



## Silverdale Baptist

RUTH: BEAUTY FROM ASHES ~ LIVING UNDER THE FAVOR OF GOD  
RUTH 2:12-23 ~ 06/17-18/2023

### Big Idea

As believers, we live under the favor of God.

### Getting Started

#### **How would you explain *favor*?**

We all would like to have favor with powerful or influential people. Yet, as Christians, we have *favor* with the King of Kings and the creator of the universe.

What is it like living under the favor of God? Let's look at Ruth 2:12-23 and see what we can learn.

### Learn

**Leader:** *In Pastor Tony's message from Ruth 2 this week, Boaz represents Jesus Christ. Ruth represents us.*

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ RUTH 2:12-23

#### **What is the main idea of this paragraph?**

**Leader:** Pastor Tony pointed out the Moabites are descendants of an incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter. The story is found in Genesis 19:30-38. If your group is unfamiliar with the story, it might be helpful for you to ask a volunteer to read the passage.

Now that we have established the passage's context let's *glean* what we can learn about living under the favor of God.

### 1. We experience God's kindness.

**According to verse 14, how did Boaz treat Ruth, and why is it so strange?**

**How does Boaz's kindness toward Ruth reflect God's kindness toward us?**

### 2. We experience God's provision.

**According to verses 15-17, how did Boaz provide for Ruth?**

**Why does Boaz's provision seem so excessive?**

### 3. We become a blessing to others.

**How is the principle of *being blessed to be a blessing* illustrated in verses 18-20?**

### 4. We must stay close to our redeemer.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LEVITICUS 25:25.

**What is a kinsman redeemer?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 PETER 1:17-19.

**How is Jesus both our kinsman and our redeemer?**

**From what we have read in Ruth 2, why is it important to stay close to our redeemer?**

**In this passage, how does Boaz illustrate the favor of God we find in Jesus?**

**In what ways is Ruth like us?**

There is a tendency in most of us to think more highly of ourselves than we should. We often think we can make it on our own; we can figure it out, we can get through this trouble on our own. Ruth represents us in our brokenness. She is broke and destitute in a harsh world. In this part of the story, we find her asking if she could gather up the scraps of grain left by the servants. But, the blessings Boaz gave Ruth represent how God treats us when we cry out to

Him. God gives us so much more than scraps. He gives us more than we could ever imagine, let alone ask for. When we cry out for help, God gives us His Son and fills us with His Holy Spirit.

As a Christian, you are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and living under the favor of God!

## Apply

**How have you experienced the kindness and provision of God?**

**How can you take the tragedies of your life and use the experience to bless others?**

## Pray

Father, thank You for giving us the favor we never deserved. Thank You for Your kindness and Your provision. Father, would You allow us to comfort others with the comfort with which we have been comforted? In the name of Jesus, amen.

## Dig Deeper

(5) *Boaz saw to it that she was satisfied (Ruth 2:14, 18)*. All of this happened to Ruth because of her faith in the God of Israel. Boaz fully knew Ruth's story, for it didn't take long for news to travel in a little town like Bethlehem. He knew that Ruth had abandoned her home and her gods and had put her faith in Jehovah. She had taken refuge "under His wings." That image sometimes refers to the hen protecting her chicks (Ps. 91:4; Matt. 23:37), but it can also refer to the wings of the cherubim in the holy of holies (Pss. 36:7; 61:4). Ruth was no longer a foreigner and a stranger. She was not only accepted by the God of Israel, but she was also dwelling in the very holy of holies with Him! (See Eph. 2:11–22.)

The word translated "answered" in Ruth 2:11 is literally "raised his voice." Boaz was getting excited! He wanted everybody to hear what he thought about Ruth, and he wasn't ashamed to be identified with her. She had trusted Jehovah, and she had proved her faith by cleaving to her mother-in-law and becoming a part of the people of Israel in Bethlehem. The phrase "spoken friendly" in verse 13 means "spoken to the heart." The Word of God comes from the heart of God (Ps. 33:11) to the hearts of His people (Matt. 23:18–23) and gives encouragement and hope (Rom. 15:4). If you listen to the voices of the world, you will be discouraged; but if you listen to the voice of God from His Word, your heart will be encouraged.

The Word of God and the Son of God can fully satisfy the heart of the believer. When we seek for satisfaction anywhere else, we will find ourselves disobedient and dissatisfied. The lost world labors for that which doesn't satisfy (Isa. 55:2), but the believer has full satisfaction because of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Pss. 36:7–9; 63:5; 65:4; 103:5; 107:9). As the hymn writer put it:

Well of water ever springing,  
Bread of life so rich and free,  
Untold wealth that never faileth,  
My Redeemer is to me.  
Hallelujah! I have found Him  
Whom my soul so long has craved!  
Jesus satisfies my longings,  
Through His blood I now am saved. (Clara T Williams)

We must live by faith, and we must depend on God's grace. But there is a third condition we must meet.

### 3. We must live in hope (Ruth 2:17–23)

All day long, Ruth labored with a happy and hopeful heart. She didn't have to worry about the men harassing her or the other workers hindering her. She had food when she was hungry, drink when she was thirsty, and a place of rest when she became weary. The grain she gleaned amounted to about half a bushel, enough food for the two women for nearly a week. She also had some food left over from her lunch (v. 18). Ruth was not only a diligent worker, but she was also careful not to waste anything God had given her.

How will Naomi respond to Ruth's experiences? The last time we met Naomi, she was sharing her bitterness with the women of Bethlehem and blaming God for her sorrow and poverty. When Ruth had asked permission to go to the fields to glean, all Naomi said to her was "Go, my daughter" (v. 2). She gave her daughter-in-law no word of encouragement, not even the promise of her prayers.

But now we hear a new word from Naomi's lips—"Blessed!" (vv. 19–20) She not only blessed Ruth's benefactor, but she also blessed the Lord! We have moved from bitterness to blessedness. When Naomi saw the grain, she blessed the man who allowed Ruth to work in his field; and when she heard that the man was Boaz, Naomi blessed the Lord. What a change has taken place in the heart of this grieving widow! This change came about because of the new hope she had in her heart, and the one who gave her that new hope was Boaz.

Naomi had hope because of *who Boaz was*—a near kinsman who was wealthy and influential. As we shall see, a near kinsman could rescue relatives from poverty and give them a new beginning (Lev. 25:25–34). But she also had hope because of *what Boaz did*: He showed kindness to Ruth and took a personal interest in her situation. When Ruth shared with Naomi *what Boaz had said*, Naomi's hope grew even stronger because the words of Boaz revealed his love for Ruth and his desire to make her happy. That Boaz insisted on Ruth staying close to his servants and in his field was proof to Naomi that her husband's relative was making plans that included her and her daughter-in-law.

Should not we who believe in Jesus Christ rejoice in hope? When you consider who He is, what He has done for us, and what He says to us in His Word, there is no reason for us to feel hopeless. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He has died for us, and now He intercedes for us in heaven. In His Word, He has given us "exceeding great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4, KJV) that can never fail. No matter how you may feel today, no matter how difficult your circumstances may be, you can rejoice in hope if you will focus your faith on Jesus Christ.

The American agnostic lecturer Robert G. Ingersoll called hope "the only universal liar who never loses his reputation for veracity." But the late Norman Cousins, former editor of *The Saturday Review*, who miraculously survived an almost incurable illness and a severe heart attack, unequivocally disagrees with Ingersoll. "The human body experiences a powerful gravitational pull in the direction of hope," Cousins wrote. "That's why the patient's hopes are the physician's secret weapon. They are the hidden ingredients in any prescription." In his work with patients at the UCLA School of Medicine, Cousins proved the power of hope to change people's lives.

For the Christian believer, hope is not a shallow "hope-so feeling" generated by optimistic fantasies. Hope is an inner sense of joyful assurance and confidence as we trust God's promises and face the future with His help. This hope is God's gift to His children through the Holy Spirit, who reminds us of God's promises found in His Word (Rom. 15:13).

Ruth's half bushel of grain was the "firstfruits" of all that Boaz would do in the future, just as the Holy Spirit within us is the "firstfruits" of all that God has promised us (8:23). Although Ruth's supply of grain would be gone in a week, the witness of the Spirit within will remain until our hopes are all fulfilled when we see Jesus Christ.

The exciting new hope that now possessed the two widows was centered in a person, Boaz, just as our hope is centered in the Son of God. In fact, Jesus Christ *is* our hope (1 Tim. 1:1; 1 Thes. 1:3; Col. 1:27). Through faith in Christ, we have been born again into "a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3); and because it is a *living* hope, it grows stronger each day and produces fruit. The hopes that the world clings to are dead hopes, but ours is a living hope because it is rooted in the living Christ.

Naomi then explained to Ruth the law of "the kinsman redeemer" (Lev. 25:47–55). It was not just the kindness and love of Boaz for Ruth that gave Naomi confidence, for those wonderful feelings could change overnight. It was the principle of redemption that God had written in His Word that gave Naomi the assurance that Boaz would rescue them. As a near relative, Boaz could redeem the family property that Elimelech had mortgaged when he took his family to Moab. Naomi wasn't wealthy enough to redeem it, but Boaz could buy it back and keep it in the family.

However, something else was involved: The wife of the deceased went with the property. Therefore, the kinsman redeemer had to marry her and bring up children bearing the name of the deceased. They would then inherit the property, and the family name and family possessions would continue to be theirs. This is known as "levirate marriage" (see Deut. 25:5–10). The word *levir* is Latin for "a husband's brother." The author of the Book of Ruth doesn't explain how Ruth's husband Mahlon (4:10) was connected with his father's property so that Ruth had to be included in the purchase. When and why the Jewish people connected the law of the kinsman redeemer with the law of levirate marriage is not made clear to us, but that was the custom in Ruth's time.

Naomi cautioned Ruth to obey the commands of Boaz and stay close to his servants as she gleaned in the field. The barley harvest occurred during March and April, and the wheat harvest during June and July. Meanwhile, Ruth kept busy and gathered food sufficient for herself and her mother-in-law. But now she was laboring motivated by a wonderful hope: She was joyfully anticipating the day of redemption! (See Rom. 8:23 and Eph. 4:30.)

It is encouraging to see the changes that have taken place in Naomi because of what Ruth did. God used Ruth to turn Naomi's bitterness into gratitude, her unbelief into faith, and her despair into hope. One person, trusting the Lord and obeying His will, can change a situation from defeat to victory.

Ruth's faith in God's Word led her to the field of Boaz. The love of Boaz for Ruth compelled him to pour out his grace upon her and meet her every need. (Grace is love that pays the price to help the undeserving one.) Ruth's experience of grace gave her new hope as she anticipated what her kinsman redeemer would do.

"And now abide faith, hope, love" (1 Cor. 13:13), and they still abide with us as we abide in Jesus Christ and trust in Him.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*Be Committed\*](#), "Be" Commentary Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), 31–38.