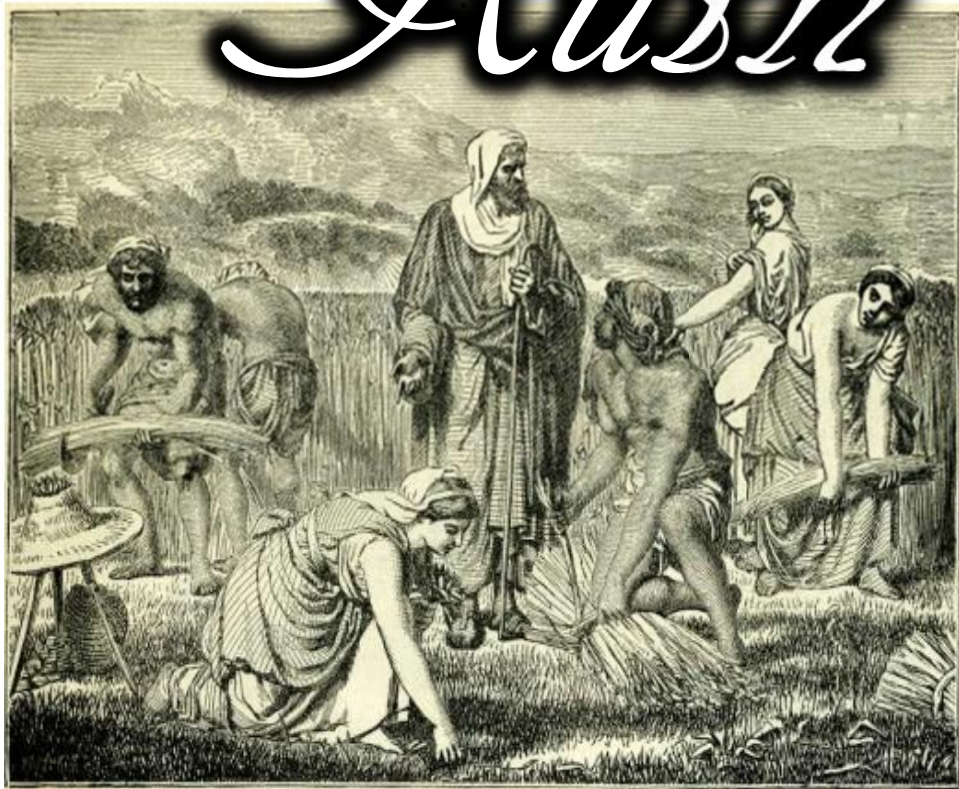


Ruth



Our Unmerited Blessedness
In the LORD

The Book of Ruth - July & August 2015
from the pulpit ministry of Christ E Free Church

Jesus Christ

Our Highest Calling

Our Greatest Purpose

Our Soul's Source and Joy

And Our All Consuming Passion

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Ruth Chapter 1 (ESV)

(1) In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. (2) The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. (3) But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. (4) These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, (5) and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband. (6) Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. (7) So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. (8) But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. (9) The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. (10) And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." (11) But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? (12) Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, (13) would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." (14) Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. (15) And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." (16) But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go

I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. (17) Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." (18) And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more. (19) So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" (20) She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. (21) I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?" (22) So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth Chapter 2 (ESV)

(1) Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. (2) And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." (3) So she set out 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 clan of Elimelech. (4) And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." (5) Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" (6) And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. (7) She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest." (8) Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. (9) Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged

the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." (10) Then she fell on her face, bowing 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) But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. (12) The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" (13) Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants." (14) And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. (15) When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. (16) And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." (17) So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. (18) And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. (19) And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man 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) And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers." (21) And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep 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, lest in another field you be assaulted." (23) So she kept close to the

young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth Chapter 3 (ESV)

(1) Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? (2) Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. (3) Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. (4) But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." (5) And she replied, "All that you say I will do." (6) So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. (7) And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. (8) At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! (9) He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." (10) And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. (11) And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. (12) And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. (13) Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning." (14) So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." (15) And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. (16) And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all

that the man had done for her, (17) saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" (18) She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

Ruth Chapter 4 (ESV)

(1) Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. (2) And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. (3) Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. (4) So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it." (5) Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance." (6) Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it." (7) Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. (8) So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. (9) Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. (10) Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day." (11) Then all the people who were at the gate

and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, (12) and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman." (13) So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. (14) Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! (15) He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." (16) Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. (17) And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (18) Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, (19) Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, (20) Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, (21) Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, (22) Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.



INTRODUCTION

In the book of Ruth, both Boaz^[2:1] and Ruth^[3:11] are referred to as “worthy” or virtuous. This is the same word and description given to the woman in Proverbs 31, whom we refer to as the “virtuous” woman.

Note:

Prov. 12:4 (ESV) “An excellent [worthy] wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones.”

Prov. 31:29 (ESV) “Many women have done excellently [worthily], but you surpass them all.”

Prov. 31:10 (ESV) “An excellent [worthy] wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.”

Therefore, when we read these descriptions of Boaz and Ruth, we are viewing this in context of a word which refers to the depth of consistent God honoring character, rather than a word that describes Boaz’s wealth or Ruth’s physical strength or endurance.

This is important for us, because we look to Boaz and Ruth as people whose character we would do well to emulate. It is not strength, endurance, toughness, wealth or other traits for which we are to admire these characters. But the deep inner, abiding God formed traits of faith formed attitudes and actions that we would do well to seek and petition God to form in us as well.

Virtuous character is not a self-focused character but in fact is a self-sacrificing quality. As you read this book and admire these characters, may we be asking God to be changing us into the likeness of these OT Christ-like people.



“With God In the Valley”

Text: Ruth 1:1-11

July 5, 2015

“In those days there was no king in Israel.
Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”
-Judges 21:25 ESV

“Integrity is doing the right thing, even
when no one is watching.”
--C.S. Lewis

INRODUCTION

Life Hurts. The future is uncertain. Things change. Plans often don't work out like we expected. We do what we have to do to survive.

Today we begin a series through the book of Ruth. Some will read through Ruth and find themselves immediately identifying and connecting with one of the characters with their life challenges. Others will find yourself thanking God that you have been spared many of these hardships.

The book of Ruth reflects Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD, the greatest blessedness, being that of the relationship itself, for those who walk with the Lord.

“When we walk with the Lord,
in the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way...”
--John Henry Sammis (1846-1919)

The book of Ruth is focused on the family of a man named Elimelech; whose name means “God is King”. Every part of the story seems to point back to his wife, Naomi. In this book, we learn: “Life lived for God cannot guarantee the hope of a life of ease and pleasantness.” Yet a life lived in disobedience, certainly cannot hold any hope for things getting better.

BACKGROUND INTO THE BOOK OF RUTH

* The events in the book of Ruth took place during the times when Israel had no king, but God provided judges, for instruction in justice and for guidance for His people. So the book of Ruth takes place within the book of Judges.

Much of the book of Judges reflects God’s judgment upon Israel.

The book of Ruth is set...

In the Time of Judges (v1

In the book of Judges, Israel drifted away from God. As a result, God allowed hardship to come upon his people for discipline. God’s people eventually cried out to God for help in repentance. God heard their outcries and had mercy on them and answered their prayers. He sent a leader, judge or deliverer and God’s people turned back to Him. And the cycle repeated itself over and over.

Cp: Judges 2:11 / 3:7, 12 / 4:1 / 6:1 / 10:6 / 13:11

A summary statement is given in Judges 21:25

<p>Judges 21:25 ESV In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.</p>
--

Ruth is as much about God’s faithfulness and repeated mercy toward the nation of Israel and their repentance, as it is about any one person.

Naomi and her family are affected by a ...

Famine in the Land

* Famine often is result of God's disciplining His people.

Deut. 28, spec.vs15-19 states that God will curse those who reject Him and being scattered will be part of the curse.

Deu 28:64 "And the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known.

While there is no direct indication that this family was cursed by God, there is reason to believe Israel as a nation was being judged by God. And in the case of sin and God's judgment, repentance is always an option.

1 Ki.8:33-36 – God's promise for Israel, was that in case of invasion or famine – the prayer of repentance will bring about God's mercy and blessings again. (through v44) Gods' Expectation is that He be #1 in our lives and our love.

Mat. 22:37-38 – Love God with all your heart, soul and mind. This is the first and greatest command.

Ex.20:3,4, 7 – No other gods; no idols; not take name in vain (emptiness, verbally but not genuinely)

** It is God who has set up His holy standards of commandments and consequences. It is mankind who must choose to obey God, trust Him, and live life under His standards, in order to experience the unmerited blessedness of living in relation with Him.

In doing so, we discover the greater "blessedness" does not come from what God does for us, but from the relationship itself, with our great and wonderful God.

LIFE IN THE VALLEY (v1-5

This is basically a story of God's people in times of challenge. Challenge is the situations they find themselves in and the choices

they make.

Life in the valley...

With those under judgment of God (v1-2

* Their own people.

Rth 1:1-2 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. (2) The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

SITUATION: They were facing a famine, which possibly reflected the judgement of God upon the national wickedness. Historically God used famine to influence or direct for His purposes.

SEPARATION: They left their challenging situation in attempt to be free from the judgment and away from the wickedness of God's people. There was a lack of food but an abundance of evil.

They moved to Moab. We know that Moab was often enemies of God's people. Some hold that Jews of Bethlehem would clash with the gods of Moab. And while there were many gods in that land, there was a greater god, who was somewhat of the god of all other gods. The god of "Chemosh, who was lord in everything." (Ex.Bi.Com.) Having fled the judgment of God in Bethlehem, is it possible that they faced some kind of persecution in the land of Moab?

Much has been written regarding the reason for Elimelech leaving the promised land; his motive and even his faith or lack of faith. "The move out of Judah is not justified". (MHCC)

We are not told that they prayed before leaving or that they did not pray. We are simply not given those details. So with that, we must be careful how much we speculate and blame and read into the motives of Elimelech. What God doesn't tell us, we must not write between the lines.

We do know that at one point, Elijah advises a family to flee due to God's famine. ^[2 Ki.8:1]

Life in the valley ...

With those of The Family (v3-4

* In the valley of trials, we do what we feel is right. Sometimes things get better and sometimes things get worse. The most important thing is that we are with God in the valley.

At face value, Elimelech is only trying to do what is best for his family, and who among us would not attempt the same thing if we were in his situation? They fled the famine but more trials arose.

Rth 1:3 (3) But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. (4) These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,

v.3) Elimelech – died – loss – grief. He was Naomi's source of provision and protection, but is now gone.

v4) Sons married – new life – gain – joy. They apparently lived there for 10 years.

Rth 1:5 ESV and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Both sons died (again no details as to how or why. Result of God's judgment or accident or disease? That is not the purpose or lesson in Ruth. Her sons would have taken care of their mother, but not they too are gone.

More loss and grief for Naomi and for her daughters-in-law as well. They all experience the ups and downs of hope and loss. In these verses we see that for Naomi and her family, there was:

- (1) A loss of stability and provisions in the face of famine.
- (2) A Loss of homeland as they left Bethlehem.
- (3) There was the hope of a new home as they arrived in Moab.
- (4) A loss of spouse when Elimelech died.
- (5) There was hope in a new family as their sons married.

(6) There was Loss as her sons died.

(7) Then there was again, the loss of homeland (Moab) as they prepared to return to Bethlehem.

(8) There is the initial loss and grief of the daughters-in-law as they prepared to depart from their home and go their separate ways.

(9) There was the hope of 1 daughter-in-law and devoted friend as Ruth devoted herself to remain with Naomi. Ups and downs, hope and loss – experiencing the challenges and valleys of life, but always aware that they are *With God in the Valley*.

GOOD NEWS OF GOD'S MERCY (v6-11

* The veil is lifted!

Ruth 1:6-7 (6) Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. (7) So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

Decisions to Move again (v6-7

So they made the decision to move again, but for different reasons. Not merely for food this time, for there was news that the famine was over, but that God's judgment had lifted. There was food, so God's blessings had returned. And "God had visited his people", so the nation must have repented and returned to the LORD.

Now Naomi and her two daughters-in-law set out to return to Naomi's home land.

Decisions to part ways (v8-11

Rth 1:8-11 (8) But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. (9) The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. (10) And they said to her, "No, we will return

with you to your people." (11) But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?"

Now another valley for Naomi with the loss of more treasured relationships. Again and again in this book it was God who was at work in the bitter setbacks of Naomi. When she lost her husband and sons, God gave her Ruth. When she could think of no kinsman to raise up offspring for the family name, God gave her Boaz. When barren Ruth married Boaz, God gave the child. The point of the story is made in the life of Naomi. The life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but God sees that they get there. —John Piper

APPLICATION

(1) We learn that life in the Lord will always have its ups and downs of its challenges and victories. Walking with the Lord, we will always experience losses and gains – grief and hope. NO one can realistically expect anything other than that. And while loss is no doubt great, Naomi is blessed with such deep and caring family relationships that our culture can barely fathom. Such close friends, with such loving and sacrificial spirit, are blessings from the LORD.

(2). Learn from the change in the circumstances of Naomi's husband not to trust in the uncertain possessions of this world. You may now be wealthy and respectable among your neighbors and acquaintances. Yet a few years or months may reduce you to a condition of discomfort, if not of poverty and indigence.

(3). Learn from the highs and lows, that whether in abundance or in want – walking with God is blessing enough in itself. Living in the presence and will of God, is contentment and satisfaction; is joy and peace; is love and victory in the Lord. Whether in loss or in gain, the Lord is the Lord. The only thing that changes is our view or our experience of Him. It only gets better.

(4). You that are parents, surrounded with a family of children, learn from this to reflect how soon these children may be taken

away. And oh! strive and pray, above all things, that they may be the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

(5). Learn from Naomi's trials the beneficial effects of affliction; and from her resolution to return to her native land—the land of Jehovah's worship—that the only true refuge in affliction is pure and undefiled religion. (H. Hughes, B.D.)

As we learn from these experiences of Naomi, we realize that walking with God and even being in His Will does not promise ease of life nor the absence of conflict or loss. But we are promised His keeping, helping, directing, providing, mercy, and abiding with us.

Mat 6:25; 31-34 ESV (25) "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing. (31) Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' (32) For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (34) "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

****** Our lives can be filled with the peaceful joys of Gods' blessedness – security, stability, provisions; even menial frustrations, and frivolous praises. Until the apple cart of our previous blessedness is upset, and some of those treasured, yet forgotten apples are lost. It is then that we discover that, even when the apple cart is empty, God in all His fullness remains present, faithful and glorious above all other things.

Whether we have abundance or in want, the most important aspect of life is to bear in mind that we are with God in the Valley, and nothing is more important than that.

We Are An Offering

by Dwight Liles

*We lift our voices, We lift our hands
We lift our lives up to You, We are an offering
Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands
Lord use our lives they are Yours
We are an offering
All that we have, All that we are
All that we hope to be, We give to You
We give to You
We are an offering.*



“Coming Home *Empty*”

Text: Ruth 1:11-22

July 12, 2015

“I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back *empty*.
Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me
and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

--Ruth 1:21 ESV

“Illusion is needed to disguise the emptiness within.”

--Arthur Erickson

REVIEW: “With God in the Valley”

Whether in abundance or want, Our Unmerited Blessedness in the Lord is not based on what we may have or what we may have lost. Our Unmerited Blessedness in the Lord is based on our relationship with Him alone, and nothing on earth can take that away.

v.9) “rest” – resting place; a place to settle down; put down some roots; home – long term! This refers to Naomi’s daughters-in-law marrying, bearing children and living a life under the blessing of the Almighty.

* Ruth reflects not just the moral of the story, but the morality of the characters.

INRODUCTION

Today we look at 3 Widows – Naomi, Orpah and Ruth. And our lesson involves 3 Ships of life.

- 1) Hard**Ship** (personal) –
- 2) Friend**Ship** (with another)
- 3) Relation**Ship** (God). Each ship represents a segment of life for Naomi.



We can all relate to these three ships.

HARDSHIP FROM LIFE (v11-13)

Naomi had certainly experienced some devastating losses in her life. But she hears news that things are different now in Bethelhelem. The veil has lifted. God's judgment has evidently been removed. There is food in the land. God has restored his blessings. And God has visited His people, indicating the people had repented and returned to God.



Naomi Sees No Hope for her family (v-11-13b)

There are no Husbands for her daughters in law. So with this good news of food in Bethlehem that things have changed back home (v6), she prepares to leave Moab and return there. In v7, all 3 women seem to initially, set out together for the same destination, until Naomi encourages the two daughters in law to go their own way, back to their own homes and to their own families.

Rth 1:11-13 ESV (11) But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? (12) Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons. Would you wait till they were grown?"

Though the women were willing to stay with Naomi and go back with her, she realizes that as she is returning to her home, they also should return to their home. With tears, they both refused to consider her recommendation.(v9-10). But Naomi was insistent and urged them to go their own ways.(v11-12)

Naomi Sees No Help from God

The Hardships of life seem to have taken their toll on Naomi's perspective.(v.13c) Naomi feels personally cursed by God. She feels personally responsible and worthy of blame for her daughters-in-law's circumstances of being husbandless and without needed support and protection.

Ruth 1:13 ESV "...would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me."

Naomi is a defeated woman – not merely defeated by life, but by God Himself, as she sees it. She feels as though God has cursed her, and as a result of that, her daughters in law should not have to suffer on her account.

Essentially Naomi is attempting to set these women free – free from the burden or guilt or sense of responsibility to remain with

her and thus continue under the curse of God which seems to be upon her own life.

CONNECTING:

Caring relationships often carry with them a deep and genuine sense of personal responsibility towards those they care about. Its hard enough to turn your back on someone in need, much less someone you genuinely care about and feel responsible for. Naomi cares about Orpah and Ruth, and because of their hardships, she attempts to set them free. In her mind, she is putting them first and attempting to do what is best for them.

the Second Ship is...

FRIENDSHIP THROUGH Trials (v14-18)

The power of Deep FriendShips are not easily broken.

Orpah & the Parting of deep friendships (v14

So with Naomi's urging, Orpah kisses Naomi, indicating that she was departing and in all likelihood, would never meet again nor even hear from one another.



Rth 1:14-15 ESV (14) Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. (15) And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

Many interpret the book of Ruth as an almost figurative story, representing a NT principle of the gospel, disobedience, and redemption. Yet in our literal reading, Orpah must not be viewed as weaker or less caring than Ruth. Orpah was drawn back to her home, but Ruth clung to Naomi and was drawn to Naomi's home. And she was willing to part ways.

Ruth: Clinging with deep relational connection (v16-1

IF anything, we can see Orpah as a woman of strength. She was able to let go of Naomi at her urging and separate herself from that friendship.

Nevertheless Ruth deeply desired to remain with Naomi.

Rth 1:16-18 ESV (16) But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. (17) Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." (18) And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more

We see great determination in the actions of Ruth. Perhaps it was Naomi's motherliness to her. Perhaps it was deep friendship, coupled with a sense of personal obligation to her. Perhaps it was a sense of the spiritual life that the God of Naomi offered and a desire to follow His will for her. Whatever the reason, Ruth stayed with Naomi.

CONNECTING:

Sometimes we sense deep ties to certain earthly friendships. We may feel a deep sense of compassion or obligation to people around us, who may need us or who we feel WE may need. But relationships based on guilt or unnecessary obligation in a way that keeps someone from getting the care they may need may be damaging. There may come a time when one must be willing to let go for the greater good of the development or maturity of another person – like children growing into their responsibility for themselves. Children grow up, or at least they should.

Continuing to care for adult children in the same manner in which you cared for them in their early years, is not healthy. Yet caring for a parent in their older years, as you cared for a child in their younger years, may be appropriate and even necessary.

Both Orpah and Ruth seem to do what they feel is best, given their circumstances.

The Third Ship is...

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LORD (v19-22)
For Naomi, this is the Long Journey Home. Again, we are made aware of the feelings of Naomi



regarding her relationship with the Lord.

Naomi Returns Back to Bethlehem (v19)

The whole town was in an uproar up when they arrived.

Rth 1:19 ESV (19) So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi

The women remembered Naomi. And asked "Is this Naomi?" People change, even after 10 years. Life changes us. Experiences change us. Perhaps they had considered her as dead, not knowing exactly what ever happened to her. But now, here she is.

Naomi Comes Home Empty (v20-21)

Remember, the name Naomi, means "pleasantness". Can this really be Naomi? Without any background or initial explanation, Naomi replies in v.20:

Rth 1:20--21 ESV (20) ..., "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. (21) I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

Bitterness, emptiness, calamity... whether accurate or inaccurate – this is how Naomi feels and for her, this is reality.

Mara means bitter. Is this Naomi – "*Pleasantness*"? No more. Call me Mara. Life has been a calamity for me. The Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full, but God has brought me back, bitter, broken and empty. She has been characterized by bitter experiences, personal brokenness, emptiness and calamity.

Some have referred to the book of Ruth as a story of a female *Job*. Naomi's suffering is certainly not as bad, as Job's or as comprehensive. But it is a woman or women, suffering grief, and loss and defeat, until God shows Himself faithful, once again.

Remember when she left Bethlehem, due to the famine and lack of food, though she refers to leaving full. In spite of the famine, her family was full. Now in spite of the food she had in Moab, she

returned home empty – empty of her family that is, apart from Ruth. This will be a challenge for Ruth as well.

- 1) She will commit to a new homeland
- 2) she is submitting to new leadership in her life. Following Naomi “where you go, I go”..
- 3) She will have to conform to a new culture and lifestyle. New ways, new practices, new families, etc.
- 4) A New Lord – no longer will Chemosh “lord of everything” be her god. But then, she has probably already forsaken the gods of Moab for the *GOD* of Naomi. This will be the test.

[taken from Mark Alan, Sermon Notebook]

CONNECTING:

Naomi’s view of life is certainly dark. Every time I read this, I think to myself – “somebody needs to hug that woman!” We are given a window into Naomi’s heart and spirit and what she is feeling. What we aren’t given is a window into the purpose of God’s will, the purpose of Naomi’s family’s suffering, and why this calamity of life has come upon her. But what we DO know that Naomi does not, is that God is preparing to restore the years the locusts have devastated; he is rebuking the devourer for her sake; he is preparing to bring joy from the ashes of her life. He is preparing to make all things beautiful in His time.

Ecc 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time.

At this point, I want to shout into the text of Biblical history – “Hold on Naomi! Hold on. God is going to come through for you. Just hold on and see the Salvation of your God.”

These literal people, with literal lives, can be a good illustration of what it means to begin the new life in Christ. Walking away from all familiar ways and practices. Submitting to a new God. Resolving to a new lifestyle and guidelines. Becoming a new citizen of a new land.

Mark Alan states that as we consider the commitment Ruth made to Naomi, it paints a picture for us of the commitment we should be willing to make to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- We should be willing to cut all ties with the old life and enter into a new land of blessing before the Lord.
- We must be willing to commit to His leadership for our lives.
- There should be a commitment to a new lifestyle based on the Word and will of God.
- We should also consider ourselves dead to the old life and alive in a new relationship to the Lord Jesus. Our lineage has changed!
- Obviously, this all means that there must be a new Lord, a new master Who dominates every area of our lives.
- Then, we should be willing to commit to the Lord and His will without any restrictions. Our commitment to Jesus Christ must be complete. It must be absolute and it must be final!
- Does this describe the life you live? Or have there been areas where you can see your commitment lacking? Can you honestly say that no matter what happens in life, you are 100%, absolutely and completely dedicated to serving Jesus, both now and forever?

Now we come to...

THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF HOPELESSNESS (v22)

This chapter ends with v22 – a “Summary of Hope and Blessedness.”

Rth 1:22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest

“There was food and God had visited his people”(v6). The veil has lifted. God’s judgment has evidently been removed. There is food in the land. God has restored his blessings. And God has visited His people, indicating the people had repented and returned to God.

Where it all started (v22)

They Arrive Back where it all Started – Bethlehem.

Not just the fact that there is now food, but it is this report in full which draws Naomi to realize it is time to head for home. God has visited His people. He is bringing fullness out of emptiness. It is presently that way for Israel, it will soon be that way for Naomi, personally.

Even if you do believe Naomi and her family were wrong to have ever left Bethlehem, the good news is, she knows when to head for home. She has not lost her heart for Jehovah God – And, she is bringing someone else home with her. Now there's a picture of the Christian life and the gospel.

CONNECTING:

Oh, How often we find ourselves holding onto the worst in our past, unaware that God is working out a plan for our best and for His glory and purpose. Hold on Naomi! Hold on, just a little longer. You will soon understand what God is doing.

For Naomi, this is the beginning of the end of her sense of hopelessness. What God had taken away from her in Moab, He is going to reward her with in Bethlehem, the house of Bread – in Judah, the land of praise.

Where it all turned around (v22)

Naomi has had a hard ride. She has endured much.

Rth 1:22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest

They had come home at exactly the right time; the light of hope was beginning to flicker again.

1) it was the time of harvest - A time of abundance for all, even the poor, the foreigners and the beggars.

2) It was a time of new beginning. A time to start over – almost surreal. She had left during famine, and she returns during a bountiful harvest. Is it real or is it a dream?

3) But the hope was not just of enough food. The hope was that they had endured and the Unmerited blessedness in the Lord would once again be experienced.

CONNECTING:

God is the God of new beginnings. He allows us to start anew. As we struggle with enduring hardships in the midst of his will or if we are lacking in faith and being drawn back into right relationship with Him – there is always an open door to repentance, submission, forgiveness, and a new start with Him as Lord of All.

This is the journey of Naomi Coming Home Empty. But it is also the story of God's filling to overflowing, the lives of those who find their stability, satisfaction, joy and Hope in Him. So that whether in abundance or in want, we always have the same opportunity to experience the Unmerited Blessedness we can all have, In the Lord or *in relationship with God through Jesus Christ*.

Where are you today? Where is your life? What is your relationship like with God? Are you properly connected to Him through Jesus Christ?

Are you presently in a land of barrenness and brokenness and distanced from God? Are you on your way back to God? Looking for a new fresh start? Are you leaving the empty things behind, and seeking the fullness of God, that can only be experienced through Him as your Source of Life?

APPLICATION

This story is more than anything, a story of God at work – keeping and sustaining during meager times and blessings and filling in abundant times.

God does not change, nor does He move away. It is about God's plan and provisions – physically, agriculturally, relationally, emotionally, and spiritually – the holistic plan of God coming to fruition.

Each of us has a life story in the making. A Story of joy, loss, grief and gain; story of abundance and of need; story of our ups and downs and hopes and hopelessness. . God's end purpose is always hope.

Ch. 1 ends with a Summary of Hope. "So they came at the beginning of harvest..." Good things.

Your life is an ever changing story of experiences, events, changes, challenges and lessons. Q: What are we learning? The faithfulness of God in His plans and purposes? That "*With God in the Valley*" is what makes life tolerable? If it were just "the valley" we wouldn't make it. But "*With God in the Valley*": (1) that is the difference making relationship and (2) the difference making perspective – that Hope is always near, as we walk with Him.

Please remember to Pray for those in HardShips. Pray for those in challenging FriendShip situations. Pray for those in need of hope once again in God's fullness and blessedness.



“Character and Courage”

Text: Ruth 2:1-12

July 19, 2015

Theme: Character in Action

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem.
And he said to the reapers,
"The LORD be with you!"
And they answered, "The LORD bless you."
-- Ruth 2:4 ESV

Life's most persistent and urgent question is,
'What are you doing for others?'
--Martin Luther King, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

With all the challenges presented in chapter 1, it ends with a beautiful summary of hope.

Ruth 1:22 MKJV And Naomi returned; and Ruth, who was of Moab, her daughter-in-law, was with her, returning out of the fields of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

7 Reasons to Love and Study the Book of Ruth , by John Piper
(www.desiringgod.org)

1. The Book of Ruth is the Word of God. The message of Ruth is unwaveringly true. It's a rock to stand on when the terrain of ideas feels like quicksand. It's an anchor to hold us when tides are ripping.... The message of Ruth is filled with God-inspired hope.

2. Ruth is a love story. The way Ruth and Boaz find each other is the stuff of epics.... But the story is the flesh-and-blood experience of one family living the unexpected plan of God.

Ruth is also a love between two women, Ruth and Naomi, which our culture does not know what to do with. Some view the relationship as uncomfortable to speak about. Others view it as Biblical evidence that gay and lesbian relationships were completely acceptable in Holy Scripture.

However, Ruth is not only a story between the pure love between a woman and a man, but also the pure friendship love between two heterosexual women. There is nothing that implies otherwise, even if our culture attempts to pervert it.

3. Ruth is a portrait of beautiful, noble manhood and womanhood.

In a day when movies and television and advertising and the Internet portray masculinity and femininity in the lowest ways, we are in great need of stories that elevate the magnificent meaning of manhood and womanhood.... Ruth and Boaz are extraordinary. Men and women today need heroes and models like this.

4. Ruth address racial and ethnic diversity and harmony.

Ruth is an "unclean" pagan Moabitess. But she is drawn into faith and into the lineage of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Her marriage is an interracial marriage. There are lessons here that we need today, as much as ever.

5. Ruth displays the sovereignty of God.

Is God's bitter providence the last word?... Everywhere I look in the world today, whether near or far, the issue for real people in real life is, Can I trust and love the God who has dealt me this painful hand in life? That is the question the book of Ruth intends to answer.

6. Ruth displays radical acts of risk-taking love.

[The book of Ruth is in the Bible] to make you a new kind of person—a person who is able "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

7. Ruth displays the glory of Christ.

[A] thousand years before Christ, this book glorifies his saving work on the cross, as we will see. Ruth is about the work of God in the darkest times to prepare the world for the glories of Jesus Christ. ---[end of disiingod.org]---

From the time of famine in Bethlehem, to their move to Moab, to the return to Bethlehem, we don't know exactly how much time passed. But we do know there was enough time to grow discouraged with life, but also long enough for God to bring resolution to life.

INRODUCTION

Chapter 1 ends with a beautiful summary of hope (v22) and Chapter 2 introduces a new character into the story of Naomi and her family.

Chapter 2 – Theme: “Godly Character In Action.”

GOD’S FULLNESS RETURNS (2:1-3)

* This is not God’s fullness simply to Israel in general, but to Naomi and her family specifically. God’s judgment has lifted from His people and personal hardship has been eased for Naomi and family.

Boaz: A Might Man of Honor (v1

Rth 2:1 ESV Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

Boaz is described as a “worthy man”. Some versions refer to him as a “man of wealth”. The same word is used in...

Ruth 3:11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a **worthy** woman.

Ruth 4:11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act **worthily** in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

The word translated Worthily can mean virtue or valor or honor. This same 3 word expression is translated elsewhere as “Mighty Man of Valor” (Jos.1:14;6:2;8:3;10:7; and Jdg.6:12;11:1,) [Pulpit Commentary]

Boaz is a “mighty man of valor which is non-specifically, an all-around virtuous person. This can indicate military force; or in context of this story, a man of influential character. All we know about Boaz is that he is a Bethlehemite who is a renown employer; a prominent business man; and a man of Godly character and known as such by those within the city gates.

Ruth: A Woman of Courage (v2)

Ruth is not just seeking a man, but she is seeking a “man of Grace”.

Rth 2:2 ESV [(1) Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.] **(2) And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter**

Ruth is still an outsider and a foreigner. She is seeking help and willing to work and work hard, not for her own needs, but for the needs of Naomi.

This was basically the Old Testament “welfare system”. The Hebrew law required land owners and harvesters to leave some of their harvest on the ground for the non-hired hands who were poor and needy, to work and find sustenance for themselves and their families^[Lev.19:9-10].

Life (Working) in the fields (v3)

Ruth is not just seeking a man, but she is seeking favor from a “man of Grace”(v2).

Rth 2:3 ESV So she set out 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 clan of Elimelech.

“The field of life” – working= physical labor; struggling=life’s hardships; thinking= Mental contemplation. It was in the fields of Moab, where they received news that “God had visited His people”. In the fields of Bethlehem, Ruth will meet her earthly resource for personal help and restoration => redemption. Hard work can lead to good things.

In this field, while working with other beggars and hired servants, she would have heard all about the boss and owner of this field. She is about to find out first-hand what Boaz is like.

BOAZ: FULL OF GRACE (2:4-9)

* Here, his character is demonstrated.

Boaz as Employer (2:4-7)

* The reapers are hired workers. The Gleaners are unpaid beggars who pick up the leftovers of the harvest.

Ruth 2:4-7 ESV (4) And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you." (5) Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" (6) And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. (7) She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

Boaz enters...

i. His speech reveals his character. He speaks blessings to his employees.(v4) Can you imagine an employer like that? Imagine the positive, spiritual influence he could make in the lives of others. Imagine the pleasant working atmosphere, as a result of Boaz’s honorable ways.

ii. His questions reveal His concern. He has genuine concern over the weak, needy and unfortunate around him.(v5-7). Boaz perceives himself as being in the position of a provider or protector of those whose lives have been filled with misfortune. He is a man of honor.

iii. Ruth's work reveals her character. She is not above hard work.(v7b) She is humble and courteous. She is courageous requesting help from the people of this new land. So both Ruth and Boaz demonstrate true character and "noble manhood and womanhood."(-Piper)

Boaz as a source of Blessing (2:8-9

He is Protector; provider

Rth 2:8-9 ESV (8) Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. (9) Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

i. spoke kindly / gently (v8a) – “daughter”

ii. Acted protectively (v8b-9) and invited – no – he urged her to remain in his field, under his watchcare. He advised her to stay “close to my young women”. He also informed her to expect only respect from the young men around her, within Boaz's field that is. This was clearly not an attitude of detest for the “no good vagrants” whom he was forced by Jewish law to provide his own resources. He was demonstrating an attitude of willing and purposeful generosity. Boaz was a man full of grace!

iii. He also Provided adequately (v9c). He provided adequate grain and drink and encouraged Ruth to drink as much and as often as she desired. This was Boaz's way of assuring Ruth that he had her best interest at heart and desired only good for her.

For Naomi and family, God's fullness had returned and God's means of demonstrating that fullness to them is Boaz.

RUTH: AN UNDESERVING RECIPIENT OF UNMERITED BLESSEDNESS IN THE LORD (2:10-12)

When we find ourselves undeserving recipients of unmerited grace, it can be a very humbling experience. We get what we don't deserve. We receive what we did not earn. Someone has mercy on us, and is gracious toward us. We are overwhelmed that the very thing we needed most has been provided and we are left with only one thing to do.

Ruth Fell on her face (why?) "Favor" (v10-cp v2)

* Why me? She found herself to be an "Undeserving Recipient of Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD."

Rth 2:10 ESV (10) Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor^[2:2] in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

We see a demonstration of:

- i. humility – Ruth evidences genuine humility. There is nothing insincere about her attitude or actions
- ii. appreciation – Ruth evidences deep appreciation. She realizes she deserves nothing, but that what she does receive will be only unmerited blessedness from the LORD.

Ruth's Reputation (v11)

Godliness attracts Godliness.

Rth 2:11 ESV (11) But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before

- i. Ruth was unselfishly dedication to Naomi – This became her reputation. (v11)

ii She left her homeland to come to a strange land (v12) Ruth came with Naomi, leaving her familiar homeland behind, in order to remain with Naomi and to care for her.

iii. She demonstrated personal courage and sacrifice for the cause of others.

Ruth's Reward Blessings (v12)

Under His "wings"

Rth 2:12 ESV The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge

i. *"May God repay you"* is a spoken blessings.

Uses of terms and concepts In the book of Ruth:

1) Grace – 2:2, 10, 13

2) Mercy (hesed) – 1:18; 2:20; 3:10

3) Bless – 2:4, 19, 20; 3:10; 4:14; (not necessarily defined but exemplified.)

4) Spoken blessing – 1:8, 9,17; 2:4, 4, 12, 20; 3:1, 10; 4:11, 14

ii. *"full reward from the Lord"* refers to all they had lacked during the famine; all they had lost while in Moab; and all they had experienced during the trials, trauma and tragedies of the earlier decade of life's valleys. This is Boaz's prayerful blessing for all Ruth had given up for Naomi.

iii. *"under whose wings"* - Ruth had found the man of grace and fullness from God in the fields of Boaz. She now found herself experiencing the unmerited Blessedness of the LORD, through the loving watchcare and provision of Boaz himself. And it seems at this point, Boaz has come to see that he may be the vessel through which God will pour out His goodness into the lives of these widows once again.

Boaz now sees himself as a kind of umbrella covering of care for others. He considers himself as someone to whom God has brought employees, beggars and widows to find help, security, safety,

provision and fullness from God “under His wings”, of which is also under Boaz’s wings or umbrella covering of blessing to others.

CONNECTING:

1) How do you Connect with Others?

Today, what do you seek in a spouse; a girlfriend; or a boyfriend? What are your standards for relationships or people with whom you become closely connected?

What attracts you to another? Others to you? What do you use to attract or make an impression on others? Your physical appearance? A little tight? a little short? a little skin? a little revealing? A little attention?

What about purity, and honor, and valor, and Christlike character in general? In the New Testament, Peter admonishes us with these words.

1Pet. 3:3-5 Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear-- (4) but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. (5) For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands,

2) How do you view your present life journey?

Naomi considered her life a calamity and even cursed of God. She viewed herself far from the LORD and from His fullness and healing.

Boaz seemed to view himself as an important part of the plan and will of God. He saw himself as the helper of the needy and weak and unfortunate.

Do you view yourself as a vessel that God wants to use to help others and bless others? God can use your words, choices, actions, love, prayers and character to dispense His blessings into the lives of others.

3) What is your reputation like?

Ruth gained a respectful reputation.

Pro 22:1 ESV A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

Abraham Lincoln once said: Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it and the tree is the real thing.”

Reputation is not what you say about yourself. It is what your character says about you and what others think about you. That is *“more valuable than riches”*.

4) How do you communicate with others?

* The Love demonstrated by Boaz is not the kind of love we are more accustomed to seeing or even feeling. This love is not focused on the feelings one gets when seeing or being close to someone of the opposite sex and feeling the electricity or chemistry or connection that is sometimes described. This is a different kind of love.

The is not specifically a feeling but a condition of a person’s character that has great expressed concern for the sake of others; and acts of kindness are for the benefit of others, rather than bait to lure someone to notice or like them.

While Love is not mentioned in the book of Ruth, it is about Godly, loving relationships.

1Cor. 13:4-8 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant (5) or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; (6) it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. (7) Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (8) Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

LOVE is Patient Kind rejoicing in the truth

Or, the way we treat others should be patiently, with kindness and rejoicing in Truth.

Love is NOT... Envious Boastful or Arrogant self focused
irritable resentful or glad in wrongdoing,

Biblical love "**agape**", is defined as benevolent. Benevolent defined is kindly, compassionate, caring, humanitarian, generous, unselfish, magnanimous, bounteous, kind-hearted, good-natured, open-handed,

LOVE is rejoicing in the truth; bearing (or enduring) all things believes all things (or believes the best until given good reason to believe otherwise). Love hopes all things, endures all things – it never ends. In other words, all these traits, and demonstrations of love are not passing or temporary or conditional, but they remain steadfast, because it is God's love, loving through you, into the lives of others.

How do you treat others? How do you communicate with others? If you need a model of what Godly, pure love is like, look at the life of Ruth in her relationship with Naomi and the life of Boaz in his relationship with Ruth. We need examples like these. We would do well to allow God to form that kind of love into our own character.



“Blessed are the Merciful”

Text: Ruth 2:11-23

July 26 & Aug 2, 2015

Theme: Character in Action

PEW: #276

*"Blessed are the merciful,
for they shall receive mercy"*
--Matthew 5:7

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits
than strict justice.
---Abraham Lincoln

Mat 5:3-8 ESV "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (4) "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (5) "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (6) "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (7) "***Blessed are the merciful***, for they shall receive mercy. (8) "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

INTRODUCTION

When Frank Baum wrote the Wizard of Oz, he wanted to show that there was still “sweetness and goodness in the world.”

When we read the book of Ruth, it shows us that good and honorable character is still alive in the world around us.

Reasons to Love and Study the Book of Ruth --John Piper
(www.desiringgod.org)

1. Ruth displays the sovereignty of God.

Is God's bitter providence the last word?... Everywhere I look in the world today, whether near or far, the issue for real people in real life is, Can I trust and love the God who has dealt me this painful hand in life? That is the question the book of Ruth intends to answer.

The answer comes in their perseverance in their faith in God, coming through in His time.

2. Ruth displays radical acts of risk-taking love.

[The book of Ruth is in the Bible] to make you a new kind of person—a person who is able "to do justice, and to love mercy (kindness), and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

3. Ruth displays the glory of Christ.

[A] thousand years before Christ, this book glorifies his saving work on the cross, as we will see. Ruth is about the work of God in the darkest times to prepare the world for the glories of Jesus Christ. ---[end of desiringgod.org]---

From the time in famine in Bethlehem, to their move to Moab, to the return to Bethlehem, we don't know exactly how much time passed. But we do know there was enough time to grow discouraged with life, but also long enough for God to bring resolution to life's calamity.

Chapter 2 – Theme: “Godly Character In Action.”

Uses of terms and concepts In the book of Ruth:

- 1) Favor or Grace – 2:2, 10, 13
- 2) Mercy, kindness or friendly (hesed) –2:13, 20; 3:10
- 3) “Bless” – 2:4, 13,19, 20; 3:10; 4:14; (not necc. Defined but exemplified.)
- 4) Spoken blessing – 1:8, 9,17; 2:4, 4, 12, 19, 20; 3:1, 10; 4:11, 14 (12 times). This is the terminology of Ruth which reflects the attitudes and atmosphere surrounding its key characters.

Ruth experiences...

UNEXPECTED TREATMENT (Attention) (2:12-17)

* Ruth demonstrates the New Testament principle: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

We see...

The High Value of Rewards (v12-13)

* I believe God gives us the promises of rewards, not to bribe us to do what is right, but to assure us, that when do what is right before God and suffer loss; ultimately there is no loss, as God promises to make all things good in the end.

Rth 2:12 ESV The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

The Lord reimburse you for your loss. May the Lord reward or give you the wages of your acts of kindness. May you receive mercy for the mercy you have shown.

v.12) Remember - Boaz's perception of himself is God's means of blessing, to those whom God has brought into His life, to be under his care. And part of that reward has already come.

Rth 2:13 ESV (13) Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

Part of that reward has already come and it is Boaz himself. Boaz is being merciful to Ruth for her mercy to Naomi. God is using Boaz to show mercy to Naomi and to bring fullness back into her life of calamity. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive..... mercy.

i.) I have found favor in Boaz's eyes (v13

* Boaz is God's gracious blessing.

ii.) You have - "comforted me "

* He is God's source of Encouragement.

iii.) you have spoken kindly to your servant

* He is God's demonstration of mercy.

[literal] – "spoken kindly" – literally, "to the heart"; as in "you have *'Touched my heart'*".

Regarding Boaz's treatment of Ruth...

Is there not a useful suggestion in all this to persons in places of authority and influence? There is sometimes a grievous fault in withholding praise from others. At the fountain-head of some of our greatest rivers a slight touch of the hand or foot would be sufficient to determine the course in which they should ever afterwards flow. And, in like manner, a kind word spoken to another at a moment when the heart is ready to faint, may be the means of dispelling the chill of despondency, of stimulating the efforts of an honest industry, of confirming good resolutions, and of helping to fix the future destiny of a brother. Some persons are far too much afraid of the effect of a little generous and well-timed praise. They would keep all their flowers in an ice-house. Letting in a little sunshine upon them at times would not be amiss. Let masters and parents and teachers try the experiment of what an encouraging word or look can sometimes do. Let it be distinctly seen by those whom they can influence that they are on the side of whatever is virtuous in effort, noble in aim, and heavenward in aspiration. (A. Thomson, D. D.)

This has been Boaz's ministry toward Ruth and ultimately toward Naomi.

-v.13 ... you have comforted me and spoken **kindly** to your servant,

- *"though (I am) not one of your servants"*

Ruth humbly sees herself for who she really is and the situation for what it truly is. She is not even a hired hand, but a beggar, receiving from the hired servants. Even those poverty stricken, may appear as kings and queens to the one who is brought to begging. And this is where Ruth is.

We hear that a person has to hit rock bottom, before they will look up. But the reality is that sometimes some people find themselves at the bottom of life's circumstances and rather than looking up in humility, their hearts are hardened and the speech is sharpened towards, life and others and even toward God.

What happens in your heart when you find your life drifting father and farther away from the pleasantness you had always enjoyed before? When life does you dirty or God seems to turn His back on you, what becomes of your attitude and disposition? Are you brought to a deeper humility or to a hotter anger? The same circumstances that cause one person to cry out to God for mercy, causes another to curse His holy name and all that associate themselves with Him.

Naomi remains tender and hopeful. Ruth remains humble and sees the kindness of others, as mercy from God.

We see...

The Merciful Treatment of Ruth (v14-15

* Boaz is often viewed as a Christ figure. That is someone who acts in a limited capacity, in performing something or representing someone else later in a fuller capacity.

Rth 2:14-15 ESV And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. (15) When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

Ruth was invited to eat with Boaz and his hired hands (v14

“Here we see Boaz, the master, serving Ruth and others, the servants and beggars.” Much like Christ serving the Passover to His disciples, breaking the bread and pouring the wine and

distributing it to them. Also, as Christ washed the feet of His disciples, He was taking on the form of a servant, and humbling Himself before them.

And we see the merciful treatment of Ruth as demonstration of the Christ like heart of the Master.

We see character that goes...

Beyond the Law to Grace (v16-17)

* Boaz does not do what he does, because the law tells him to. He does what he does because the love of God in his heart compels him to.

Rth 2:16-17 ESV (16) And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." (17) So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

-beyond the law – - Lev.19:9-10

Lev 19:9-10 ESV "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. (10) And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.

Boaz is a man full of grace and Truth; power and mercy and position and humility.

-beyond the law – moved by grace and generosity

- take more – pull out and leave more for the needy.

Generosity

- Morning to evening - then beat and sifted (v17)

CONNECTING:

Today, consider out Christ-like character.

Question¹ – How does my view of work and how I value life influence others?

The work Ruth did, was menial and monotonous - empty of glory or nobility. In fact there was no differentiation between the one servant and a thousand others, other than perhaps the manner and mindset in which she carried out her duties.

‘Men measure the worth of work by its visibility, attention and outstanding qualities. The real worth of work lies in meeting the necessity for its existence, and the motive which inspires it. For Ruth, two lives depend upon her labors—then her work has worth; she loves the woman for whom she toils—therefore her work has dignity. Her love consecrates lowest means, for highest ends.’

[-Author unknown]

Question² – How do others view me?

Ruth was no noteworthy person, other than the motives behind her actions and the reputation which has preceded her in the way she treated others.

Pro 22:1 ESV A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

Question¹ – What is your Reputation before others?

Question² – What is your Influence upon others?

All these will reflect your level of character in Christ.

[AUGUST 2, 2015] “Blessed are the Merciful” part2

A couple more reasons why the book of Ruth is important for us.

1) Ruth helps us understand that the worst part of life is not the duration of life. The trials of life often color our world more vividly and more indelibly than the rest of life – even the good experiences. Ruth helps us remember that God never quits working with us and there is always hope for goodness to return!

2) Ruth also helps us see that we reap what we sow and that we should not grow weary in doing good, for in due time we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up. ^[Gal.6:9]

3) In God's dealings with Ruth, we learn that God is "Magnanimous". That means, His grace and mercy and help and hope, is *Out-Pouring* and *Over-Flowing*. They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness!^[Lam.3:22]

Ruth received...

OVERWHELMING ABUNDANCE (v18-20)

* Ruth has held out, kept sowing and is beginning to reap the harvest from the Lord. God is bringing Boaz, to bring grain to Ruth, in order to bring hope and fullness back into Naomi's life of calamity and emptiness. Naomi is beginning to understand that she is an undeserving recipient of God's unmerited blessedness.

Ruth was ...

Overwhelmed with Fatigue And, Grain (v18)

* If you have ever been tempted to think God has given up on you, This helps us believe that He will still come through for each of us.

Rth 2:18 ESV And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

God is beginning to demonstrate that He is a "Magnanimous" God; that is, He truly is Out-Pouring and Over-Flowing.

Ruth went home fatigued after a hard day's work, but she went home with grain for Naomi.(v18), which is evidence of both her selfless labor and Boaz's abundant provisions. Ruth helps us see in action, a very important New Testament principle.

Eph 4:28 ESV Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

Ruth is not just working for Ruth. She is also working for Naomi as well. Naomi is not a burden to Ruth, because Ruth works and provides out of her love for Naomi.

Ruth and Naomi were...

Overwhelmed with Joy and Blessing (v19-20)

* Boaz has treated Ruth mercifully, because she has treated Naomi mercifully. God is using Boaz to show mercy to Ruth and to bring fullness back into a life of calamity for Naomi.

Naomi blesses Boaz (v19 where?)

Rth 2:19 ESV (19) And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man 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."

Ruth Identifies Boaz as their human source of mercy and blessing. Naomi had given of herself for others. Ruth has given of herself for the benefit of Naomi. Now Boaz is giving of himself for both Ruth and Naomi.

Luk 6:36-38 ESV Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. (37) "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; (38) give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

In this story, we see both mercy being given and being received. We see people reaping what they had sown, that is goodness and righteousness. We also see some people blessing and others being blessed.

All of them were ...

Overwhelmed by Mercy (v20)

* Boaz was overwhelmed with a heart of mercy toward Naomi and Ruth and they both were undeserving recipients of such unmerited mercy and blessedness.

Rth 2:20 ESV (20) And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."

i.) - Naomi offers another spoken blessing (vs19,20)

- “may he be blessed by the LORD”

ii.) - Kindness and/or mercy was shown

iii.) – “not forsaken living or dead”

- helping the living in need

- remembering the dead by comforting the living

iv.) – “close relative” – “Redeemer”: This is the first time the word is referred to in Ruth, even though the entire story, both Ruth and Naomi have been drifting toward redemption. Up until now Boaz has only been referred to as a family member or “relative”. But a transition is taking place in the view of Boaz. Now he is referred to as a “redeemer”. Boaz is a close relative and a possible redeemer and source of hope for this family. He is ultimately God’s provision, together with Ruth, for the lineage which will bring forth the Messiah of God’s’ people.

Together we witness ...

LIFE UNDER THE SHEPHERD’S CARE (v21-23

* Life under the Shepherd’s care is intended to be one of humble dependence and abundance.

We see life...

Under the Care of His wings (v21 | cp.v. 12

* Specific Instruction is Given. There is safety under the care of the shepherd, Boaz.

Rth 2:21 ESV And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

Ruth is instructed to “stick close” to Boaz and his people. Boaz is a Christ-like figure. His life and character points forward toward the Redeemer to come and the protection and provision that God desires to offer His own people, should they submit themselves to His care.

Ruth reports to Naomi and is told to stay close till end of harvest (v21

There is an invitation to remain under the blessing if she chooses to. There is an invitation to remain and enjoy the safety and security that will certainly come under Boaz's care.

There is an invitation to abide with him as her shepherd and experience continued provision and abundance.

*Boaz does not just offer a one time help, but an on going blessing, conditional only upon whether or not they will abide with Him.

Joh 15:4-5 ESV Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (5) I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Joh 10:10 ESV The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Jesus urges us to abide or remain in Him. He invites us to find our life and fullness in Him. He is to be our Source of all things, for this life and the next. Boaz is an Old Testament picture of the coming Messiah and Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see the wisdom of...

Knowing and Trusting the Shepherd (v22)

* *Specific Obedience is Encouraged.*

Rth 2:22 ESV (22) And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted."

The young women will keep from harm (v22). They will be in good company together. They will enjoy the loving watchcare of the Shepherd together.

There is wisdom in remaining within the Shepherd's company; surrounded by those he keeps. These are also those who are helped by the shepherd.

Joh 8:31 ESV So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

We have a Biblical example of...

Ruth's Choice to Remain with the Shepherd (v23

** Specific Instruction Requires Specific Obedience.*

Rth 2:23 ESV (23) So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

i. with obedience came blessing (v23) And so as chapter 1 ended with a summary of hope^[1:22], so does chapter 2^[2:23].

ii. We end here with an uneventful summary of Hope, and a lesson that “it is a good idea to remain close under our shepherd’s care.”

CONNECTING:

Question: How are you done in abiding under the Shepherd’s care”? Are you experiencing Jesus Christ as your Provider and Protector and Redeemer? Are you living daily, abiding in Jesus as your Vine and Source of life?

v.19) Again, looking at this as a fireside gathering, as it were, today, at the end of one week, and before the new one, with its activities, is fully upon us, does not this come out of the question and the answer—that, after all, you have had unexpected success? Ruth’s story shows us that, when we come across good times, when we come to what is called “good luck,” we are in danger then. Now, don’t go away and say that that is come to you because you rose early and sat up late, because you were sharper than other people, because your wits are keener, because you have shuffled the [percentages], so to speak, more cleverly. Put in God somewhere; give God the credit, give Him the praise, give Him the glory, for, I tell you, it is all His. (J. McNeill.)

“For what He has so readily given; He may just as readily take away. And the loss of things removed, becomes the strength and joy to come.”

God's blessings toward Naomi are Magnanimous, that is, OutPouring and OverFlowing. God is our Fountain of blessings.

Chapter 2 ends with the summary of Boaz's faithfulness to provide and protect. It also ends with Ruth's persevering under her shepherd's care.

As Christians it is important for us to persevere under our Shepherd Jesus's, loving care.

<p>Gal 6:9 ESV And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.</p>
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“Drifting Toward Redemption”

Text: Ruth 3:1-10

August 16, 2015

Theme: Hope Restored

Pew Bible, Page 276

And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter.
You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that
you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.
--Ruth 3:10 ESV

Redemption is not perfection. The redeemed must
realize their imperfections.

---John Piper

INRODUCTION

In Seminary, I had a professor who was a very humble and student focused teacher. Some of the professors made you feel lucky that you were in their presence. This one was different. He was here for the student and not to make a name for himself.

He eventually had to move with his wife, to Arizona for the health of his wife and to tend to her physical needs there. He left a lot of notoriety and wound up teaching at a small Bible school out there, as he took care of his wife. Most people are not interested in living their lives for the sake or benefit of others. But this professor did.

The man was always one of my favorite teachers in Seminary. Once he left to care for his wife, I loved the guy all the more.

Psalms 34:18 represents part of the theme of the book of Ruth, particularly in regard to the life of Naomi.

Psa 34:18 ESV The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Today our lesson is entitled: “Drifting Toward Redemption”. It begins in v.1 with a demonstration of Naomi’s concern for Ruth and ends in v.10, with the demonstration with Ruth’s concern for Naomi.

We see preparation for...

COMING BEFORE THE REDEEMER (3:1-6)

The Divine winds of change are causing Naomi and Ruth to drift closer and closer toward life redemption.

Naomi’s Input is expressed (v1-2)

* Here we see Naomi’s concern for Ruth.

Ruth 3:1-2 ESV Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? (2) Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

Here, Naomi’s concern for Ruth’s well-being is evident.

1) Naomi’s advice is motivated by motherly

concern (3:1) “My daughter” - “seek rest for YOU,...that it may be well with you?” (compare 1:9)

The nature of “Rest” refers to the absence of movement or labor; Salvation; Wholeness; Security and protection. It refers to lack of worry; to settle down as in a home and family. [SermonNotebook]

Rest also carries with it as being a cultural norm and acceptance. It refers to marriage and a companion with protection, provision and blessing. The Stigma of being husbandless, childless and homeless is removed, and fullness brought back into a life of emptiness.^[1:21]

2) Naomi’s insight is prompted by providential

insight

(3:2) Boaz is our relative. You are now one of his “young women”.

Deut.25:5-10 refers to the Jewish law in which a male relative could officially become a kinsman redeemer for the family, whose husband had died.

Naomi's Instruction is specific (v3-6

* Her instruction is a bit awkward for us, but specific and cultural, none the less.

Rth 3:3-6 ESV (3) Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. (4) But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” (5) And she replied, “All that you say I will do.” (6) So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.

1) Wash and anoint (v3a [Mark Copeland]. This would be in reference to personal cleansing from the days work and a proper presentation to approach the potential “redeemer” and as being one who was “available” for marriage.

On the whole, we must say, had not Boaz been a person of extraordinary piety, prudence, and continence, this experiment might have been fatal to Ruth. We cannot easily account for this transaction, probably Naomi knew more than she revealed to her daughter-in-law. The experiment however was dangerous, and should in no sense be imitated. [–Adam Clark, commentary]

2) Wait and see (v3b-4a. This was in waiting for the appropriate time, when all work and relaxation was over.

3) uncover his feet, lie down and await (v4b). This would be in regard to Boaz's response to Ruth's approach.

This potential outcome of marriage for Ruth and redemption for Naomi carries with it:

*** A PROMISE OF HOPE:** Relief from poverty, from being alien, from being without the “Head” – protection and provision. Hope for future and family. The “head” over the family was both the authority figure, as well as the accountability figure. He is given authority by God to lovingly govern His family in the law and love of God, but he was also accountable to God for this responsibility. (Consider Adam)

**** A PROMISE OF HELP:** Partner and companion for life. “Help meet”

Gen 2:18 ESV Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a *helper* fit for him.”

Also note:

1Pet. 3:7 ESV Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

***** AND A PROMISE OF HOME:** to Settle down, acquire a resting place or home. She would no longer be a wanderer, nomad, a vagrant nor an alien. [SermonNotebook]

It all sounds a little like heaven doesn't it. Jesus presented this concept in the New Testament.

Mat 11:28-30 ESV Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Heb 4:9-11 ESV So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, (10) for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. (11) Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Realizing that...

LOVE'S REDEEMING WORK IS DONE (3:6-10)

Up until this point, Ruth's relationship with Boaz has been a servant- Master relationship. But it is preparing to change to a husband-bride relationship. Things are under way in the heart of Boaz and in the plan of God for Ruth to be brought into the family.

Ruth's Growing Connection (v6-9)

* At this point, we can see the covenant that Ruth had declared with Naomi, coming to fulfillment – partially from God's hand and partially from Ruth's.

Rth 1:16 ESV But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

Ruth is drifting toward a deeper connection to the people of the God of Naomi. Naomi's people will not merely become Ruth's people in terms of nationality, but also her people in terms of family relations. And, Ruth is seeing how the God of Naomi truly deals with His people who trust in Him. Her faith is not merely passed on to her verbally. She is experiencing it as God moves on their behalf, and her relationship with Him, becomes personal.

Rth 3:6-10 ESV (6) So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. (7) And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. (8) At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! (9) He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your *wings* over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

2 things here:

(1) "wings": "Wings" here refers to Boaz's watchcare, provision and protection over Ruth

But in 2:12 where the concept of *wings* is first introduced, the reference is of Ruth and others seeking refuge from Almighty God. All those who are under the “*wings*” of His shelter, provision and protection are blessed.

Rth 2:12 ESV The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose *wings* you have come to take refuge!"

Now in 3:8, it is referring to Ruth coming to find refuge under the “*wings*” of Boaz, who is both close relative, however, even with Boaz as “relative”, it is clear that he has been perceived as providing Redeemer like qualities. He bestows grace to Ruth and Naomi- in 2:2, 10 & 13. He is also described as treating them with Kindness or Mercifully in 2:20, 13, 3:10

Naomi's Nearing Redemption (v10)

* God has brought Boaz into the life of Ruth, in order to bring blessedness back into the life of Naomi. Boaz already views himself as a source of help and blessing to those whom God brings into his life and under his “*wings*”.

Rth 3:10 (10) And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

“May you be blessed by the LORD...” v.10. This is another one of many spoken blessings in every chapter of this little book. (cp.1:8, 9,17; 2:4, 4, 12, 19, 20; 3:1, 10; 4:11, 14)

Ruth has not approached Boaz for her own benefit of finding a husband, but for finding a redeemer for Naomi's family line.

F.B. Huey writes: “Those who interpret a sexual relation in the events reflect their twentieth-century cultural conditioning of sexual permissiveness. They fail to appreciate the element of Ruth's trust that Boaz would not dishonor her whom he wanted for his wife. They fail to appreciate the cultural taboos of Ruth's time that would have prevented a man of Boaz's position from taking

advantage of Ruth, thereby destroying her reputation and perhaps endangering his own.

Biblical writers were not squeamish about describing sexual encounters, but the writer of Ruth has deliberately refrained from saying there was a liaison between Ruth and Boaz. If read carefully and with sensitivity, it becomes clear that he was saying just the opposite. Both Ruth and Boaz acted virtuously in a situation they knew could have turned out otherwise. Chastity was not an unknown virtue in the ancient world.” - F. B. Huey, Jr.
(Expositor’s Bible Commentary)

We began this chapter, with Naomi’s concern for Ruth being expressed. We end this lesson in v.10 with Ruth’s concern for Naomi being demonstrated by approach Boaz for marriage for her, and redemption for Naomi’s family.

NT PRINCIPLES, OR REFERENCES

Drifting Towards Redemption is not a reference to being saved, little by little. It is referring to the drawing work of God, the faith building experiences of God in our lives leading to a gradual understanding of Who God is, and what He has done, which leads each of us, to come to a point of understanding of Truth, and saving faith and life redemption.

One New Testament principle pertains to...

Unbelievers approaching the Holy One

For the unsaved, unforgiven, dead-in-their-sins. “unbelievers” -- there is nothing that can be done in order to sweeten up, spice up, doll up or clean us up, that will make any difference towards gaining God’s approval or earning salvation or deserving our “unmerited blessedness in the LORD”.

Rom 4:5 ESV And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

Things are under way in the heart of Boaz and in the plan of God for Ruth to be brought into the family. Once we trust in Christ, we

rest from our labors. We are brought into the family of God and we become the bride of Christ.

Another link is that Naomi is a Jew. She moved away from the promised land then returned back to Bethelhem. And God used a Gentile, Ruth the Moabite, to marry into the family of Boaz, in order to bring blessing back into the family of Naomi.

Likewise, God uses the Gentiles to bring Israel back into His fold again.

Rom 11:11-14 ESV So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. (12) Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! (13) Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry (14) in order somehow *to make my fellow Jews jealous*, and thus save some of them.

Rom 9:25 ESV As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"

Paul understood that it was God's purpose to use the Gentile nations, not merely to punish His people, as with the Babylonians and Syrians. He was also going to use Gentiles to bring His people back into relationship with Him.

So we have Ruth approaching her kinsman-redeemer. I would even suggest the manner in which Ruth approaches Boaz, is a picture of how we should approach God. She approached Boaz humbly and reverently. She had been cleansed and approached him appropriately.

Likewise, as believers we must approach the Holy One fearfully and reverently. We should be careful to come into His presence cleansed and approach Him appropriately and without pretense.

Our second principle pertains to...

Tainted Believers approaching the Holy One,

Unbelievers approach God as they are and He forgives, saves and redeems them. However it is different for believers! There is a dangerous but prevalent mindset among some believers, that says “as a believer there is never anything held against believers which we will be held accountable for.

All our sins were forgiven at the cross, past present and future. Therefore, there is the belief that there is nothing that can affect our fellowship with the Savior. You are covered forever – you are accepted in the Beloved – You are justified unconditionally and you are viewed as “flawless” or “faultless” before God in Christ.

WHILE THAT IS TRUE in that whatever you have done – in Christ we will not be condemned or eternally judged for our sins. ^[Rom.8:1] HOWEVER, when Christians sin, there is still offense to God; and there is an adverse effect of our fellowship with God in Christ.

1John 1:9, John writes to the Church; “Confess our sins...”

Rev.2, John writes to the 7 Churches: “Repent!”

APPLICATION

[READ Romans 6:19-22]

Rom 6:19-22 (19) I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to *holiness*. (20) For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. (21) But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. (22) But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to *holiness* and its end, eternal life.

Personal holiness is the individual level in which we live apart from sin, practicing righteousness and personal devotion to the will and glory of God. And Christians *can* sin, violate that holiness and our offense *can* affect our fellowship with God.

2Cor 5:9-10 ESV So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ someday and be held accountable for the things done in our physical lives, whether good or evil.

Rom 14:10 ESV Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

If we as Christians think God doesn't care how we live as His children, then we are woefully misinformed regarding the holiness of God and what He expects of us as His church and how He will deal with everyone, even the church at the end times. We won't be condemned to hell, but we may experience blessings withheld.

We are to come into the presence God like Ruth entering the presence of Boaz, that is humbly, reverently, cleansed and our lives a sweet aroma to God.

We should not be so concerned about the beauty of our outer wear, but of the purity of the inner person. We should have a time of personal examination and personal cleansing.

1Jn 1:9 ESV If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We should (1) examine ourselves, (2) confess our sins if necessary; (3) repent of sin and (4) fight against sin taking hold of us.^[Gen.4:7]

One Author writes this: "If we expect to find ourselves at His feet, enjoying the best He has for us, then we are to live a life that comes up before God like a sweet smelling incense."^[2Cor.2:15]
(Anointing oil also was used to set things apart for particular

service, as with the implements used in the Temple, by priests and kings.^[1Sam.16] Ruth anointed herself with oil before approaching Boaz, her redeemer. God's people are to separate themselves from every evil attachment^{”.[2Cor. 6:17]} [SermonNotebook]

That is the practice of holiness.

AW Tozer, The Price of Neglect: “The childish clamor after happiness can become a real snare. One may easily deceive himself by cultivating a righteous joy without a correspondingly righteous life. No man should desire to be happy, who is not at the same time holy. He should spend his efforts in seeking to know and do the will of God, leaving to Christ the matter of how happy he shall be.

For those who take this whole thing seriously, I have found a suggestion. Go to God and have an understanding. Tell Him that it is your desire to be holy at any cost and then ask Him never to give you more happiness than holiness. When your holiness becomes tarnished, let your joy become dim. And Ask Him to make you holy whether you are happy or not. Be assured that in the end, you will be as happy as you are holy;”

A closing prayer for personal holiness....

“Lord, help me to separate myself from any and all sinful practices. Strengthen me from each and every temptation that would lead me to sin against you.

Psalm 139:23-24 ESV Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts! (24) And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

And please help me to grow in my personal holiness.”

-Amen!



“Drifting Toward Fullness”


Text: Ruth 3:10-18

August 23, 2015

Theme: Hope Restored

Pew Bible, Page 276

Everday people in God’s eternal plan.



“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

--Luke 6:38 ESV

It's lack that gives us inspiration. It's not fullness.

--Ray Bradbury

INRODUCTION

Ruth is a story of everyday people in God’s eternal plan. Day by day, we have opportunities to trust or doubt; we face experiences that confirm or test our faith. At times we sense an emptiness of spirit and distance from the Lord, while other times we are overflowing and sensing the nearness of the Lord’s presence.

The book of Ruth leads us through the lives of Boaz, Ruth and Naomi. We are shown the highs and lows, ups and downs, loss and gains that life brings about, while also seeing God honoring character on display.

We also see faith evidenced on a variety of levels, along with the patient sovereignty of God at work in the lives of His people, accomplishing His plan for a few, as well as for an entire nation.

THE LAW OF THE REDEEMER

(v9-10)

* Redemption can be defined: to ransom; restore rights; avenging wrong.

We see Boaz as a...

Kinsman Redeemer

Rth 3:9 ESV He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

Redemption affected property or inheritance; it affected marriage and family and national standing. Verse 9 refers to that which was Ruth's request for marriage, was Naomi's request for redemption. Redemption was to purchase back, that which had been lost or taken away.

This is the law of the kinsman redeemer

Deut. 25:5 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

This is Naomi's hope for Boaz, that he would be a husband for Ruth and their kinsman redeemer for the family.

The Reward for Ruth and the Blessing for Naomi

Together they are drifting toward fullness in the form of Boaz's treatment of Ruth, which is God's way of bringing fullness back to Naomi.

Rth 3:10 ESV (10) And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

Alan Carr [SermonNotebook] points out some points of Boaz's treatment of Ruth.

1) v10a. He Received Her - Imagine the fears that must have occupied her mind as she lay there. "What if he rejects me?" "What if he misinterprets my actions?" "What if he publically humiliates me?" "What if he drives me away and refuses to have anything further to do with me?" She needed not worry, for when he speaks, he says "Fear not!"^[v11] [A.Carr]

As we view Boaz as a Christ-like figure, we need never fear Jesus turning us away! He loves you too much to do that,

John 6:37 ESV All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

When you come to Him humbly, honestly, openly and willingly, you will get what you come after. If you need salvation, you can get it at His feet. If it is a closer walk that is your goal, you will find it at His feet. You need not fear rejection, but you should...[prepare for the Master to change your life!]

2) v10,11c. He Rejoiced Over Her - Boaz praises Ruth for her love for him and for her godly lifestyle. He refers to her as “worthy”,^[3:1] If we go back and compare ch.2:1-“worthy” was also a term used that was pertaining to Boaz.

Rth 2:1 ESV Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a **worthy** man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

“Worthy” is referring to high moral character or godliness. It refers to that which is virtuous, or honorable. Ruth’s behavior and godly life, as well as Boaz’s generous heart and God’s sovereign purpose, have all worked together to bring these circumstances to pass for her.

THE PLAN OF THE REDEEMER (3:11-13)

The plan of the Redeemer is to *Redeem*, its what he does. In other words, the redeemer’s purpose is to redeem or to take action which would bring about redemption. He wants to buy back; restore; renew; revive; purify; transform; fill; empower; even utilize that which will accomplish his plan or purpose, and bring Him glory.

A Woman of Virtuous Character

Rth 3:11-12 ESV (11) And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. (12) And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

Again, Alan Carr brings out that Boaz...

1) v11b. He Reassured Her - Boaz responds to Ruth's request by telling her that he will do everything necessary to see that they are together. He will take care of all the matters involved. She had been told that if she could just get to his feet, he would tell her what to do, v. 4. She got there and she was told to trust Boaz, he would see to all the details!

Note: What a truth! If we can ever just get to Jesus' feet, we will find that He is willing to do everything to see to it that our relationship is everything that it should be. You see, what the Lord wants from us is our love. He wants us to be at His feet. When we are there, He will take care of all the details of life, ^[Matt. 6:25-33]. By the way, His name is still Jehovah-Jireh. ^[Gen 22:14]. Those who are at His feet know that they can simply trust Him to see to all the details of life!

v.12) redeemer = "kinsman redeemer" within the Hebrew law of redemption. Prior to 3:10, Boaz is referred to as a relative; or someone from the family or clan of Elimelech. But in v.10 he begins to be referred to with a word meaning Redeemer – which still means kinsman, but more specifically a next of kin in line to redeem under Hebrew law of family redemption.

Rth 3:12 (12) And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

"redeemer nearer" – or one who is more qualified to redeem or who is an even closer relative qualified to redeem, than Boaz. ^[Deut.25:5-10] Actually Boaz is not first in line, so to speak, to be redeemer for Naomi and Ruth.

Boaz shows himself to be...

A Man of Blessed Assurance

Rth 3:13 ESV (13) Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

"remain" or wait, meaning to lodge. "I will redeem you"! This is her promise of blessed assurance. Boaz was devoted to helping this family be redeemed, and that is what Ruth and Naomi needed to be assured of.

Trust in Boaz, the man of God. He tells her to wait, remain, lie down and stay still until morning. This is not a time to jump up and be busily or nervously or eagerly stirring about. It's a time to be quiet.

Isa 30:15 ESV For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength."...

Take **Note of the good pleasure of the Redeemer**: The smile of the Savior is the great reward for those who pay the price to get themselves at his feet. Regardless of the price, regardless of the effort, His smile, His blessings, and His closeness are worth it all! You see, nothing gives Him more pleasure than being able to take your life and mine, hold it out before the world and say, "*This is what I can do with a life laid at my feet!*"^[Eph.2:10; 2Cor.4:7]

Conclusion: When Ruth made the effort to get at the feet of Boaz, everything in her life changed. [Alan Carr]

Likewise, our heavenly Boaz, the Lord Jesus Christ, can and will do the same for you, if you will get at His feet. Who possesses the courage and the resolve to move from where you are right now to get to His feet? (1) If you have never been to the feet of Christ – humbly offering yourself to Him as His own, then I invite you to come to Him today for salvation.

(2) If you have been there consider yourself saved and part of the family of God, yet have wandered away, then I invite you to return to His feet and rediscover the blessings that can only be found there. (3) If you are at His feet right now, then I invite you to come

before Him, thank Him for allowing you to be there and ask Him to help you remain close to Him. It is the redeemer's plan to redeem.

The Hope of the Redeemer (3:14-18

* At this point, Ruth and Naomi are drifting dangerously close to fullness. We have two lessons here for the Church.

We see a demonstration of...

The Redeemer's fullness

* Who was this for? Probably a sign of promise for Ruth and a sign of hope for Naomi. Fullness has returned to Naomi's family.

Rth 3:14-15 ESV (14) So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." (15) And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

(1) Boaz takes careful Precautions to Protect Ruth. Boaz instructs, "don't let it be known..." - Boaz is more concerned with Ruth's reputation than with his own.

(2) He Provides ample Provisions for their needs. Remember 2:16.

Rth 2:16 ESV And **also pull out some from the bundles** for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

Before, she was sent home with added blessing due to Boaz' generosity. Now in 3:15, he heaps out more graciously and more generously than even before.

V15)

1. Boaz was a gracious and virtuous man. He is good in his character, as well as in his generosity.

2. As Boaz gives, so much more our God never sends home true seekers who are empty, and needy, and yet humbly seeking from Him, all that only He can provide.

He giveth, and He giveth liberally—He giveth grace, He giveth more grace

James 4:6 ESV But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

“Six Measures of Barley” – there is no specific reference of definition the word “measure” is intended to take. It literally reads, “he measured out Six of barley”. The word “measure” is implied, in the original, but not defined in its amount. 6 measures of a man’s armload?; or 6 measures of whatever amount would fill her scarf once?; or 6 measures of the barrel on the cart? None the less it is intended to imply abundance, and generosity and fullness – both for Ruth AND for Naomi – especially for Naomi.

Six measures is a reference to the generosity of Boaz. Wealth and good fortune generously distributed, not selfishly hoarded. He is giving, as God has given unto Him, good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over into their lap.^[Lk.6:38]

Remember, God provided Boaz as a husband for Ruth in order to provide redemption for Naomi. This is fullness, not only for Naomi’s life but ultimately for Israel’s, as well.

Here we see ***another lesson for the Church***, that is a demonstration of the Redeemer’s fullness.

We see Ruth giving of herself for Naomi. We see Boaz, giving of himself for both Ruth and Naomi. We have a picture of the Church of Jesus Christ working on behalf of others who are in need – in need of Jesus Christ.

Giving to the Lord – consider all God has done for you and all Christ has given of Himself on your behalf. What an example that is for us.

Giving on behalf of others who are the spiritually needy of our community and mission field, is a godly trait. Your tithes and offerings you give to this church, go toward doing our best to be obedient to Gods word, and fruitfully carrying out the great commission until He comes. Your giving of yourself and of your own resources, is doing your part to contribute to the spiritual

benefit of others, that they may hear the good news of Christ, have opportunity to believe in Jesus, have their sins forgiven and to become true disciples of Jesus and begin their eternal journey with Him.

We see a demonstration of...

The Redeemer's Trustworthiness

* Waiting on the Lord

Rth 3:16-18 ESV And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, (17) saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" (18) She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

Thus far, every chapter has ended with a summary of hope. Now 3:18 also ends with a summary of hope – the assurance of the coming redemption.

v18) - All matters concerning mankind are appointed by a Divine decree in heaven, before they be accomplished by a Divine Providence upon earth. Even all matches and marriages are made in heaven, before ever they come to be realized on earth (Psa_55:22). It is our work to cast care, and it is God's work to take care (1Pe_5:7). We must let God alone with His own work, which is then only well done, when it is done by Himself. The man will not be at rest.

v.18 – Again, Ruth is instructed to “wait”, but this time it is from Naomi. She is to guard against being overly eager due to the possible positive outcome of coming events. She should not act rashly, but should allow time for God to move and work and for others to observe.

Php 1:6 ESV And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Wait v. Work. There is a time for both. When we have trusted, and obeyed and prayed and worked, there is a time for waiting.

It seems to me, that after planning some strategic plans of her own and Ruth carrying them out, Naomi senses that it is now time to trust and see how God will now work this out in His time and in His way.

[READ Is.40:27-31]

Isa 40:31 ESV but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Where are you today? Working? Striving? Praying? Obeying? Or is it time for you to be Trusting and waiting? There is a time and a purpose for each.



“A Redeemer Arises”

Text: Ruth 4:1-11

August 30, 2015

Theme: Hope Restored

Pew Bible, Page 276

* Missions Sunday

“.. and you have received *fullness* in him,
who is the head of all rule and authority...
--Colossians :10

At the cross God wrapped his heart in flesh and blood and let it
be nailed to the cross for our redemption.

--E. Stanley Jones

INRODUCTION

Hope for the future and fullness of life are strong motivators toward a person's perseverance.

We have all has experiences in life that at times are too good to be true. In the midst of that experience have ever said, or heard someone say, "***Somebody pinch me please! I must be dreaming.***"? Well, I suppose that is what Ruth is feeling when you reach the concluding chapters of this book. She finds herself in a situation that is almost unbelievably good! [SermonNotebook]

A brief summary of the last chapter. Naomi coached Ruth in her approach to Boaz for marriage. Boaz agreed to receive Ruth's request for marriage and to do what he can to bring redemption into the family of Ruth and Naomi.

This morning we look at a progression of events leading to redemption.

THE ASSEMBLY GATHERS

(4:1-2)

We see **PREPARATION** for Redemption. In this chapter, we see Naomi's circumstances forming to bring about redemption *and* her perseverance, through times of emptiness, bears the fruit of personal fullness and restored hope.

They have persevered through some significant struggles; that is emotional, physical, spiritual and even situational trials.

Rom 5:3-5 ESV Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces *endurance*, (4) and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, (5) and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

What a beautiful promise of hope, but the conditions are the trials of suffering, which are outside forces, together with perseverance which are inside forces.

Boaz at the city gate

Rth 4:1-2 ESV Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

(v1) The city gate was the place of community business, of merchandise and market produce. The gates were the seat of business transactions and even court justice proceedings. Here Boaz meets the kinsman redeemer who is first in line to redeem Naomi's life and her family lineage.

Boaz with the city elders

Rth 4:2 ESV (2) And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

The city gate was also the social hub of the community. From the many gathered there, Boaz assembles a group to "legally" carry

out the necessary legal process of family redemption according to Hebrew law.

THE ADDRESS OF THE SITUATION (4:3-4)

We See the **PRESENTATION** for Redemption. The address of the situation is presented by Boaz to the assembly. The business of the day begins with the sale of a piece of property.

The Sale of a piece of property

It appears as though the man who was first in line to be Naomi and Ruth's redeemer had not yet heard of the selling of Naomi's property or their interest in being redeemed.

Rth 4:3 ESV (3) Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the *parcel of land* that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

At first, it appears to be a simple business deal, involving a mere parcel of land. But for Boaz, it meant much more.

Boaz defers the...

Request to the closest Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 4:4 (4) So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you."

Boaz makes the request for the sale known and asks for a decision.

"If you will redeem it, redeem it". This man was the closest of kinsman redeemers (v4b) which was qualified to redeem this situation. But if he is not willing, then Boaz, second in line, will redeem it.

We have to admire Boaz at this point. While in his heart he is committed to redeeming the family and marrying Ruth. Nevertheless he abides within the Jewish law of the nearest kinsman redeemer. At this point, having done what he felt was right, he can only trust God and wait for the decision to be handed down. The situation is out of his hands.

First there is...

THE AGREEMENT - Land AND a woman

(4:4b-8)

The **PROBLEM** of the Redemption arises.

The Agreement

Rth 4:4 (ESV) “....And he said, "I will redeem it."

Having heard this agreement, Boaz's heart must have sunk, realizing this would mean that his relationship with Ruth would be over.

[Sermon Notebook: Alan Carr]

A. **The Problem Of The Requirements** - For a man to fulfill the role of the Kinsman Redeemer, there were a few requirements that he had to meet.

1. **Redemption Required A Relationship** - According to Lev. 25:25 (Deut.25) , the kinsman redeemer had to be a near relative of the person being redeemed. Both Boaz and the other kinsman fulfilled this requirement, (Ruth 2:1; 2:20).

2. **Redemption Required Resources** - That same passage teaches that the kinsman redeemer had to have the funds to buy back the sold possession. Both men would also fulfill this requirement. (Ruth 2:1).

3. **Redemption Required A Resolve** – (Lev. 25:25 and Deut. 25:5-10) teach that the kinsman redeemer had to be willing to buy back the inheritance of his kinsman. Once again, both men fulfilled this requirement. (3:11).

(Note: For the saints of God, Boaz is a picture of our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Savior also fulfills all the necessary requirements to qualify as our redeemer. He has a relationship to us, (Phil. 2:5-8). He has the proper resources (Eph. 3:20).

Heb 7:25 ESV Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

And, He was willing to pay the price for our redemption - Mark 10:45; John 18:37. Jesus alone is qualified to be the Redeemer of mankind!)

Up to this point, both men qualify to be the kinsman redeemer for this family. The first in line has agreed to the deal. But an unforeseen problem is brought up.

Everything changes when Boaz shares...

The Clarification or Ruth

Everything changes once Boaz shares the information that along with the plot of land, Ruth comes as part of the package.

Rth 4:5- ESV (5) Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance."

You buy the field and you get Ruth. Now⁴ the situation takes on a different challenge for the kinsman redeemer and perhaps a renewed hope for Boaz.

The Decline

After hearing the information about the inclusion of Ruth, the kinsman redeemer then declines. We can only imagine that Boaz is inwardly thrilled with these turn of events.

Rth 4:6-8 (6) Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it." (7) Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. (8) So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal.

[ref. Deut.25:5-10]

In other words, the redeemer is concerned that if he takes the deal with Ruth as his wife, his own family relationships will be in jeopardy. Clearly if he is already married, then that could present untold problems, both with present relationships, as well as with

future inheritance issues. He is not side stepping his promise to redeem, but only responding appropriately when the bigger picture is presented and the potential family dangers considered.

Throughout this story, we see Boaz as the redeemer. Then Boaz reveals that there is one who is nearest of kin and more qualified to be the redeemer. When that man declines, the spotlight falls back onto Boaz and The Redeemer Arises and it is indeed, Boaz.

THE ALTERNATE - *Land AND a woman* (4:9-11)

* The **PROCEEDINGS** of Redemption go forward.

Col. 2:6-10 ESV Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, (7) rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (8) See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. (9) For in him the whole *fullness* of deity dwells bodily, (10) and you have received *fullness* in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

We have been given fullness in Christ. He fills all things and desires to rule all things. When the Redeemer Redeems, life becomes all about Him – or at least that is the intent.

And when Christ becomes our Redeemer, our lives are changed and our focus must be changed. Our lives are taken in a different direction. Our passions and purpose are changed. Christ becomes our all in all.

Jesus Christ...
our Greatest Purpose,
our Highest Calling,
our Soul's Source and Joy
and our All-Consuming Passion.

Who is Jesus Christ to you?

Boaz becomes Redeemer

And for Naomi and Ruth, their life is in him, as God's channel of blessedness in the LORD.

Rth 4:9-10 ESV Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. (10) Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Boaz acquires the land (v9) and also Acquires Ruth, purchased as his wife. (v10)

[Pulpit Commentary]

v.20 - This, to Boaz, would be by far the most delightful part of the day's proceedings. His heart would swell with manly pride and devout gratitude when he realized, amid all the cumbrous technicalities of old Hebrew law, that Ruth was his. And he would rejoice all the more, as, in virtue of her connection with Machlon and Elimelech, both of their names would still be encircled with honor, and might, by the blessing of Yahveh, be linked on distinguishingly and lovingly to future generations. Note the expression, "that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place." The people who assembled at the gate might on some future day be able to say, "This boy is the heir of Machlon and Elimelech, who once migrated to Moab."

So chapter 4 brings about Redemption that has been so long anticipated and sought. Redemption has taken place. Hope has now been secured for Ruth, Naomi and the family name of Elimelech.

A Community of Witnesses

I find it interesting how the community played such a part in this proceeding.

Rth 4:11 ESV (11) Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. **May the LORD** make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. **May you act worthily** in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

1) The witnesses testify as being part of this historic event and pleased with the day's business.

2) The Blessing is another spoken prayer or blessing of the LORD upon Boaz and his new family.

a) *"May the Lord...make her like Rachel and Leah"*

– In other words, their desire was for Ruth to be as blessed and as fruitful as was the first mothers of Israel. The blessing of God is viewed as being evidenced through many children.

"Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward. (4) Like arrows in the hand
of a warrior are the children of one's youth. (5) Blessed is
the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not
be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies
in the gate." -**Psalm 127:3-5** ESV

In short, the prayer is for God to bring His fullness into this family.

b) *"may You act **worthily**..."*

"May you act **worthily**..." – i.e. worthily [cp. the following]

Ruth_2:1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a **worthy** man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

Ruth_3:11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a **worthy** woman.

In other words, "may you act according to your established reputation of honorable character" – being a virtuous man.

"...and be renown.." – i.e. may this act be made known in all of Israel and in centuries to come. And may your fame as an

honorable (*worthy*) man of God toward others, go before you and extend throughout history.

APPLICATION *for* CONSIDERATION

We see God at work in all the characters. And when God is at work, God is at work changing us. You see, in the verses of this little book, Ruth has worn the garments of a **Widow**, Chapter 1; of a **Worker**, Chapter 2 and of a **Woman**, Chapter 3. But, in this concluding section of the book, we see Ruth wearing the garments of a **Wife**! For her it must have been like a fairy tale! She must have felt like Cinderella as the handsome prince swept her off her feet to live happily ever after.

Boaz has worn the hat of a Land owner, a master of servants, a keeper of beggars, a Man of honor in the gates of the city and ultimately, a Redeemer.

Naomi has worn the label of traveler, alien, widow, griever, mother-in-law, friend, and life coach toward Ruth.

In this book, God has been working in the lives of all, showing Himself present and Lord of All, and has been changing everyone. In the book of Ruth, we as the readers learn of perseverance- not giving up on life or on God. We have learned what it means to give yourself and work hard, even sacrificing yourself on behalf of others.

We have learned of our own unmerited blessedness in the Lord – being undeserving recipients of the goodness and favor of God.

And we also learn what it means to view your own life as God's means of blessing others. God was working in Ruth's life by using Boaz to bring blessing to Ruth, in order to bring fullness back to Naomi.

Take a moment and read the words of this old hymn. Also, take notice that the refrain is a *prayer*.

Make Me A Blessing, by George S. Schuler

Verse 1: Out in the highways and byways of life,
Many are weary and sad;
Carry the sunshine where darkness is rife,
Making the sorrowing glad.

Refrain:

Make me a blessing, make me a blessing,
Out of my life may Jesus shine;
Make me a blessing, O Savior, I pray,
Make me a blessing to someone today.

Verse 2: Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love,
Tell of His pow'r to forgive;
Others will trust Him if only you prove
True, every moment you live. (Refrain)

Verse 3: Give as 'twas given to you in you need,
Love as the Master loved you;
Be to the helpless a helper indeed,
Unto your mission be true. (Refrain)

I spoke with a fellow this week, at the fair. He said, “some people say I talk too much, but I’ve got a lot to talk about.” He believed that God brings people into our lives for a purpose. And he wanted his conversation with others, to be such that when they walked away from him, they were “without excuse”, because he always tells them something about the Lord Jesus.

What do your words communicate to others? What does your life, channel into the lives of others? Peace and Joy? Or a soured scowling disposition? Is your life a channel of God’s love through Christ? Or is it a deterrent to those who might be seeking? Is your life an influence of Hope and a message of redemption?

[Closing song: I WILL FOLLOW]

All Gods' ways are good. Where He leads, we follow. Though we don't understand – we follow. Then, like Ruth and Naomi, we discover that the longer we follow, the more we begin to understand. It takes a while, but it eventually comes.



“Hope Renewed and Fullness Restored”

Text: Ruth 4:12-18

September 6, 2015

Theme: Hope Restored

Pew Bible, Page 276

Final Message on RUTH –

Series: “Our Unmerited Blessedness in the Lord”

Title: “Hope Renewed: Fullness Restored”

“You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have
loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness.”

- Psalm 30:11 ESV

People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived,
reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone.

--Audrey Hepburn

SUMMARY OF BOOK OF RUTH:

As far as we can determine, this family is not responsible for their trials. Their trials and sufferings – their family’s loss of homeland, family deaths, personal hopelessness, emptiness and calamity, even family separation are not their fault.

The turning point in the life of this family is revealed in 1:6

Rth 1:6 ESV Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.

This was a foreshadowing of the turn around of Israel's plight in general, but of Naomi's family in specific.

IN THIS BOOK we have learned among other things, the hope that faith in God can sustain, and the value of perseverance in our challenges of life, along with the NT principle of belief in our own Redeemer, Gods' Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thursday morning, with our family's old house packed up, cleaned up and everything ready to sell, - before leaving the family headquarters for the last time, I sat down with my cup of coffee around the family dinner table and read Ruth chapter 4 one more time. I thought of Naomi's emptiness and how God in ch.4, brings about such increase and such fullness.

Then I thought of our family, and of everything I used to have growing up, that I thought was valuable to me – all that was now priced to sell at next week's estate sale or its in the dumpster in the driveway. And as the house is being prepared to be emptied, I sat there and thought of all the fullness God has brought into my life over the years since I had moved out of that house. My family, friends, churches, opportunities to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. And I realized: "What God whittles away and empties out in one area of life, He brings fullness and restoration in another area of life.

He never promises to give back what He takes away. But He does promise to restore, renew, revive and revisit with His presence and fullness.

INRODUCTION

Our title for this morning from Ruth 4:11-18 is: "Hope Renewed: Fullness Restored"

Our Theme which flows through this chapter is: Perseverance Is Rewarded & Redemption Is Achieved. And now for Naomi's family, "unmerited blessedness in the LORD" comes in like a flood.

And that which Naomi believed to be true about God, but felt as though she had failed to experience - has now come to pass. And as a result, Her Perseverance Is Rewarded and Her Redemption Is Achieved.

This holds a message of hope to all of us who believe the truth about something pertaining to Gods' kingdom principles, and yet feel that we have failed to experience that principle.

Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD

We begin with...

BLESSING FROM THE WITNESSES TO BOAZ (4:11-12)

Support from the family of God can become an unmerited blessing in the Lord For His people.

The blessing of Israel (covenant)

* The people of God is the focus here- Israel and Bethlehem, Ephrathah.

Ruth 4:11ESV Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

This blessing relates to God's promises in His covenant with Abraham.

Gen 12:2-3 ESV (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

[comp: Gen.15:5; 22:17]

The Blessing or fertility and lineage

This was not meant to be a blessing to Boaz's family alone, but for all of Israel.,

Ruth 4:12 ESV (12) and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman."

Why is Perez and Tamar mentioned? According to Numb.26:20-22, Perez's family clan was one of the largest clans in the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Judah was known as the largest and most fruitful of all the tribes of the children of Israel. So their prayer of blessing that God's favor and unmerited blessedness would rest heavily upon the family and that they would be fruitful in child bearing, and in so doing, they would bless Israel. (v.11-12)

Now we finally come to the focal point of this book.

BOAZ MARRIES RUTH

(4:13)

Note: Boaz is not pursuing Ruth. Instead, he is pursuing God's will and is doing what is right in view of the law of Hebrew family redemption; He is trusting God, waiting for God to work out the results and allowing God to work, even through circumstances and even if it means losing Ruth as his wife, if that is what the LORD has in store.

Sometimes in relationships people are frantically trying to find a spouse or desperately trying to hook someone or hang onto someone with little thought or interest as to whether or not it is what God wants.

I once knew a fellow in my church and every time I asked him, "Hi Jerry, how are you doing?" His response was typically, "no girlfriend. No dates." And I thought, "No wonder!" He was totally preoccupied with "girls".

Boaz does not take drastic measures to snag a woman. Neither is the marriage itself made much of.

Boaz marries Ruth

* The Long Awaited Covenant of marriage finally takes place.
BUT *DON'T BLINK!*

Ruth 4:13 ESV (13) So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife...

There it is. Scripture doesn't make much of the ceremony itself. We don't know what Ruth wore, or what their wedding vows consisted of. We don't know where it was held or who was invited. We are simply told that it happened. In that short, sweet sentence, the marriage takes place and redemption is achieved.

Ruth Bears a Son

* The Promised Provision of Fullness comes in like a flood.

Ruth 4:13 ESV (13) So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

With the marriage, redemption takes place. With the birth of a son, hope is renewed and fullness has returned to the life of Naomi. .

A BLESSING FROM THE WOMEN TO NAOMI (4:14-15)

Women encouraging women and nurturing in the faith. This is what enables on person to persevere through difficult times.

The Blessing of Renown or Fame

Though we don't actually hear from Naomi, another spoken blessing from the women in attendance is addressed to Naomi.

Ruth 4:14 ESV (14) Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!

that *HIS* name may be famous in Israel; some see the "his", as referring to the name of God, by whose providence this was brought about; others view it as a reference to Boaz, who was well

spoken of for his charity, integrity, and humility, shown in redeeming the estate, and taking Ruth to wife; or rather it refers to the newborn child, of whom they express their hope and confidence, that when he came to man's estate would be very famous and honourable in Israel, being a worthy and virtuous man himself, and the progenitor of such illustrious persons as Jesse, David and even of the Messiah. [John Gill]

The Blessing of Restoration of Fullness

Now here in 4:15 we read:

Ruth 4:15 ESV (15) He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to **HIM.**

Just who is the "**Him**", being referred to here? It has to refer back to her son. Take note of the references.

Ruth 4:13 ESV (13) So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a **SON.**

Ruth 4:14 ESV (14) Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a **REDEEMER**, and may **HIS** name be renowned in Israel!

Ruth 4:15 ESV (15) **HE** shall be to you a **RESTORER** of life and a **NOURISHER** of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to **HIM.**

"Life is Redeemed!
Hope is Renewed!
and Fullness is Restored"

And it's a good day for Naomi!

Rth 1:21 ESV I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought **calamity** upon me?"

In Ruth 3:17 we read:

Ruth 3:17 LITV And she said, He gave me these six measures of barley, for he said, ***You shall not*** go empty to your mother-in-law.

That can read: “***You must not*** go empty...” as though she had something to do with it. But it can also read, “***You shall not*** go empty...” more as a promise.

Ruth 4:16 ESV (16) Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her ***lap*** and became his nurse

Here is notification that fullness has officially returned to Naomi.

Luk 6:38 ESV give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your ***lap***. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

God blesses Boaz and Ruth with a family, in order to bless Naomi with Renewed Hope and Restored fullness. Lk. 6:38 –fullness will be poured into your lap... [paraphrased].

Naomi is unaware of the extent of...

THE BLESSEDNESS OF FULLNESS OF FAMILY LINEAGE (4:17-18)

As in each chapter in the book of Ruth, chapter 4 ends with a summary of hope.

The community named Ruth's Son

Ruth 4:17 ESV (17) And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

If Naomi could only have known just how far and how full her unmerited blessedness in the Lord would one day reach – all the way to the throne of Israel and on to heaven.

Ruth's Son is in line of Royalty

Ruth 4:18 ESV (18) Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, (19) Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered

Amminadab, (20) Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, (21) Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, (22) Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

The genealogy closes with David, an evident proof that the book was intended to give a family picture from the life of the pious ancestors of this great and godly king of Israel. But for us the history which points to David acquires a still higher signification, from the fact that all the members of the genealogy of David whose names occur here are also found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. "The passage is given by Matthew word for word in the genealogy of Christ, that we may see that this history looks not so much to David as to Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed by all as the Saviour and Redeemer of the human race, and that we may learn with what wonderful compassion the Lord raises up the lowly and despised, to the greatest glory and majesty" [K&D, (Brentius)].

APPLICATION

Let's look at a lesson application from each chapter.

Chapter 1) God does not lead us into the desert of life and then say, "See ya!". That is never God's plan. He is always with us in the deserts of life.

"He Didn't Bring Us This Far, To Leave Us",
by The Imperials

"He didn't bring us this far to leave us
He didn't teach us to swim to let us drown
He didn't build His home in us to move away
He didn't lift us up to let us down"

In the end, no work nor even word of Ruth or Naomi are recorded – not even a word in this final chapter. Perhaps we have hoped to hear Naomi express a changed attitude from her previous years of calamity, as she embraced this renewed time of personal restoration and fullness - -but the events speak for themselves.

ASSIGNMENT: Consider the trials in your life and share with one person whom you trust. Share with them how you are trusting God to bring about renewal of hope and restored fullness into your life.

Chapter 2) God's plans are without human limits.

Understanding by faith, that the work of God in one life, means an additional and perhaps greater effect in the life of others beyond you.

Perhaps like Boaz, we could see ourselves as vessels of God's blessings to others whom He brings into contact with us.

ASSIGNMENT: Consider the many people God has brought into your life and your realm of influence. How might you begin to be a source of blessing and fullness in the lives of each one of them?

Chapter 3) Boaz was a person of redemption in the life of emptiness and calamity.

ASSIGNMENT: Identify 1 or 2 people whom God has placed in your life, who have brought help and hope and support to you in times of hardship. First, thank God for them, then Thank THEM, by letting them know how God has used them and how much you appreciate their input into your life.

Chapter 4) God's redemption does not simply refer to spiritual salvation or the salvation of the soul. He is in the business of redeeming and using all of life's experiences and turning all those things around to accomplish His will and renew our present hope and fullness.

Ecc 3:11 ESV *He has made everything beautiful* in its time....

Rev 21:5 And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, *I make all things new.*" Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

The marriage of Ruth and Boaz.

The Redemption of Naomi and Elimelech's family line.

The birth of her grandson, Obed.

Psa 30:10-11 ESV Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me! O LORD, be my helper!" (11) You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,

ASSIGNMENT: Identify situations in your life, which seemed hopeless, but God has brought redemption out of the situation. Praise God for those experiences.

NOW Lets look at a few Book Theme Lessons:

Book theme Lesson 1) "Perseverance brings about the hope of its rewards. Persevered through periods of disappointment and disillusionment, emptiness and sorrow, until God rewarded her with joy, fullness and unmerited blessedness again.

If only she could have read the end of verse 17-v22, she would have seen that what she thought was fullness and blessing to her family, was more far-reaching than she could have imagined. For the redeemer for her, would be in line of Israel's greatest king and opened the doors of heaven for all of Israel to experience **THE UNMERITED BLESSEDNESS IN THE LORD** and personal eternal salvation through mankind's ultimate Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Perseverance is Key!*

Working hard, even on behalf of others, carries with it, great personal kingdom reward for the future.

Book theme Lesson 2) We have Our own Blessed Redemption and fullness in Christ.

- 1) We have hope in Christ 2) We have fullness in Jesus Christ
- 3) We have Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD

Eph 1:7-12 ESV In him we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the **riches** of his grace, (8) which he **lavished** upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his

purpose, which he set forth in Christ (10) as a plan for the **fullness** of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (11) In him we have obtained an **inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to **hope** in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD is in Christ

The book of “Ruth” is about Hope Renewed and Fullness Restored. When God renews, redeems or restores, He does not necessarily give us back what we have lost. But He does bring about new experiences and bestows new blessings, that are intended to remind us of His faithfulness, mercy and benevolence – and that we are all unmerited recipients of His undeserved favor, because **WE ARE HIS!**

It is my prayer that this series, helps us see that Our Unmerited Blessedness in the LORD, does not lie in what He gives us, but how He might choose to use each of us to bring His blessing and fullness into the lives of those around us, whom God has brought into our realm of influence.

Also, Naomi’s fullness would prove to be Israel’s fullness.

God’s fullness and blessing and purpose for you may not be personally, fully experienced in this life. He may use you to be the beginning or the avenue of blessing to others far down the road, by what you are doing and experiencing right now. Think about that!

God brought Hope Renewed: Fullness Restored back into Naomi’s life at the end of this book. I heard someone say this week, that your life is a book. Today is a page in the book of your life. You are not at the end yet. We must persevere, and continue to trust God for every page of every day.

We must continue to believe that He has a greater hope and a deeper fullness for us, than we had imagined. We should not look for the things we have lost to be returned. But we should be looking for all the unmerited blessedness in the LORD that he has

yet to bestow on us – and not just on us, but through us and into the lives of others whom God brings into our lives.

In closing, Ruth gave herself on behalf of Naomi. Consider the idea that God may have people in your life, that He is calling you to help – perhaps spiritually, emotionally with support and encouragement; maybe even financially. Is there someone in your life that God may want you to bring support to or to help? What is keeping you from acting on that leading of God.

You could be the channel of blessing and the means of God bringing hope and fullness back into a life of another struggling soul. Your life in Christ is an open book – page by page, being written day, by day. And yet God has known your end for the beginning. Live His Life.



Don't close this booklet yet

without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior or *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8
For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13
But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God, -
John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?
*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
Christ E. Free Church, PO Box 619, 19682 Hill Rd,
Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

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your greatest purpose,

your soul's source and joy,

and your all-consuming passion.

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

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