

# The Gospel of Ruth: Grace Rewrites Ordinary Lives | Redemption, Faith & God's Steadfast Love

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Date: 10 November 2025

[0:00] Now, to explain the title, The Gospel of Ruth, I'm not talking about some newly found apocryphal book. We're talking about the book of Ruth, but in a way it's The Gospel of Ruth.

And you could call it Ruth's story is the gospel in a nutshell in some ways, how God works in the lives of ordinary people. So if you'd like to turn to Ruth, it's I think the eighth book after Joshua Judges, then you've got the little book of Ruth, just four chapters, so it's easy to skip it in your Bible as you're flicking through.

Ruth's story, The Gospel of Ruth. God works through quiet lives, humble, unseen and faithful ones. And Ruth's story, it should prompt us to consider how grace reaches the outsider.

And grace rewrites the story of our life. Grace points to the redeemer. There's all of those kind of themes in the book. And Ruth has this story of hope, of love, of redemption in a world of chaos. Setting the scene, we see it was the time of the judges and Judges 21-25 tells how, in those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

[1:22] Sounds a bit like Australia at the moment, doesn't it? Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. It was a time of chaos, a crisis time, society was broken.

It was a time of famine, of loss, of grief, death. And here into this broken world steps Ruth. A widow, a foreigner, from Moab of all places.

A people under God's judgment. The Moabites, the enemies of Israel. Ruth, she had no status, no safety, no future.

A widow. It was a drastic place to be. An outsider, here she was in Bethlehem, which means the house of bread.

But it was a time of famine. And now this humble woman is bending her back in the barley fields, picking up leftover grain. How humbling that would be.

[2:26] Yet weaving in her life, God was preparing her to be the one who would be very pivotal in the royal line leading up to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her great-grandson would be King David. Israel's shepherd king. She didn't know that just now. She was the humble woman, bowed down in the sun, in the barley fields, picking grain.

Yet her name would appear in the New Testament. In Matthew 1, verse 5, Boaz begat Obed of Ruth. A pagan widow becomes part of God's master plan, of the Messiah's family tree.

That's the wonder of grace. Grace. You could say that the gospel is here. Sometimes people like to think, well, grace wasn't until Paul.

Well, actually, grace was right back in Genesis. Right back at the very beginning of the book. Of course, we're especially under grace now. But grace was there right through from Genesis to Revelation.

[3:38] And in the book of Ruth, we see grace. Grace reaching the outsider. Grace rewriting her story. And Ruth's story is also about God's steadfast love.

The Hebrew word hesed is something that features in the book. Hesed. It means God's steadfast love. His abounding faithfulness.

It's the heart of God. It's his kindness. His overflowing goodness. And you see that, for example, in Exodus 34, verse 6. It tells of the Lord God.

The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. The word goodness there is this same word, hesed. It's God's goodness.

It's God's kindness. It's akin to grace, really. This word. It speaks of God's kindness, of his mercy, especially towards those who don't deserve it.

[4:37] Do we deserve God's love? Yet he gives it. He lavishes it, doesn't he? It's unmerited. It's persistent.

It's his compassion. It's grace, divine favor, forgiveness, extended without obligation. The goodness of God. We don't deserve it.

Yet he gives it. So graciously, his gift. Grace. Grace. Grace. Marvellous, infinite, matchless. Grace that is greater than all my sin.

And we see grace at work in Ruth in her life. Grace has been working since Genesis. And now it's at work in the gospel, if you like. The gospel of Ruth. In Ruth chapter 1, we see her resolve.

We see her resolve, her resolution. And we see how grace draws us home to the Father's heart.

Now, Elimelech flees Bethlehem during famine.

[5:38] That's Naomi's husband. And Elimelech leaves the promised land for Moab, Israel's enemy. Leaves the promised land for Moab.

A land of idols. Bad move. Elimelech dies there. His sons marry Moabite women. Orpah and Ruth. Ten years pass. No children. Then both sons die. Disaster. Yet there comes a whisper of hope. As Naomi hears the report.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab. This is Naomi. For she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

A whisper of hope. The famine is broken in Israel. And Naomi decides to return to her home. Her homeland.

[6:45] To Bethlehem. And she tells her daughters-in-law, go back. Start over. I'm going to Bethlehem. And Orpah leaves.

But Ruth clings. It tells how she clave unto Naomi. She clave unto her. It means to hold fast.

To clave. To cleave. Like you'd hold on to a lifeline. As a drowning person. You hold on to that lifeline for dear life. It's a cleaving.

It's like a sticking like glue. Super glue. That's how Ruth clave unto Naomi. She wouldn't let her go. Her mother-in-law. And then we see Ruth's great faith vow.

She declares. She confesses. Her faith. And Ruth said. This is Ruth 1.16.

[7:45] And Ruth said. Entreat me not to leave thee. Or to return from following after thee. For where thou goest I will go. And where thou lodgest I will lodge.

Thy people shall be my people. And thy God. My God. That's faith. Ruth is leaving her homeland. Her gods. Her family.

Everything familiar. To follow Naomi. And to trust Naomi's God. Even going into the unknown. That was for her. And it's a conversion moment here. She turns from Moab to the master.

And she trades Moab's idols for the living God. When Naomi sees Ruth's steadfastness. She stops arguing. She could see there's no point. Because it tells of Ruth.

She was steadfastly minded. To go with her. She'd made up her mind. I'm going to steadfastly decide. I'm going with you. Naomi. And when they arrive in Beverlyham.

[8:42] The women of the town. Whisper. Is this Naomi? Is this Naomi? Of course it had been some years since they'd seen her.

But all the city was moved about. And they said. Is this Naomi? And Naomi it says. She said unto them. Call me not Naomi.

Her name Naomi. It means pleasant. Call me not Naomi. Call me Mara. For the Almighty have dealt very bitterly with me.

I went out full. And the Lord have brought me home again. Empty. Naomi. She felt empty.

But she wasn't. Ruth was God's quiet gift. Of grace. Standing right there. With her. She wasn't empty.

[9:41] And it can feel like that. When life feels bitter. When it feels like things are. In this. Low place.

Grace is still beside you. She wasn't empty. Grace was there. In the person of Ruth. Standing by her. Naomi. She's blinded by sorrow.

And grief. But God is already rebuilding her life. Through Ruth. And Ruth's loyalty here. You see. That real love. Love. What real love looks like. She's standing by. She's standing with. Her mother-in-law. Faithful. Even when life's falling apart. That's what the Bible calls. Heseb. This steadfast. Covenant love. This love that is loyal. And true. It reads of that love. It tells us in Micah 6.8. He hath showed thee.

[10:38] O man. What doth the Lord require of thee. But to. Do justly. And to love mercy. And to walk humbly.

With thy God. This word mercy. Is that heseb again. It's that. Mercy of God. It's that goodness of God. It's that. Love and kindness of God. And we should want that too.

And Ruth. Displayed that. Kind of heseb. That selfless. Love. She stayed with Naomi. When she could have left.

She could have gone back. To what was familiar. To Moab. To I suppose. Her other family. Of her own. That familiar place. But no. She left Moab.

For the master. She wanted Naomi's God. To be her God. She was steadfast. She clung. When others let go. And you too.

[11:34] You can watch how God. Can turn your bitterness. Into blessing. That trouble. Became. The way that God.

Worked. His wonders. In her life. And she went really from emptiness. Into abundance. Both Naomi. And Ruth. As we'll see. So that's chapter one.

In a nutshell. We're just skipping through. Some of the. Prominent. Pieces. Of the book. Now notice. Secondly. Chapter two. Notice.

Ruth's reliance. We've seen her resolve. We've seen. That grace. Draws us home. Now we see. Ruth's reliance. Grace. Providing. Under his wings. Ruth two. Verse two. Tells us. And Ruth. The Moabites. Said unto Naomi.

[12:30] Let me now go to the field. And glean ears of corn. After him. In his sight. I shall find. Grace. There's that word again. And she said unto her. Go. My daughter.

The barley harvest. Begins. Ruth is looking for grace. Grace. And that word grace. It appears again and again. In her story.

Grace is unearned. It's undeserved. It's unexpected. And Ruth doesn't demand or complain. She sees there's work to do.

She goes out. Humble. Hopeful. Doing what she can. Trusting God. Well. Do the rest. And under the law of Moses. At this time. The poor could gather the leftover grain.

From the harvest time. It was a beautiful picture of God's care. For the needy. Provision was made. It's God's heart. And here's Ruth now.

[13:27] She's bending her back. In that. Hardship. In that. Harvest field. The sun beating down on her back.

Picking up leftover grain. On her hands and knees. Trusting God's provision. And then the Bible tells how.

She went out. And came and gleaned. In the field after the reapers. And her hat. Was to light on a part of the field.

Belonging unto Boaz. Who was of the kindred of. Elimelech. Her hat. In other words. It's kind of happenstance. She just happened. It just so happened.

A coincidence. You know. Sometimes as Christians. We say. No. It wasn't a coincidence. It was a God incidence. Wasn't it? That. Hey. God's in this. Was it by chance?

[14:24] No. Not at all. God was in it. There's no such thing as chance. In the life of a believer. And that's providence here. Her hat. Just happened.

Just happened. To come. To Bethlehem. Just happened. To come. At the time of the barley harvest. Just happened. To come. To the field. Boaz's field.

Who is. A family. Member. Boaz greets his workers then. The Lord be with you. He says. He was a man. Who brought the Lord.

Into his everyday work day. Isn't that something good? I know some workplaces. Might not appreciate you. Saying the Lord be with you. When you greet people in the morning. But that's what

Boaz did.

He brought God into his work day. And here we notice Ruth's character. She's diligent. Humble. Steady. And. Boaz.

[15:20] The owner. Of the field. Asked the foreman. Of Ruth. And he reports. She hath come early. And hath continued from the morning until now.

And she's only had kind of a little break here and there. She's been full on. Basically she's hardly stopped. Since she started. Early this morning. Faithfulness.

In the everyday. That was Ruth. It catches Boaz's. Attention. And Boaz. He offers her. Protection and kindness. Far beyond the law.

And he offers for Ruth. A place even. At his very table. This was. Amazing. And it tells Ruth's reaction.

She's overwhelmed. Then she fell on her face. And bowed herself to the ground. And said unto him. Why have I found grace. Grace. In thine eyes. That thou shouldst take knowledge of me.

[16:18] Seeing I am a stranger. She's overwhelmed. About grace. And Boaz blesses her for her faithfulness. And he prays.

The Lord recompense thy work. And a full reward be given thee. Of the Lord God of Israel. Under whose wings. Thou art come. To trust. He sees her faithfulness. He praises her.

He prays for her. And this is the gospel invitation. Under his wings. Under his wings. Thou art come to trust. Here's what every sinner must do. To come under the shadow.

To come under the shadow. Of the almighty. To come under his feathers. To find refuge under his wings. And rest in his grace. What a picture.

Of salvation. And later. He tells his man. To drop handfuls. Of purpose for her. He says. Let also some of the handfuls. Of purpose for her.

[17:14] And leave them. That she may glean them. And rebuke her not. Little bundles of blessing. That the reapers would leave. Deliberately leave. Chunks. Of bundles.

Of barley grain. Left behind. Deliberately for her. Isn't that how God deals with us. He leaves bundles of blessings.

Doesn't he. Along the way. In the path of those. Who rely upon him. And it tells in the story. That Ruth goes home. With abundance. About 17 kilos.

Of barley. And that's a fair weight. To carry. Isn't it. 17 kilos. Of barley. And she comes home. Naomi sees the barley. And she bursts it.

Out with renewed faith. She recognizes the hand of God. In all of this. And this is Ruth too. That Ruth tells the man's name. Boaz.

[18:10] And Naomi said unto her. Daughter-in-law. Blessed be he of the Lord. Who hath not left off his kindness. To the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her. The man is near of kin.

Unto us. One of our next kinsmen. In other words. One of our redeemers. He had this. Potential to be a redeemer. To buy back. So it's a picture of the.

The redeemer. The kinsman redeemer. Speaking of our Lord. And Ruth's humility here. It positioned her. For divine blessing. She asked for grace.

Not for rights. She trusted. Quietly trusted. And God worked powerfully. So you can see in Ruth's life. The quiet trust. Knowing that God is working.

Where we cannot see. We can have the same faith. In chapter 3. Ruth found rest. She found rest. She found grace again.

[19:06] At the redeemer's feet. A picture of the rest we can find in Christ. Our redeemer. It tells Naomi seeks rest for Ruth. In verse 1 of chapter 3.

My daughter. Shall I not seek rest for thee? Rest. Rest. It speaks of security. Of a home. Of a future. We can think of the rest.

That we have in Christ. Isn't it? When we follow. When we come. To leave off our dead works. Our own works. And trust in the finished work. There's a rest.

We can rest in the finished work. We can find a rest. There's a security there. There's a home there. There's a future there. There's heaven there. That rest of the believer. And Boaz is a near kinsman.

He's got this right to redeem. In other words. To buy their family land. And to marry the widow. To carry on the family name. So he had his special privilege.

[20:03] That he could be the one to redeem. And Naomi instructs Ruth. Ruth 3 verse 3. Wash thyself. Anoint thee. Put thy raiment upon thee.

And get thee down to the floor. She's directing Ruth to the threshing floor. It was a place of winnowing. Where the grain was separated from the chaff. They throw it up.

And the wind blows the chaff away. To have the barley separated. And this was what was happening in this time of harvest.

The gathering. And then this threshing. So the grain could be collected. And Ruth replies to her mother-in-law. With humble courage.

She says all that thou sayest unto me. I will do. She just obeyed. What a picture of really. That response God wants from us.

[21:00] To trust. To obey. And she quietly uncovers Boaz's feet. And she lies down. As her mother-in-law directed. It was a symbolic request.

For redemption. Here she is lying down at Boaz's feet. At the threshing floor. He's asleep. And he awakes. And he says. Who art thou? And she answered.

I am Ruth thine handmaid. Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid. For thou art a near kinsman. Now. The meaning here.

The word skirt. Is also the word wing. Where he prayed before in chapter 2. That she would find shelter under the wings.

Of God. And she's saying. Spread your skirt. Your wing. Over me. In other words. She's saying here. Do as you prayed. Cover me with your wing.

[21:56] Of grace. It's a picture of her. Trusting. In the covering. Of the redeemer. The one who would redeem her. And Boaz blesses her back.

He says. Blessed be thou of the Lord. My daughter. For thou hast showed more kindness. Hesus. Same word. You showed the kindness of God. You've shown the goodness of God.

You've shown that loyal love. That covenant love. You've shown more than. More kindness than really. Could be expected. You didn't go looking for a younger man. But you came to the redeemer. And verse 11. It tells. Now my daughter. Fear not. I will do to thee. All that thou requirest. For all the city of my people. Doth know. That thou art a virtuous woman.

All the city knows. You're a virtuous woman. What a testimony Ruth had. People knew her. They knew she was real. They knew she was fair dinkum. They knew her character. A woman with integrity.

[22:52] And grace. She didn't chase after young men. She waited on God's promise. On God's timing. And Boaz promises to act the very next day.

But before she leaves. Boaz fills her shawl with barley. A massive gift. About 27 kilos. She must have been getting the muscles up.

Carrying all this barley. Can you imagine? I don't know. I should get a bag full of 27 kilos of barley. Just to demonstrate. But I imagine that would be fair. A fair stack of barley. Wouldn't it?

27 kilos. He says go not empty. Hey. He gives her abundance. That's grace again. Isn't it? Grace. She didn't work for it. That's grace.

Isn't it? Abundance. God's supply. God's provision. And she came to her redeemer in need. And she left with abundance. When she went back home. On the final chapter now.

[23:49] You could say that grace writes the final chapter of our lives. Chapter 4 of Ruth. It's a story now of redemption. The whole book really is about redemption. It's God's grand design.

It's grace from cover to cover of her story. And grace is God's grand design. And then we see what happens next.

Boaz is seated at the city gate. And he publicly redeems the land and Ruth. Making her his wife. And he declares ye are witnesses.

He says I have bought all. Moreover Ruth have I purchased to be my wife. The word purchased here it means redeemed. He says I've redeemed Ruth.

I've restored her. I've claimed her. She's mine. That's salvation isn't it? Where the redeemer says you're mine.

[24:49] You belong. You're mine. My purchased possession. You're my family now he says. As many as received him. He gave power to become the sons of God.

Even to them that believed on his name. Redeemed. How I love to proclaim it. And the Lord then gives them a son. So Boaz took Ruth and she was his wife.

And the Lord gave her conception. And she bare a son. And Naomi's arms are filled again. It says that Naomi now carries the little boy in her empty arms.

And they're filled again. And the women rejoice. And they say unto Naomi. Blessed be the Lord which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman.

You've got a redeemer. You're not alone. He's given you so much. He's given you a redeemer. And the boy's name means servant. Obed means servant.

[25:49] And he became the father of Jesse. The father of David. You could even contemplate it's entirely likely that Ruth may have lived long enough to hold King David in her arms.

Her great grandson. And from this royal line would come the Lord Jesus Christ. Our greater Boaz. And when you think of Ruth this humble pagan widow that she was.

Now she is Ruth. The great great great 27 times great grandmother of Christ. What a blessing. The thing of grace that made it all possible.

And you think of the wonders of this picture of grace. You see the redeemer who sees us the outsiders, the unworthy, the ultimate, the absolute redeemer.

Who paid the ultimate price to redeem us for himself. And the ultimate redeemer, our Lord, he's brought us into his own family. And he's given us a future.

[27:04] You could reckon in a way Ruth's story is our story. God's grace that reaches across barriers, across cultures, across generations to redeem those who trust in him.

In summary, who was Ruth? She was loyal when it was hard. It was hosed. That loyal love. That devotion. That gracious love.

She held fast. She was filled with faith in the unknown. Entering this strange land. Leaving everything that was familiar.

By faith. She entered in. She was humble in her labor. Willing to stoop down in the blazing hot sun. To do a menial, irksome job.

Diligent in her daily duty. Obedient when it cost. Whatever you say I'm going to do, she said to Naomi. She had that heart. And all the city knew.

[28:10] She was a virtuous, virtuous woman. She walked in integrity. It's the same word used of Proverbs 31. The ultimate model of a virtuous woman.

That was Ruth. And God used her humble faith in his eternal plan of redemption. Think of everything. That she would be a forebear of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What a blessing came to such a humble woman. And you may feel small. You might feel useless. Unseen. Maybe you feel you're marked by your past. Whatever's happened.

But God sees. God sees you. And he knows your heart. He knows that he can change your heart. And he knows that your story is not yet finished.

By faith. And the God of Ruth, he's still working today, isn't he? Doesn't he work today? The gospel of Ruth, it's still real for you today.

[29:09] The wonder of the grace of God in the book of Ruth. The God of Ruth is still turning sorrow to song. He's turning bitterness to blessing. He's turning emptiness to abundance.

He's still doing his work in human hearts. And Ruth teaches us that this ordinary faithfulness, it invites to the extraordinary grace.

Unworthy. We can come and be a beneficiary of his blessings. Undeserved grace. And above all, friends today, can you be like Ruth and trust your Redeemer?

But I'm talking about the Redeemer. The Lord Jesus Christ. You can find shelter under the shadow of his wings. What a picture of that covering, of that tenderness, of that comfort.

And under his wings, you will always find refuge. What a picture. You ever seen chooks? And you see the little ones underneath the mother's wings.

[30:17] What a picture of our dependence upon him. Under his wings, there's a refuge for you. As Boaz told Ruth, The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

What a reward. It's actually a reward we get from doing nothing. Simply receiving. There's a reward, isn't there? Ultimately, heaven's glory is just to trust under his wings.

To find the one who saves to the uttermost. He saves forever. He gives eternal life. Will you trust under his wings?

Will you trust the one who can give you refuge? That you can flee to him and find his saving grace and his love this morning?

Trust him. Lord, we thank you that you are the great redeemer. As we see in Ruth's picture story there of little glimpses of you, we see her searching and her desire for rest.

[31:31] And Lord, in this busy world, we know we all need to find rest for our souls. We must come unto you for that. And find that refuge under the shelter of your wings.

To find the grace that sustains us. The grace that provides. Lord, the grace that is always by us, even when we don't even realise it. That you're writing our story.

Rewriting our story. Lord, you're taking unworthy sinners and making them gracious recipients of glory. Lord, we thank you for your wonders of your grace today.

Pray each one may know that truth, that their hearts may know your grace. Lord, as we come in simple faith, we believe your promises, we trust your salvation.

It's not by works that we have done, but it's according to your mercy. Lord, of the tenderness of the chesed, of your goodness, of your faithfulness, of your love, that extends in grace to reach the most unworthy, the most unlikely, that you can rewrite our story.

[32:43] Lord, you can forgive us our sin, cleanse our hearts, make us brand new people, your own people. We praise you, Lord. Lord, minister, we pray, in each life, every heart, every home, every family.

Lord, be glorified, we pray. Help us, Lord, to reach out to you and never to underestimate the power of your grace. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.