested, so that the poor and the widows could glean what was left behind. But we know

from history that gleaning could be dangerous. Women were often harassed, even attacked, while trying to gather food.

But Boaz steps in and takes Ruth under his wing. He guards her, watches over her, and protects her.

Do you see it? He says to her, *stay in my field where it's safe*. Keep close to my young women. Follow after them. *I've told the men not to touch you, not to harm you*.

And behind Boaz's kindness, we are meant to see the faithful love of God — not just guiding Ruth's steps but **guarding her path**.

I see that especially in verse 12:

[Ruth 2:12](#) (ESV)

“The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

What a beautiful picture that is.

Boaz recognizes that Ruth hasn't just come to him for help — she's come to take refuge under the wings of God.

I love how John Piper describes it — he says God is like a great eagle, spreading His wings over His people, and Ruth is like a small, threatened eaglet finding safety beneath His care.

That's what's happening in this moment.

Ruth came looking for grain, but what she found was refuge.

God's faithful love was protecting her — not just from danger, but from despair. And through Boaz, God spreads His wings over Ruth, showing her that she is seen, valued, and safe.

That's how God's faithful love works in our lives too, isn't it?

It's the same image we see in the Psalms:

[Psalm 57:1](#) (ESV)

***Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
till the storms of destruction pass by.***

Like Ruth, we take refuge under the shadow of God's wings.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. The name of the Lord is, a strong tower, the righteous run into it and they are saved.

Think of [Psalm 23](#) — “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

God never promises that we won't walk through dark valleys, but He does promise to walk *with us* through them. He promises His protection in the valley.

And I'm struck by how Ruth responds to Boaz. Look at verses 10:

[Ruth 2:10](#) (ESV)

Then she fell on her face, bowing 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?”

I love that, because if this were today, someone might say, “Well, it's about time someone took notice of me! You really should have more people out here protecting workers like me.”

But Ruth has no sense of entitlement. She recognizes that Boaz owes her nothing. What he is showing her is pure grace — undeserved favour, unmerited kindness.

She bows low in humility: “*Why have I found favour in your eyes?*”

It's a question every believer should ask when we think of how God has treated us.

Who am I, Lord, that You would take notice of me? That You would love me? That You would show me grace?

That's what humble adoration looks like.

Proud people don't recognize grace. Proud people feel entitled, as if they deserve God's kindness.

But humility opens our eyes to see what pride blinds us to — the goodness of God.

It's why Scripture repeats this truth again and again:

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

The proud don't know how to receive grace.

God's faithful love guides us.

God's faithful love guards our paths.

And now, we see next — **God's faithful love provides abundantly.**

GOD'S FAITHFUL LOVE PROVIDES ABUNDANTLY

God's faithful love provides — and He provides abundantly.

Look with me at verses 14–17:

[Ruth 2:14–17](#) (ESV)

And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.” So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

Picture what's happening here.

Boaz invites Ruth — a poor, foreign widow — to come and sit at his table. She's not one of the servants. She's not an Israelite. She's an outsider. And yet Boaz says, *"Come, eat with us."*

She eats until she's satisfied. And not only that — she has food left over to take home.

This may have been the first real meal she'd had in weeks.

But Boaz doesn't stop there.

He tells his workers, *"Let her glean not just from the edges, but from among the sheaves — from the best parts of the field. And while you're at it, pull out some extra bundles and leave them for her."*

And the text says Ruth gathered about an ephah of barley — somewhere around 40 to 50 pounds of grain! Enough food for her and Naomi to eat for weeks.

It's almost a humorous picture — this little woman staggering home with an overflowing sack of grain.

That's the point — God's faithful love provides abundantly.

He doesn't just give what's *necessary* — He gives what's *more than enough*.

That's the covenant love of our God — His *hesed* — His steadfast, faithful, overflowing love.

A love that doesn't just meet our needs but satisfies the deepest longings of our hearts.

It's a love that points us to the greater Redeemer — Jesus Christ.

He said,

John 6:35

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst."

And again,

“If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” ([John 7:37](#))

Jesus is saying, *“I am what your soul is craving.”*

He alone can fill the emptiness within.

But we so often settle for substitutes — things that promise to satisfy but never last.

We try to fill our hearts with possessions, pleasure, entertainment, success — and for a moment they seem to work. But soon enough, we find ourselves empty again.

C.S. Lewis once said, “We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us.”

That’s the truth — we’re far too easily pleased.

But Jesus says, *“Come to Me.”*

Come to the table of grace. Come hungry. Come thirsty.

And I will satisfy you — not just with what you need to survive, but with what you need to truly live.

That’s what Ruth experiences here.

She came to glean scraps, but she left with abundance.

She came empty, and she left full.

And when we come to Christ — empty, hungry, and undeserving — He meets us the same way: with grace upon grace, blessing upon blessing.

Maybe that’s you this morning.

Maybe you’ve been trying to fill the emptiness inside with everything the world offers.

Maybe you’ve been chasing satisfaction in all the wrong places.

But could it be that God has brought you to this moment — this place — to remind you that His faithful love still provides, still satisfies, still fills the empty places of your soul?

He is still saying, *“Come. Eat. Be satisfied in Me.”*

God’s faithful love provides abundantly.

And through His provision, He’s leading us to something even greater — to redemption itself.

“See, this is where the story turns again. Ruth comes home carrying this sack of grain, and Naomi — the woman who once called herself bitter — begins to see a glimmer of hope. For the first time in a long time, she begins to recognize the hand of God again. And that brings us to this final truth:

GOD’S FAITHFUL LOVE REDEEMS OUR STORY

That’s the last thing I want us to see this morning:

God’s faithful love redeems our story.

[Ruth 2:18–20](#) (ESV)

And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man 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.” And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.”

Do you notice how the whole scene shifts when Naomi hears that name — *Boaz*? It’s as if a light turns on inside her. The bitterness begins to break. Hope begins to flicker again.

Suddenly Naomi realizes, *“Wait a minute... this man is one of our redeemers!”*

And in that moment, she begins to see what she couldn’t see before — that God has been working this out the whole time.

The move to Moab, the loss of her husband and sons, the return to Bethlehem, their arrival just as the harvest begins, Ruth wandering into a particular field — it’s all been part of God’s providence.

What seemed random was never random.

What felt hopeless was never hopeless.

God’s faithful love was quietly weaving redemption through every detail.

Naomi says, *“Blessed be the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.”*

That word *kindness* is our word *ḥesed* again — God’s steadfast, covenant love.

She’s realizing that even when she felt forgotten, God’s *ḥesed* had never left her.

He had been working all along to redeem her story.

Have you ever had one of those moments?

A moment when you look back on a trial — a painful season — and realize, *“Oh, that’s what You were doing, Lord.”*

In the middle of it, you couldn’t see anything but loss or confusion. But later, you realize His hand was there all along — guiding, providing, redeeming.

That’s what’s happening for Naomi here.

Boaz may be the human redeemer, but God is the One doing the redeeming through him.

And as we look closer, we see how Boaz’s redemption of Ruth points us forward to the greater Redeemer — Jesus Christ.

Think about the parallels:

- Ruth was a stranger, a foreigner, with no claim to Boaz's kindness. Yet Boaz in verse 8 calls her "my daughter." Isn't that what God does through Christ? He takes those who were once far off — strangers, even enemies — and calls us sons and daughters.
- Boaz invites Ruth to his table to share a meal. That's not something you did with just anyone — it was a gesture of intimacy and belonging. And through Jesus, God does the same for us. He gives us a seat at His table. He says, "Come, dine with Me." We who had no right to draw near are now welcomed into fellowship with Him.
- And Naomi says, "The Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead." That's what redemption does. It brings life where there was once death.

[Ephesians 2](#) says, *"You were dead in your trespasses and sins... but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, made us alive together with Christ."*

That's ~~hesed~~.

That's steadfast love.

God's love does not forsake the dead — it raises them to life.

Boaz redeems Ruth's story — but Jesus redeems ours.

At the cross, He paid a debt we could never pay.

He bore our sin, our shame, our judgment — and through His death and resurrection, He restores our relationship with God.

He takes our brokenness and makes it whole. He takes our emptiness and fills it with grace.

That is the faithful love of God — a love that redeems us forever.

Maybe today you need to be reminded of that.

Maybe you've been walking through your own chapter one — a season that feels bitter, barren, or confusing.

But hear this: God's faithful love is quietly at work in your story too.
You may not see it yet, but He is writing redemption into every line of your life.

Two quick thoughts before we close.

First — **trust Him in the unseen.**

Maybe right now you're in the middle of your own chapter one. You can't see what God is doing. It feels dark, maybe even hopeless.

But the same faithful love that redeemed Naomi's story is quietly redeeming yours.

You may not see it today, but one day you'll look back and say, "*The Lord's kindness never left me.*" One day, like Naomi, you'll look back and say, "*The Lord's kindness has not forsaken me.*"

Keep trusting His heart when you can't trace His hand.

Second — **be the visible expression of His faithful love.**

Boaz becomes the hands of God's *hesed*.

God's invisible grace shows up through his tangible kindness.

And that's what God calls us to do — to show faithful love to others, to be the reason someone else experiences hope again.

When you extend grace, when you act generously, when you walk faithfully with someone in their pain — you become part of how God's love shows up in their story.

Maybe this week, God wants His *hesed* to flow through you — to your neighbour, your coworker, your spouse, your child, someone who feels forgotten.

And through you, they might see that God has not forgotten them after all.

So, as we close — look at where we've come from.

Naomi and Ruth began this journey empty, bitter, broken, convinced that God had turned away.

But in the ordinary fields of Bethlehem, God's faithful love was quietly at work — guiding, guarding, providing, and redeeming.

And the same God is still at work today.
His love is quietly at work in the details of life.

Because *His hesed* — *His steadfast, faithful love* — *never lets go*.

So, trust Him.

Rest in Him.

And let His faithful love show up through you this week.