

Good Evening! It is great to be able to be with you on a Wednesday night and teach once again. I also want to welcome those that are watching via Mt. Pleasant Anywhere. We are looking forward to when the majority of you that are watching will be here in person soon.

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading and studying the book of Ruth and just seeing the richness of God's Word and God's sovereignty as we look at a portion of Ruth's, Naomi's, and Boaz's life. So, if you will please turn in your Bibles to the book of Ruth. For tonight we will begin in verse 19 of Chapter 1 and will go through the whole 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter. Tonight, we will see the hopeless go to being hopeful or full of hope!

As you are turning, we will have a very quick review. We left off where Naomi had decided to leave Moab and come back to Bethlehem after the deaths of her husband, Elimelech and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Mahlon and Chilion were married to Orpah and Ruth. Naomi told Orpah and Ruth to go back to their families, but Ruth refused to go. Remember those famous words Ruth said to Naomi?

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and be buried."

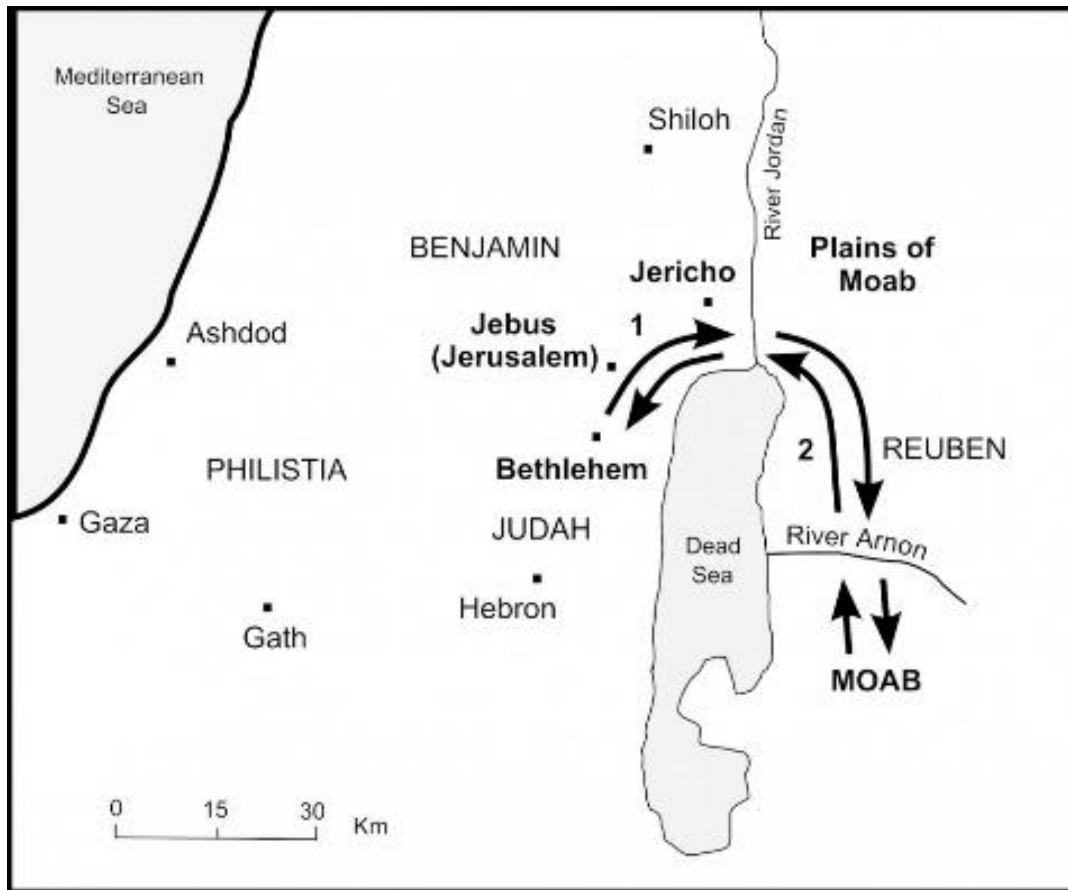
Wow! What devotion! What love Ruth had for Naomi! So, Naomi, seeing Ruth's determination, she relented, and they headed to Bethlehem and that is where we begin this evening.

Let's read verses 19 to 22 of Chapter 1.

***Ruth 1:19-22***

***<sup>19</sup> So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" <sup>20</sup> She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" <sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.***

First, I want to show you the trek or path that they would have taken to get to Moab in the first place and the path that they took to get back to Bethlehem. Which of course would be the same path. Look at this map.



As you look at the arrows you will see the direction that they would have used going to Moab and the direction Naomi and Ruth would have gone to return to Bethlehem. They would have headed out north each time. Though this was rough terrain, it was much better and safer than if they had tried to go south around the Dead Sea. So, each time they would have traveled about 50 miles. This would have taken Naomi and Ruth anywhere from 7 to 10 days to complete this journey.

They arrive in Bethlehem and what did it say about how they were greeted. The city was stirred! The news was going around. Naomi is back in town. What did the women say when they saw her? Is this Naomi?

One, I would say a lot of people were excited to see her. But also, there was some question, “Is this really Naomi?” At least 10 years had gone by and think of the grief she has been going through, all the stress that had entered her life. Her husband died, her two sons died, and she has her two daughter in-laws to look after right now. She has decided to go back to Bethlehem, and she didn’t know what to expect when she returned.

But not only had she changed physically; we see the spiritual toll all this had on her. Because when the women said, “Is this Naomi?” What did Naomi say? Look at verses 20 and 21.

***Ruth 1:20-21***

***<sup>20</sup> She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. <sup>21</sup> I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”***

Naomi in the Hebrew means, “my delight, or pleasant”, which could be indication of Naomi’s personality. But now, Naomi, says don’t call me Naomi. Call me “Mara”, which means “bitterness”. A sign of where she is

emotionally. Here was this possibly extremely outgoing and bubbly person before they left Bethlehem but now here comes this downtrodden, beaten woman. Is this Naomi?

There are times in our lives where we may question God. There are times where we may blame God for our circumstances. What we must realize even in the pain and grief that we may be under that God is always working. When we are going through life's circumstances, do we always see the whole picture? So, it is with God also. Sometimes we just see the next step.

Naomi could not see what God was doing in what she was all going through physically and emotionally. But as we go through this book, we will see God's sovereignty and how he works circumstances in our lives that are best for us and for his glory even in the worst of times.

Let's look again at the time of when they arrived in Bethlehem and we begin to see the timing that God has laid out. We see in verse 22 of Chapter 1 that they arrive at the beginning of the Barley harvest so let's begin to read there and we will read through verse 7 of Chapter 2.

### ***Ruth 1:22***

***<sup>22</sup> So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.***

### ***Ruth 2:1-7***

***<sup>1</sup>Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. <sup>2</sup> 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." <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." <sup>5</sup> Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" <sup>6</sup> And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." <sup>7</sup> She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So, she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."***

Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of the Barley Harvest is shortly right after Passover which would be in the month of Nisan in the Jewish Calendar. But where did they return to. We won't go there but in Chapter 4 we do see that Elimelech and Ruth had property. Naomi and Ruth came back with nothing and if the property was not taken care of, which is probably the case, they came back to a place that was in disarray.

What are they going to do to provide for themselves? We saw that in verse 2. But first I want to make a point about verse 1. Verse 1 is only a statement of information. Naomi has not shared with Ruth of any relatives that she has in Bethlehem yet. The writer of Ruth is setting the stage for what happens next.

Back to verse 2. We see in verse 2 that Ruth is again referred to as the Moabite, reminding once again that Ruth had come from a nation that served pagan gods. But she is now going after the one true God Jehovah seeking to live for him. What we also see by her request that Naomi and Ruth are destitute. Ruth asks Naomi permission to go to the fields once again a sign of respect and honor towards Naomi. Naomi says, "Go my daughter."

So, what is this gleaning? What is actually happening here and what is the process?

Turn in your bibles to Leviticus 19 and we will look at verses 9 and 10. The Law has been given to Moses and it is being shared to the nation of Israel. There was a command within the law that as those that owned land and were able to reap from the crops that they owned there was also a way to provide for the poor.

***Leviticus 19:9-10***

***<sup>9</sup> When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. <sup>10</sup> And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.***

The workers or reapers would harvest the wheat by taking a sickle, that at that time was made with flint material. They would cut them and then bound the wheat into sheaves. What they were not able to bind together or what would fall to the ground was left for the poor to come behind and glean for themselves.

Ruth heads out to the fields to glean what she can from the leftovers if you will from what is being gleaned by the reapers. Did you catch something here how it is stated that she ended up in the field owned by Boaz? We would say it this way! ***Well, it just so happened that, or just by chance, she ended up in Boaz's field!*** May I ask you question? If you are a true follower of Jesus Christ and you are truly seeking him in your life. Does anything that happens in your life, "Is it just by chance?" "Well, it just so happened!"

That is not how God works. Listen to these portions of Scripture:

***Isaiah 41:10***

***Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.***

***Isaiah 46:9-10***

***Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.***

Even when we may not think we see God working. He is working. God is not surprised by our circumstances. You've heard it before, and I will say it again. Do you think God is up in heaven and something happens to us or in the world and he says, "Whoa! I didn't see that coming!"

Philippians 2:13 says "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

The writer I believe is trying to show us that there was no human intervention here. It is once again God's sovereignty in the affairs of man to bring his will to pass. How many fields did Ruth pass? What did she see along the way that helped her to get the field God wanted her to be at that day? Whatever it was it was God's hand helping her move along.

Look at what happens next. In verse 4, ***And Behold***, Boaz just "***so happens***" to drop by the field that day to check on the progress of the work. Would Boaz come to the field every day? If he had a good foreman, one he trusted, probably not. And Ruth catches the eye of Boaz. He asks, what we could say is his foreman. The man in charge of those working for him. Whose young woman is this?

He answers the young Moabite woman. There again that distinction is made, the young Moabite woman who came with Naomi. She came early, asked to glean in the field. Did you see in verse 7 though where it says she said, "Please!" By law she actually had the right to just come into the field and start gleaning. But she asked! Ruth came at early morning and has been working since.

What we continue to see in Ruth is the character of a changed woman. Yes. She followed Naomi back to Bethlehem because of her love for Naomi but what we are seeing is more so her love for God and her love and desire to follow after God. Hmmm! Kind of sound familiar to me!



I hope you are praying and spending the time with the Lord through this Prayer Emphasis!

Now we begin to see this interaction between Boaz and Ruth. Let's look at verse 8 to 16.

#### **Ruth 2:8-16**

***<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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." <sup>10</sup> 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?" <sup>11</sup> But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. <sup>12</sup> 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!" <sup>13</sup> Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants." <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. <sup>16</sup> And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."***

This had to be an emotional encounter for Ruth. Remember what she has been going through also. Her husband has died. She is coming to an unknown place. Naomi is just struggling with all that has gone on and is just hopeless and that must weigh on Ruth also. Then here is this tremendous act of kindness she receives from Boaz. You see where he calls her, daughter. This is a term of endearment, a term of affection!

Ruth asks why are you doing this for me? Remember back when Boaz first noticed Ruth in the field? Her beauty caught his eye. But when his foreman told him who it was, we now see that it goes much more beyond the beauty. Ahhh! Yes. So, this is Ruth!

In verse 11, Boaz answers her question. You know the old saying. Your reputation precedes you! Now, that could be good or bad! But in this situation, it is good! I heard all that you have done Ruth. You are kind to your mother-in-law. You had lost and left everything to come here! I believe I am beginning to see why you did Ruth!

Look at verse 12 again,

### ***Ruth 2:12***

***<sup>12</sup> 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!***

Ruth has given her life to the Lord! She is serving the one true God! But do you see the picture here!

Did Ruth deserve Boaz's kindness? Did she deserve all that he is doing for her? Would you say that Boaz is going above and beyond what is required of him? Look at what Boaz did!

1. Boaz set a hedge of protection around her. Telling her stay in his field and told his men to make sure they don't touch her and make sure no one else does either.
2. She could drink from the vessels of water that was prepared for Boaz's workers.
3. Boaz allowed her to eat with his workers and not only that made sure she had enough to where she was able to have leftovers. Boaz brought her in with his workers and his maidservants.
4. Boaz not only let her keep gleaning from the sheaves that were already bundled and not only that, take some out and give to her.

Isn't that a picture of what God has done for us? Did God not go above and beyond for us? Romans 5:8, While we were yet sinners! While we were yet what? While we were yet what? What? Sinners!!!!

I'm so glad you said that! Do you know how hard it is to get people to say that these days? We will say things like, I made a mistake, I messed up, I'm not perfect! You're right because you are a sinner! As sinners we need to repent of your sin and put your complete trust in Jesus Christ as Lord Savior, as Redeemer! We will get to it later in the study but what is Boaz called. The Kinsman Redeemer.

In what we just saw we begin to see this hopelessness turn to great Hope and we see it even more as Ruth heads back home to Naomi. Let's read verses 17 to 23.

### ***Ruth 2:17-23***

***<sup>17</sup> So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> 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." <sup>21</sup> And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" <sup>22</sup> And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted." <sup>23</sup> So she***

*kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.*

We see again, Ruth and her character. Because she could of just tied up her wheat into a sheave. Get it carried back to the house and she and Naomi could have beat out the grain. But Ruth stays and beats it out the grain, which would have been with a stick called a flail. She would beat it out and then with a winnowing fork lift it in the air so the chaff would blow away and the grain would fall and be gathered.

It reminded me again of the time we spent in Ethiopia and we would watch the women beat out the grain from what was called “Teft” and then they would make what was called Injera as you look at this picture and that was our eating utensil.



It says she accumulated an Ephah. I looked that up and an Ephah is about a  $\frac{3}{5}$ <sup>th</sup> of a bushel. I thought how much is that? What was the amount going to be able to provide for Ruth and Naomi? So, I took the figures from Doctor Google and started some figuring. Now, I will say this is not precise, but I would say it is very close. There are about 60 lbs. of grain in a bushel. So, Ruth was able to get  $\frac{3}{5}$  of a bushel. So, you do the math. That is about 36 lbs. I would say that Ruth and Naomi sold some of the wheat so they could get other items. But let's say they were going to use it all.

I brought a little show and tell!

- 1. 1 lb. of Barley berries – 5 1/2 Cups of flour*
- 2. It took 4 cups to make this loaf of bread. The barley flour would be mixed with wheat flour for bread. So that it wouldn't be dry.*
- 3. The barley berries could be used for soups, they could roast it to eat just as they had done that day.*

Sounds like Ruth did pretty good that day!

But Ruth returns to Naomi with the leftover food she did not eat at mealtime and the Ephah of barley. What do you think was Naomi's reaction? Surprise, thankful, hope? What we are going to see is this change begin in Naomi because she asks Ruth, "Where did you glean?"

Ruth tells her in the field of man named Boaz!

Boaz? Boaz? He is a close relative; he is one of our redeemers! May the Lord bless him for not forsaking the living and the dead! When Boaz realized that this was Ruth, who came with Naomi that this was family! He was stepping in as a close relative to Elimelech who had died (The Dead) and he is stepping in to protect and provide for Ruth and Naomi (The Living)!

Ruth tells Naomi and he told me to return. That I could stay close to his men and his women! Ruth said, "It is good!" Ruth was going to work several more months in the fields!

Could Naomi begin to see what God was doing all along? Remember when Naomi came into Bethlehem. Is this Naomi? Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara! For the Lord has dealt bitterly with me. I left full and come back with nothing! With Ruth standing right beside her! How do you think that made Ruth feel!

Could it be she is now saying, "Forgive me Lord!" I see what you are doing!"

Naomi hopeless, at least in her mind! Now to Hopeful!

Without Jesus we are all hopeless! But just as Boaz, at the right time, stepped into the lives of Ruth and Naomi. Jesus Christ stepped into this world to save us, as Galatians 4:4 says:

***Galatians 4:4***

***But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.***

We as Gentiles, grafted in, just as Ruth was grafted in! But as Jesus stepped down to us! We must step towards him in repentance and say, I see God! I see what you did and are doing!