

Today we want to see what God has to teach us from Ruth, chapter two. But for those who were not here last week, and to remind those who were, let us briefly recall what we learned last week. We discovered the book of Ruth has importance historically, allegorically, prophetically and doctrinally.

1. Historically, Ruth gives us the link between the dismal time of Judges when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" to the high point in Israel's history when king Saul, David and Solomon ruled, recorded in the Samuels, Kings and Chronicles. We learn that Boaz and Ruth become the great-grandparents of King David in the line of the Messiah.
2. Allegorically, we learned that the story of the love relationship between Boaz and Ruth is a type of the love story between Jesus and His church. Ruth the Gentile Moabitess is drawn into the family of God by Naomi, a type of the Jews. And she is redeemed into the family by Boaz, just as the Gentile church is grafted into God's family through the redemptive act of Jesus on the cross.
3. Prophetically we see the Jewish race, represented by the family of Elimelech and Naomi, departing the promised land and undergoing dispersion and persecution among the heathen nations. As Naomi finally returns to her land, we see prophetically that Israel has come back to the promised land, but yet to be redeemed to full status. When the redeemer, Boaz, restores Naomi and Ruth to their inheritance we see a prophetic picture of Israel being restored when they finally see Jesus as their redeemer, and the Church is taken as the bride of Christ.
4. Doctrinally, we learn the full meaning of redemption. Redemption requires a kinsman-redeemer, that is, one who is closely related and has the payment and position to redeem to full status. As Boaz met that requirement in our story to redeem Ruth, so Jesus meets that requirement to redeem the world in being the God-man who is one of us, yet with the power and wealth of deity.

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

Chapter One of Ruth found the happy Jewish family of Naomi leaving Bethlehem and the Promised Land because of a famine, and going to live in heathen Moab for ten years. While there father dies, and the two sons also, leaving Moabite wives behind. When Naomi hears word that the famine has past, she decides to return to Bethlehem, but encourages her daughters-in-law to stay in their homeland where they will have much better chance of finding a husband and a second chapter of their lives.

But Ruth determines to return with Naomi, making a powerful statement of loyalty to both her and to her God. Chapter One ends with Naomi returning in poverty and only a glimmer of hope that someone might restore her to her husband's inheritance. Ruth comes to the Jewish Promised Land as an outcast heathen and enemy of the people, only trusting in the God of her mother-in-law. We have a "cliff-hanger" to be sure!

READING OF CHAPTER TWO

So let me read the 23 verses of chapter two, as you follow along in your Bibles.

- *At this point, chapter two is read aloud.* -

In Chapter One, we had "Love's Resolve" with Ruth resolving to follow Naomi in following her God no matter what. In Chapter Two, we have "Love's Response" – a dual response of love. One, Ruth lovingly goes to glean in the fields to provide food, but also to find one who might show their family favor in their need. And Two, Boaz responds in love by giving Ruth undeserved and unanticipated grace. Let's see how the story unfolds verse by verse, and what God wants us to "glean" as we venture into the field of His precious Word.

BOAZ

Chapter two, verse 1 introduces us to the last important character in our drama. We learn three critical pieces of information about Boaz (whose name means “In whom is strength” or “alacrity” – a word meaning “brisk and cheerful readiness; doing well in all things.”)

1. Boaz is a kinsman of Naomi – of the family of Elimelech. (#1 of 3 requirements for a kinsman-redeemer is met)
2. Boaz is “a man of great wealth.” (#2 of 3 requirements for a kinsman-redeemer is met)
3. Boaz by the meaning of his name is one in whom has strength (ability) and willing ability (alacrity). (This is requirement #3 of 3 for a kinsman-redeemer, and will be borne out as true as the story unfolds.)

So in 2:1 we have hints, if not direct fact, of Boaz meeting the requirements of a kinsman-redeemer – exactly what Naomi and Ruth need to be made complete in Israel. And as I know you can see, Boaz is a type of Jesus the Christ, who meets (and exceeds) all the requirements to be our kinsman-redeemer. The stage is set for the drama to unfold!

LOVE’S RESPONSE #1

In verse 2 Ruth asks Naomi for permission to go to glean ears of grain. This shows her submission to and respect of her mother-in-law. Her goal is two fold: (1) to provide food for their near-empty stomachs and (2) to meet someone who might show favor to them in their dire situation. Ruth has clearly been made aware of the Mosaic Law concerning the plight of the poor.

Leviticus 23:22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 24:19 When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

May this godly principle of generosity and mercy for the needy ring true in our hearts.

GOD’S GUIDANCE

When we read in verse 3 that Ruth “*happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz*” we must smile and rejoice in God’s divine provision and guidance.

For the Christian there are no “accidents” or “coincidences.” As King David said in Psalm 23, God “*leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.*” God was guiding the narrative of Ruth’s life, just as He guides our lives “*for His names’ sake,*” in order to accomplish His purposes.

THE GRACIOUSNESS OF BOAZ

The following verses show the gracious personality of Boaz. He had a friendly relationship with his hired help, and freely expressed the blessing of the Lord upon them, revealing his spiritual constitution. Likewise, they responded in kind. In verse five he not only notices Ruth, but wants to know if she is “taken.” (2:5) Since we know the rest of the story, we might call it “love at first sight.”

She was identified as the Moabite who had returned to Bethlehem with Naomi – but this did not dissuade Boaz in the least. In fact, he shows his gracious protection from potential accosters in urging her to stay gleaning in his field protected by his maids. And he lets her know that none of his male servants will touch her, and that his servants’ water jars are available for her to drink from. We must surely see that he is showing more than a passing gracious interest in this woman whose name means “comeliness” and had definitely attracted his bachelor eye.

In all this you must see your Savior’s gracious special attention to you. You are protected by His Almighty hand, and provided for in your every need. He has seen your devotion to follow God, just as Boaz recognized Ruth’s devotion. And He rewards you, for you have found favor in His sight, though like Ruth, you are not worthy in your own merit. What a gracious, good-good Father we serve!

In verse 14 it is lunchtime. And the reapers come in to sit and eat. Boaz has Ruth sit with him, and gives her special gracious attention. We might see it as their “first date.” He dotes on her. He goes above and beyond. Just as our Savior and Redeemer does for us. And then in verse 15-16, when she rises to go out to glean for the afternoon, we hear Boaz’ love response.

LOVE RESPONSE #2

Boaz offers Ruth “handfuls on purpose.” He instructs his servants to let her glean even among the already harvested grain, and to “*purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean.*” Oh, dearly beloved of God, do you not see that this is exactly what your Savior Jesus does for you?! How many times have you received that wonderful blessing that comes from “nowhere.?” How many times have you found given far more that you have deserved or asked for? How many times have circumstances happily gone your way? Luck? Good fortune? Or God’s “handfuls on purpose?!”

REPORT TO NAOMI

Verse 17 to the end of the chapter relates Ruth’s return to Naomi that evening, bringing home more than a full basket of fresh grain. Naomi discovers that it was close relative Boaz who was Ruth’s benefactor and she exclaims in praise, “*May he be blessed of the Lord who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.*” Prophetically, this reminds me of the time yet to come when those who remain after the rapture will see Jesus in the clouds.

Matthew 24:30 *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall the tribes of the earth mourn, and they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

This initial sighting will cause mourning, but ultimately will result in the turning of many of the Jews to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Jesus will bless all believers, Jew and Gentile, by coming for them in the air. But for those left behind, there will be an acknowledgment of what they had missed, and then for many, salvation in believing. This was Naomi as she saw the blessing to Gentile Ruth by Boaz.

Lastly for today, notice Ruth telling Naomi what Boaz had instructed her to do. She was to stay in the fields of Boaz and close to his maids. In this I hear Jesus instructing us to stay close to Him and to His children. This is good and divine advice. In this closeness to Him we find both provision and protection. “Gleaning” in other fields is dangerous and tempting to wander astray.

So we end this chapter with Ruth gleaning in the fields until the end of barley harvest. And we, Jesus’ church, are still gleaning in the fields of souls yet won to the Savior.

The stage is set for scene 3, in chapter 3 and the ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION.

Likewise, the stage is set in our lifetime for our Kinsman-Redeemer to make us complete in Him!