

- After a long time away from home, Naomi returns to Bethlehem, and not with the same people that she left with – her husband and two sons have died while in Moab ... Mahlon's widow, Ruth, insisted on coming back with Naomi ... So, not only are people surprised to see Naomi, they are surprised to see Naomi's state of affairs, as well as the foreigner who has come with her ... Imagine the awkward tension experienced by the women and those gathering around ... Past memories, fear of the future, emptiness of the present overwhelms them ... Naomi and Ruth have come back to Bethlehem for refuge, but the refuge of home isn't what it once was
  - Legally, Naomi doesn't own anything ... The house and land rightly belong to the person who bought them from Elimelech ... She may possess a title but someone else possesses ownership ... It seems the women are able to stay at Naomi's old house, but she cannot use the land for income ... This is why Ruth decides to gather grain in someone else's field ... But where does she go ... She's a foreigner from a place that has a contentious relationship with Israel ... Both women are in need of extravagant favor – favor that neither of them could produce or earn by their own doing ... This favor is what Ruth begins to experience right away
- Ruth leaves the house and enters a field to gather grain ... After working a hard day, she's confronted by the owner who immediately begins to bestow favor upon Ruth ... His favor centers around the words he prays over her in [v12](#) ... [Reward](#) – *salam* (sha-lam), *repay* – may what you gave be returned to you ... [Reward](#) – *maskoret* (mass-cor-eth), [reward from faithfulness](#) – may you receive what's been promised
  - Both rewards stem from God's grace ... Not based on our merit ... It's true God blesses our obedience, but are we blessed because of *what we give* or because of *how we give* ... [2Co9:7](#) – isn't God concerned with the motivation in giving than the gift itself ... What's our purpose: the benefit of self or benefit of others ... And so, Jesus says [Mt5:46-6:1](#) (neg) ... [Lk6:35-36](#) (pos) ... Paul in [Co3:23-24 \(17\)](#)
  - The actions of Ruth are stated in [v11](#) – she's left everything behind for the benefit of Naomi, not her own ([1:16](#)) ... She's given no guarantee of finding a husband or having children or even having a hopeful future ... Ruth has no foreknowledge of what awaits her in Bethlehem ... But she's committed to Naomi's welfare ... And yet, her commitment to Naomi is secondary to her primary belief in Yahweh faithfulness and refuge
  - Ruth's faith in Yahweh isn't self-serving ... Her faith is a total dependence on Him ... Her faith is akin to the faith of Abraham – he left everything and followed the Lord ... He believed the Lord to be who He says He is and to do what He says He will ... [Ge15:1](#) – I will protect you; in Me your reward will be great ... [Hb11:6](#)
- And what is the greater reward of putting our faith in God – knowing and experiencing Him in the fullness of who He is ... He is the fully sufficient one that you and I need in life ... Not as an option among other options ... But as our greatest necessity in life ... The refuge that He provides is what we are all seeking after in life ... Some seek after it through material gain ... Some seek after it through power or performance ... Some through alcohol or drugs or sex or relationships or popularity ... The type of refuge that we need cannot be sufficiently secured by our own ability ... The refuge we need can only be provided by the One who is Himself refuge ... Again, this stems from His grace ([13](#))
  - Notice how the Lord uses Boaz to provide the blessing he prays over Ruth ... She can glean in his fields as much as she wants ... When fields were harvested, crops had to be left around the border of your field; as crops were collected, whatever was dropped from a bundle had to be left on the ground; if an entire bundle was accidentally left in the field, it had to be left in the field ... The crop around the border, any that dropped from bundles, and any bundles left in the field all belonged to the poor, widow, orphan, sojourner ... Each was able to go into that field and pick up (glean) as much as they needed ... In this, Yahweh cared for them

- Boaz displays God's refuge in instructing the young men to treat Ruth with respect and in the characteristic of God, not savagely ... At mealtime, Boaz invites Ruth to sit at his table, and to eat the food he's enjoying ... He sends her home with 26-quarts of barley – enough food for 10-days; more than a hired worker earns
- Notice how the providence of the Lord has already been at work in providing refuge for Ruth and Naomi – [2:3 \(Pr16:9,33\)](#) ... As Naomi later informs Ruth, Boaz is a man who can legally redeem (to purchase back) the land Elimelech sold before leaving Bethlehem ... Boaz is also a man who is able to redeem the life and future of both Ruth and Naomi
- In [v20](#), Naomi blesses Boaz ... Boaz has not pushed aside Ruth, but has intentionally put blessing upon her ... In doing so, Boaz has honored Naomi, and honored both Elimelech and Mahlon ... "He" can also refer to Yahweh, in that, through the faithful kindness of Boaz, God has demonstrated His faithful kindness and His ability to fulfill what He has promised ... He Himself causes life to rise from death, hope to rise from despair, plenty to rise from famine, faith to rise from doubt
- The Lord is your refuge ... His refuge is given because of His grace ... God does not treat us how we deserve to be treated ... Rather, He treats us how He desires and determines to treat us ... His grace is a refuge we cannot live without ... The grace of God is power for our weakness ... Grace is peace for our anxiety ... Grace is mercy for our sin ... Grace is healing for our brokenness ... Grace is His love for our unworthiness ... His grace is a refuge – our hiding place, our security, our defense, our calm ... How well do you know this ... How well do you believe in this