

Ruth 2 “The Providence of God”

Introduction

Remember from last week:

- Elimelech and Naomi left to Moab – bad decision – didn’t work out so well for Abraham either.
- All the the men died.
- Ruth was determined to stay with Naomi, as Naomi was “returning” to Israel to Bethlehem.
- Naomi came back from Moab feeling as if God was against her:

Ruth 1:20-21

20 But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara,

(1) for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

21 **(2) "I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty.**

Why do you call me Naomi,

(3) since the LORD has testified against me,

(4) and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

- But Naomi returns. And she is going to learn (like the Prodigal son), the blessing from God’s hand will also return

2:1 New Character to the story, “Boaz” a relative or “Kinsmen” of Elimelech

Ruth 2:1

1 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

A. There was a relative of Naomi's husband.... of the family of Elimelech

It was not someone from her family line, but from her deceased husband’s line.

Relative:

In the KJV version it says, “Kinsmen” rather than relative which is going to become significant in a few verses.

B. a man of great wealth

I don’t know if there where any really wealthy people in Bethlehem at this time.

Although, it appears that Boaz was doing better than most at the time.

This is the only place this Hebrew phrase is translated this way.

But, in other places in the Old Testament this exact Hebrew translation means, **“mighty man of Valor”**.

For example, when the Angel of the Lord was talking to Gideon.

Judges 6:12

12 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD is with you, **you mighty man of valor!**"

Judges 11:1 Jephthah one of the Judges,

Referring to David as a young man (diffidently not wealthy at the time).

1 Sam 16:18

18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, **a mighty man of valor**, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him."

Also:

1 King 11:28 Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor

2 King 5:1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, ... He was also a mighty man of valor, but a leper.

2 Chronicles 17:17 One of David's mighty men Eliada a mighty man of valor

2 Chronicles 32:21 Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria.

C. His name was Boaz

Once again the passage is asking us to notice the name.

Boaz:

His name means "fleetness or swiftness".

We will discover that he is a man to swiftly work to make this Gentile Bride his.

Note: (In Solomon's temple)

In front of the temple (in which Solomon built) there was an area called, "Solomon Porch". Solomon named one of the 2 front pillars (*made of bronze and 18 cubits high*) after his great grandpa, "Boaz".

1 King 7:21

21 Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Jachin, and **he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz.**

2 Chronicles 3:17

17 Then he set up the pillars before the temple, **one on the right hand and the other on the left**; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and **the name of the one on the left Boaz.**

2:2-3 Ruth goes to glean....just so happens she picked Boaz's field
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Ruth 2:2-3

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.**

A. Glean heads of grain.

What does this mean? We find that God had a certain way everyone was to harvest their fields to that the poor could come and take a percent of it. A type of welfare system.

Lev 19:9-10; (Lev 23:22)

9 '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.

Deut 24:19-22

19 "When you reap your harvest in your field, **and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow**, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20 "When you beat your olive trees, **you shall not go over the boughs again**; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

21 "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, **you shall not glean it afterward**; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

22 "And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

In this welfare system it was not just a handout but it did it in such a way that people could get help and save their dignity. It wasn't given to them, they had to work for it.

- You had to leave the corners of the field
- You have one pass at it to harvest, what was ever missed was for the poor
- If you dropped anything you could not pick it up

This was **for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, in which Ruth was all three.**

B. She (Ruth) happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Like in the book of Esther, we see the providential hand of God. We get to see and know that God is at work on our behalf even when we can't see it.

Rom 8:28

28 And we know that all things work together for good **to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**

You might say, "I don't see God's providential hand working in my life". Then choose ye today to love God and live according to His purpose.

Begin doing what Jesus said, **Matt 6:33** (*My paraphrase*) Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and then you will see God working all this earth stuff out for you.

We don't need to wait around for God to work in the supernatural on our behalf.

Quote: (Chuck Smith)

"God is at work supernaturally in the natural"

Ruth had committed her life to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to follow Him. (Ruth 1:16)

Prov 16:1

1 The preparations of the heart [belong] to man, But the answer of the tongue [is] from the LORD.

Prov 16:3

3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.

Prov 16:9

9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

2:4-7 Boaz speaks to the poor reapers with Kindness

Ruth 2:4-7

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."

A. Boaz ... said to the reapers.....The LORD be with you!

We see that Boaz was a joyful man to those in need who would be scavenging in his field. I would think many Farmers would be less happy to see a bunch of poor people standing around his workers while trying to work.

Boaz seems to be "working as unto the Lord", and his heart is "joyfully generous" to the poor.

Prov 14:31

31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.

Prov 19:17

17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.

Prov 22:9

9 He who has a generous (**good or clear**) eye (**giving person**) will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

Prov 28:27

27 He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

Zech 7:8-10

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying,

9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Execute true justice, Show mercy and compassion Everyone to his brother.

10 **Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor.** Let none of you plan evil in his heart Against his brother.'

1John 3:16-18

16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But **whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?**

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

James 1:27

27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:

to visit orphans and widows in their trouble,
and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

B. And they answered him, "The LORD bless you

The people felt welcomed and blessed.

What a gift Boaz had, to not make those poor in the field feel like they are unwanted, but to let them know that He joyfully is glad to see them, and prays God's blessing on them in their harvest as well.

C. Boaz asked,.....Who is this woman?

His servants told him that she was the daughter-in-law of Naomi, that she was a Moabite who had come back from Moab with her.

She also asked permission to glean, even though that was unnecessary. It showed her submissive character.

Ruth's life was under inspection and she had no idea. We should remember that for ourselves.

2:8-9 Boaz talks to Ruth and tells her to stay at his field and she would be protected

Ruth 2:8-9

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."

A. You stay close by my young women

These were Boaz's female field workers, who tied together the cut stalks of grain. Boaz told Ruth to stay close to them, so she would be well taken care of.

B. Boaz shows other kindnesses to this foreign Moabite women:

- In Boaz's field, Ruth would find **companionship** (among the **young women**).
- In Boaz's field, Ruth would find **protection** (**Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?**).
- In Boaz's field, Ruth would find **refreshment** (**when you are thirsty**) drink from the employee water jugs.

2:10-13 Ruth was humbled and thankful for Boaz's kindnesses

Ruth 2:10-13

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."

A. Why have I found favor in your eyes:

Ruth's attitude was wonderful. She was truly humble and showed genuine surprise of Boaz' kindness.

B. Since I am a foreigner:

This was constantly on Ruth's mind. She was a Moabitess, and not an Israelite. She knew that on the basis of national background, she didn't belong. This made Boaz's kindness to her all the more precious.

The Bible says that we should be kind to the strangers among us, but this also applies on another level.

Deuteronomy 10:19

You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:34

The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 27:19

'Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow.' Then all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

Ezekiel 47:22

You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens who reside among you and have begotten children among you. They shall be to you as citizens of Israel; with you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

Matthew 25:35

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Matthew 25:40

Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren you did it to me.

Luke 10:27

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.

Acts 10:34

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

C. It has been reported to me:

This is a dynamic of small-town life; everybody knows everybody else's business. Yet it also shows that Ruth's devotion to Naomi mattered – it was noticed.

D. The LORD repay your work and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel:

Fittingly, Boaz encouraged Ruth as if she were a new convert to the God of Israel.

In many ways, Ruth stands as an example of a new convert.

- She put her trust in the God of Israel.
- She has left her former associates.
- She had come in among strangers.
- She was very low in her own eyes.
- She found protection under the wings of God.

In the same way, older Christians should be like Boaz unto younger Christians who are like Ruth.

Quote: (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.”

These words of Boaz was actually a prayer, “The Lord....”

Significantly, though these words were said to Ruth, they were also *a prayer unto God for Ruth*. Christians should pray for oneanother, especially older Christians should pray for new converts.

E. The LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge:

Boaz especially knew of Ruth’s commitment to the God of Israel. This was his way of showing kindness and encouragement to a young believer in the LORD.

1. Under whose wings:

This is a beautiful picture. “The imagery is probably that of a tiny bird snuggling under the wings of a foster-mother. It gives a picture of trust and security.
(Morris)

Psalms 17:8

8 Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

Psalms 36:7

7 How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God!
Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.

Psalms 63:7

7 Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

Note:

I wonder if Great-grandson David got some of his poetic ways from his Grandparents. It seems to run in the Family. First Ruth (Ch. 1:16-17) and now Boaz.

2. Let me find favor in your sight:

This was a very polite way of saying “thank you” to Boaz. Ruth was almost overwhelmed by his kindness, and was polite enough to say, “Thank you.”

2:14-16 Boaz invites Ruth to eat with him

Ruth 2:

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."

A. Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread

Perhaps now, we see the first hint of a romance.

Boaz showed great kindness and favor to Ruth at mealtime.

It may not be obvious here, but no doubt this was hard thing to except such an invitation. Especially when she already felt so humbled by his earlier kindnesses. To receive such “grace” and then “more grace”, would really take a lot of faith.

Everything in her was wanting to say, “thank you, but no, you have already done too much”.

We will see later the parallel of Boaz/Ruth and Christ/the Church, but as we finish the book of Ruth I believe this will become a very clear parallel.

Luke 14:15-24 (*the Parable of the great supper*)

15 Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,
17 "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

18 "But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

19 "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'

20 "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

21 "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here [the] poor and [the] maimed and the lame and the blind.'

22 "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.'

23 "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

B. and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar

It would be enough to have just invited her, but he also invited her to share fully in the meal, even the privileged dipping.

C. She ate and was satisfied, and kept some back:

Ruth also may be awakening to some romance towards Boaz; she **kept some back**. She did not eat all that was offered to her, meaning that she didn't want to seem like a greedy eater in front of Boaz, and that she was sensible enough to take some home to Naomi.

D. Let she glean even among the sheaves:

This was more generous than the command in Leviticus 19:9-10. Boaz would allow Ruth to take some from among the already gathered sheaves of grain.

E. Let some grain from the bundles fall purposefully for her:

Drop some on purpose, but don't make it obvious.

Boaz wanted to bless Ruth, but he didn't want to dishonor her dignity by making her a charity case.

2:17-18 Ruth took home a record amount of barley!!

Ruth 2:17-18

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.

A. she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned

She was helped by Boaz, but she still had to have a sun-up to sun-down workday. She gathered until sun-set or so.

Then had to beat it out; "the process of separating the stock from the chaff".

B. It was about an ephah of barley:

This was about a **5 ½ gallons** (22 liters) of barley – a wonderful day's work to people who had nothing.

C. Gave to her what she had kept back:

Besides all the barley grain, Ruth brought Naomi the food left over from the meal with Boaz. This was obviously a blessing for Naomi.

2:19-23 Naomi finds out that “by chance” (or providence of God) she was at Boaz’s field

Ruth 2:19-23

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."

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.**" (*Heb. Word “Goel”= “Kinsmen-Redeemer”*)

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.

A. Blessed be the name of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead:

These are the 1st positive words spoken by Naomi:

Remember earlier when she returned to Bethlehem?

- **“Call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me”** (1:20)
- **“I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty.** (1:21)
- **“since the LORD has testified against me”,** (1:21)
- **“the Almighty has afflicted me”** (1:21)

But now she is beginning to see God’s plan unfolding, so she can see better “how all things are working together for good for those who love God” (Rom 8:28).

B. It is good, my daughter:

Of course, Naomi told Ruth, “Stay with this man Boaz!” Not only was he generous, he was **one of our near kinsmen** (*Heb. Word “Goel”= “Kinsmen-Redeemer”*) – the importance of which will be unfolded in the following chapters.

Heb. Word “Goel”= “Kinsmen-Redeemer”

This is a “Close relative”, usually a brother. Who has the absolute responsibility to marry and raise up kids to his dead brother.

He must fulfill this responsibility as the “Goel”.

Ruth 4:14

14 Then the women said to Naomi,

"Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative (*Goel*) ; and **may his name be famous in Israel!**

Jesus fame as the deliver or the Redeemer:

Matt 4:24 (KJV)

24 **And his (Jesus) fame went throughout all Syria:** and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

Matt 9:31 (KJV)

31 But they, when they were departed, **spread abroad his fame in all that country.**

Luke 5:15 (KJV)

15 But **so much the more went there a fame abroad of him:** and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

Conclusion
