

Sunday Night Message

February 24, 2018

Gleaning in the Field of Boaz

Series – *Ruth*

Text – Ruth 2

Introduction

Review Chapter 1

In this chapter we will learn what happens to Ruth and Naomi once they return to Bethlehem, in the land of Judah.

I God's Sovereignty in Bringing Ruth to the Field of Boaz (vs. 1 – 3)

As Naomi and Ruth are now moving in the direction of the will of God, God begins to guide and direct them.

v. 1 – We are introduced to Boaz, whose name means “in him is strength”. We learn that he is a near relation (kinsman) to Naomi, and he was a very powerful and wealthy man. We do not know what the relationship was. He could have been a brother, or possibly a cousin. The word kinsman is only used two times in the Bible - here and in Proverbs 7:4:

"Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:" (Proverbs 7:4)

We will see later on in this passage that this man Boaz' wealth and power came because of God's blessing. Boaz is a godly man, and God had blessed him mightily. (see vs. 4, 12, 20) We will also see that Boaz is a very generous man. God provides blesses his children with wealth so that they can in turn be a blessing to others. And when people use their resources to help others, God gives them more:

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." (Proverbs 11:24-25)

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." (Luke 6:38)

v. 2 – Ruth states that she will go glean some food from anyone who would be kind enough to allow her to, and Naomi agrees.

Notice Ruth's concern and care for the needs of her mother-in-law. She is taking responsibility to make sure Naomi is cared for.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." - (1 Timothy 5:8)

She is demonstrating that she really meant what she said when she made a profession of faith regarding Naomi's God. (see Ruth 1:16 – 17) Ruth was putting some feet to her profession.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." - (James 1:27)

Naomi was a widow, and Ruth was caring for her. We are to be concerned for the poor also; and we have an obligation to see to the care of the fatherless, and the widows.

According to the Old Testament Law, farmers were supposed to allow the poor to glean from their fields. Turn to [Leviticus 19:9 & 10](#) for principles regarding gleaning.

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God." - (Leviticus 23:22)

"When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing." - (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

There were some rules, however for the gleaners:

"When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thine own pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn." (Deuteronomy 23:24-25)

Note – the “ears of corn” was actually barley – see v. 17. According to Easton’s Bible dictionary, the word “corn” means all the commodities we usually describe by the words corn, grain, seeds, peas, beans.¹ According to Webster’s 1828, “corn” is generally applied to wheat, rye, oats and barley.²

v. 3 – Notice God’s providential leading of Ruth to Boaz. She “hap[ped]” upon Boaz’ field. This literally means that from Ruth’s perspective, this was a chance encounter. However, we also know that God was sovereignly directing her.

Illustrate – Back in Genesis 24, when Abraham’s servant was searching in a far country for a bride for his master’s son, Isaac. He “happened” to run into Rebekah.

¹ Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

² Webster, Noah. *American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 Edition)* (Kindle Location 128754). Packard Technologies. Kindle Edition.

"And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." (Genesis 24:27)

God led Ruth to Boaz. If we are sincerely desiring to do the will of God, and we are being obedient to what God has already revealed to us through His word, then God will lead us as well.

Illustrate – I believe that God supernaturally led me to go to Longview, Texas for Bible school. I believe He led me here as well.

Stop thinking that all of the supposed “chance encounters” of your life are just coincidences, and start recognizing them as divine appointments.

II Boaz’ Supply of a Permanent Place for Ruth to Glean (vs. 4 – 17)

You will notice that Boaz went well beyond what was required by the Law in his treatment of Ruth.

v. 4 – Notice the relationship that Boaz has with his workers. An employer ought to have a good relationship with his employees. He ought to try to do everything he can to supply their needs.

Illustrate – Kevin Albritton at Super One.

Notice also that although this was the time of the Judges when every man “did that which was right in his own eyes,” that there were exceptions to the spiritual darkness that was prevalent in the land. Boaz was a godly guy. His workers were as well.

v. 5 – Boaz’ takes notice of Ruth and inquires who she is. Ruth caught her attention. I believe that God often brings people together this way. There is an initial attraction that will later blossom. Boaz’ sees Ruth and he is drawn to her and curious about her. The word “damsel” is frequently used of a young woman.

Vs. 6 – 7 – Boaz learns who she is. The way the reapers explain Ruth and Naomi indicates that Boaz was familiar with Naomi and knew of her story, but had not yet met Ruth. He learns that Ruth had requested and been granted permission to glean behind the reapers. The reapers tell Boaz that Ruth had worked hard all morning, except for a short break when she went “into the house,” which possibly refers to some kind of a shelter in or near the field that would provide shade from the sun.

Practical Point – Ruth was apparently a hard worker. Parents need to instill in their children a good work ethic. Work is a good thing.

"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24)

Teach your children not to be lazy.

"The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour." (Proverbs 21:25)

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." (Proverbs 24:30-34)

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." (Proverbs 23:21)

Teach your children to stay busy doing productive things. Idleness is a tool the devil will often exploit to the fullest. David was idle when he spotted Bathsheba.

"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy." (Ezekiel 16:49)

Prosperity is built upon hard work, but it breeds idleness. Stay busy. Work hard for your family; work hard for your food; work hard for the Lord.

v. 8 & 9 – Boaz is now speaking directly to Ruth. *"Hearest thou not"* – literally means won't you listen. Boaz assures Ruth that she will find all that she needs in his field. He promises to provide for her and protect her.

Practical Point – Everything that you and I need can be found inside the will of Christ. Boaz is a picture of Christ in this passage, and Ruth is a picture of the church. Everything the church needs is found "in Christ." Don't wander in the fields of this world looking for satisfaction. Everything you need; everything your family needs is in Christ. If you work in His field, you will lack nothing.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:19)

There is another illustration here in this passage – Boaz told Ruth to "abide here fast by [his] maidens. Ruth was new to the faith. It was wise for her to stay close to people who were already doing the right thing and moving in the right direction. Young Christians need to latch on to an older believer who is going in the right direction.

Also notice that the men and women in Boaz' field were to watch out for this new girl Ruth. We who are the more mature believers are to take an interest in the new believers, the younger ones in the faith.

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." (Titus 2:3-5)

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but

of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." (1 Peter 5:1-3)

v. 10 – Ruth was very humble. She knew that as a Moabitess (“a stranger”), she may not be received favorably.

"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee." - (Deuteronomy 23:3-4)

Practical Point – Ruth appreciated what Boaz was doing for her. Learn to appreciate and express your appreciation when people do things for you. Stop feeling that you are entitled. You don't have to bow yourself physically, but perhaps it would not hurt at all for us to bow ourselves mentally, and have a humble and contrite attitude.

vs. 11 & 12 – Ruth's reputation had reached the ears of Boaz.

Your reputation travels pretty far as well.

Boaz tells Ruth that God was rewarding her for what she was doing for Naomi. Ruth sacrificed for somebody, and now God was rewarding her. (Luke 6:38) Ruth was reaping what she sowed, in a good way.

Notice – “under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." - (Exodus 19:4)

"For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." - (Deuteronomy 32:9-12)

vs. 13 & 14 – The dialogue between Ruth and Boaz continues. Ruth continues to express her appreciation, and Boaz continues to be a blessing to her. He gave her bread and vinegar to dip it in. He also gave her some roasted corn (“parched”); enough that she had some left over after eating her fill to bring home to Naomi.

Practical Point – The more we appreciate and express our thanks for what God has already done for us, the more He blesses us.

vs. 15 and 16 – When Ruth leaves to go back into the field, Boaz commands his servants to treat her well, and to on purpose leave some food behind for her to glean. He was making sure that this Gentile woman was going to “eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.” (Matthew 15:27)

As long as Ruth was gleaning in Boaz' field, she would be cared for. As long as we are serving in God's field, we will be cared for as well.

v. 17 – an ephah – a half bushel (30 – 40 lbs.) Again, note that the “corn” that Rth was gleaning was barley.

III Ruth Shares her bounty with Naomi (vs. 18 – 23)

vs. 18 – 20 – Ruth reports back to Naomi and brings her the food. Naomi discovers that God had brought Ruth to a close relative (a near kinsman). (see also 3:9, 12; 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14)

A close family member could redeem a family member that was sold into bondage; a property that was sold, possibly because of hardship; or a family name by marrying a brother or kinsman's wife and raising seed to the kinsman. This was known as a levirate marriage.

See Leviticus 25:47 – 49; Leviticus 25:23 – 28; Deuteronomy 25:5 – 10 regarding a kinsman redeemer.

Boaz pictures Christ, who as a Brother (Heb. 2:17) redeemed those who:

- 1) were slaves to sin (Rom. 6:15–18),
- 2) had lost all earthly possessions/privilege in the fall (Gen. 3:17–19), and
- 3) had been alienated by sin from God (2 Cor. 5:18–21).³

vs. 21 – 23 - Naomi agreed with Boaz that Ruth should just stay in his fields until the harvests were ended. She didn't need to go anywhere else. She had provision and protection.



³ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). The MacArthur Study Bible (electronic ed., p. 370). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.