

Redeeming Love

The Book of Ruth

A Glimmer of Hope

Key idea:

God creates a glimmer of hope for Naomi and Ruth through three means: His providential orchestration, Ruth's diligent work, and Boaz's redemptive kindness.

Key text:

Ruth 2

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, from the clan of Elimelech, a man of standing, whose name was Boaz. ² And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor." Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." ³ So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech. ⁴ Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The LORD be with you!" "The LORD bless you!" they called back. ⁵ Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, "Whose young woman is that?" ⁶ The foreman replied, "She is the Moabitess who came back from Moab with Naomi." ⁷ She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She went into the field and has worked steadily from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter." ⁸ So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. ⁹ Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled." ¹⁰ At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me — a foreigner?" ¹¹ Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband — how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹² May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." ¹³ "May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant — though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls." ¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar." When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. ¹⁵ As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, "Even if she gathers among the sheaves, don't embarrass

her. ¹⁶ Rather, pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her." ¹⁷ So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. ¹⁸ She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough. ¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!" Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said. ²⁰ "The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers." ²¹ Then Ruth the Moabitess said, "He even said to me, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.'" ²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with his girls, because in someone else's field you might be harmed." ²³ So Ruth stayed close to the servant girls of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Key points:

1. God is actively working behind the scenes, even when circumstances seem chaotic.
2. Our faith should propel us into action, not make us passive.
3. God uses both His divine providence and human activity to accomplish His purposes.
4. Finding refuge in God through Jesus Christ is the most important decision we can make.
5. Christians who understand God's Providence live with confident boldness and actively seek to be a blessing to others.

Discussion Questions:

1. The teaching mentions the concept of seeing the "backside of a tapestry" versus the front. How does this analogy help us understand God's work in our lives during difficult times?
2. How do Ruth and Boaz demonstrate active faith in this chapter? In what ways does their faith motivate their actions?
3. In what ways can Ruth's determination and faith inspire us to act boldly even when facing difficult or uncertain situations?

4. How does Boaz go "above and beyond" the requirements of the law in his treatment of Ruth? What can we learn from his example?
5. The teaching emphasizes God's providence throughout the story. Can you share an experience where you've seen God's providence in your own life, even if it wasn't clear at the time?
6. In what ways does the story of Ruth challenge our cultural attitudes towards foreigners, the poor, and those different from us?
7. How does the idea of God's providence working through seemingly chance events (like Ruth happening upon Boaz's field) affect your view of 'coincidences' in your own life?
8. Bret said, "Better to be in the refuge of Christ and have life look like chaos than to have everything seeming to go your way and you are outside the refuge of Jesus Christ." What are your thoughts on this statement?
9. How does understanding God's sovereignty and providence impact our willingness to be generous and help others?

Practical Applications:

1. Reflect on areas in your life where you may be struggling to see God's work. Commit to praying for increased trust in His providence this week.
2. Identify one way you can "go beyond the minimum" to bless someone in need this week, following Boaz's example.
3. If you haven't already, consider how you can find refuge in Jesus Christ. If you have, think about how you can share this refuge with others who may be struggling.
4. Practice looking for signs of God's providence in your daily life this week. Keep a journal of moments where you see His hand at work.
5. Meditate on Psalm 46 this week, reflecting on God as our refuge and strength.
6. Listen to the worship song [God Moves In A Mysterious Way](#) - it powerfully describes how we can learn to walk through bitter valleys while clinging to our faith.
7. Listen to the new worship song [He Will Be](#). Meditate on the faithfulness and graciousness of God, and He is your Provider, covenant Protector, and merciful redeemer.