

# PM Ruth 2 Redeemed by Grace

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Preacher: Rev Charles Douglas

[ 0 : 00 ] Ephesians chapter 2, verses 11 to the end of that chapter.

The second chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and it's been talking about, in the first part it's been talking about the change that takes place when someone becomes a Christian. And then in verse 11 he says, Therefore remember that one time you Gentiles in the flesh called uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision which is made in the flesh by hands. Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ, for he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with all the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him we also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. May God add his blessing. Then there's its reading from his own inspired word.

Lord, I'd like to open the scriptures now in the Old Testament and we'll just continue in Ruth. So it's Ruth chapter 2. We're looking at Ruth chapter 1 in the morning. So we'll just start from the verse 1 here of Ruth chapter 2.

[ 2 : 44 ] Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 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 favour. And she said to her, Go, my daughter.

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.

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and he said to the reapers, The Lord be with you. And he answered, The Lord bless you. And Boaz said to his young men, who was in charge of the reapers, This young woman is this? 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.

She said, Please let me glean and gather among the she's after the reapers. So she came and she had continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.

And 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 woman.

[ 4 : 09 ] Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them, having 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.

And she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found favour in your eyes that should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner? 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.

Will the Lord repay you 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?

Then she said, I have found favour in your eyes, my Lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants.

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.

[ 5 : 29 ] When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some of the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean.

Do not rebuke her. So she gleaned in the field until evening, when she bare out what she had gleaned, and it was about an epha of barley.

She dug 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.

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 that the man's name with whom I work today is Boaz.

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.

[ 6 : 37 ] And Ruth the Moabite said, Besides, he said to me, You shall keep close to my young men until they have finished all my harvest.

And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with this young woman, lest in another field you be assaulted.

So she kept close to the young woman of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law. May God add his blessing then to this further reading from his holy word.

I'd like to turn to the passage you read in Luke. In Ruth chapter 2, Just draw your attention to one verse at the moment, verse 10, that it says of Ruth, That she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, Why have I found favour in your eyes that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?

This chapter, in a wee booklet I had about Ruth, just a very small booklet, it was headed, Ruth the Gleaner.

[ 7 : 53 ] And I think, I thought the main message here that's brought out later on in the chapters about redemption and the grace of God.

These are some of the themes you see in the second chapter of Ruth. Ruth the Gleaner. Now, of course, this comes from, as you might know, Leviticus, this aspect of gleaning.

And I'll read just to the foundation of gleaning from Leviticus 19, verse 9, where God laid down rules so that those who were less needy were catered for in these times.

And so, this was the advice or law that was given. When you reap the harvest of your land, don't reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and foreigner. I am the Lord your God. So you can see in a very practical way Leviticus and other passages laid down that guidance so that the community would be cared for and the stranger and those in need would be helped.

[ 9 : 14 ] I was wondering nowadays what farmers do for leaving, gleaning in their fields. We'll leave that for them to tell us later.

But that was the custom then. They left these portions in the field for the widows and the poor and the foreigners to gather up.

And this, again, is to do with the covenant God and which is to be matched by a certain pattern of behaviour in the likes of the covenant people.

So the covenant God, this is just one illustration of how God was caring for his covenant people and a certain behaviour because they were under God's covenant was expected of them.

And that behaviour, both here and in Leviticus, was to make sure that those who are foreigners and poor are catered for. For the land and the people belong to this covenant.

[10:15] God and their pattern of life is to reflect his nature. And so God in his covenant laid down and it's saying what's noticed here is that the pattern of the life of these covenant people was to reflect the nature of God's grace by providing.

So anyway, Ruth took advantage of this Levitical law of gleaning. She was willing to humble herself and go and work in the fields.

As we finished, I think, in chapter 1 it said there was plenty. There was plenty of harvest at that time. But still, Ruth had to go and gather it.

She had to go into the fields and work and gather the food. But she recognises something early on in the chapter that we read. She's dependent on finding favour with someone.

She was dependent on the grace of other people. That word as she looked there about finding favour it's first used as you might remember in Noah who found grace or favour in the eyes of the Lord.

[11:28] That's the first use of that word. And it's the same word as she was looking for finding favour or grace with someone as she started her work in the field. She was dependent upon that favour and we too in a different way are dependent upon finding favour not with just each other but we're dependent upon finding favour with God.

As we read in Ephesians don't we despite grace we are saved it is not of ourself if anyone will boast. We see something of humility I think in the life of Ruth willing to take up this work as we noticed this morning her desire to go with Naomi wherever she went to make her people her people and her God her God and that's something of the humility of Ruth here and that she was willing to go out and diligent in the work that she was carrying out in these fields and that's the kind of spirit I think that we who are new covenant people God wants to see in us this humility and this diligence as we seek to serve him I see that in Ruth but I think it's some characteristics also that God wants to see in each one of us that humility and a willingness to be diligent in the things that he has given us to do we read of her she persevered working it says hard all the morning and only had one short rest so that shows something of her diligence and taking up this opportunity of the

Levitical law of gleaning so it's interesting she must have known obviously must have told her about this law and she took advantage of it but then there's an interesting verse 3 in this chapter she says 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 Boze who was the clan of Elimelech there's different ways of translating that as you've maybe had the older versions it's quite poetic but here ESV says she happened to come to the part of the field on this aspect I want to focus on just for a minute it's called what I call the providence of God now I glanced over in Norman's house and Sheila's house there and on the desk there was a copy of Shorter Catechism and

Shorter Catechism question 11 says what are God's works of providence and the answer God's works of providence are his most holy wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions and I think that verse 3 points out something of that providence where it says he just happened to come but if you read the whole story you can see it wasn't just a chance I think God was using his laws and Leviticus but he's also using guidance in Ruth's life the confession of faith puts it like this God the great creator of all things doth uphold direct dispose and govern all his creatures actions and things from the greatest even to the least by his most wise and holy providence according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will to the praise of the glory of his wisdom power justice goodness and mercy that confession should encourage us to think about

God's providence in our own lives I still remember a phrase way back as some of you know it was brought up in the Leith church well it wasn't brought up there but it came into the Leith church in the 70s and it was my father-in-law who was a minister there at that time Duncan Beaton and whenever he came to a personal story he used to say pardon a personal reference if I remember rightly looking at Daphne so pardon a personal reference here about God's providence I just want to pause a minute and just share this with you just to show how Ruth happened to come to the part of the field and what the confession of faith says I was in last year of secondary school and that's about grammar some of you know what

[16:28] I was brought about the Episcopal church there in Nossabra but it was a very nominal church it was a social church it was a very high church amongst other things so although I attended and I was a communicant member there I didn't really know the gospel but I thought I was a Christian you know because I took the Lord's Supper brought up there and it was in secondary

school and in my last year of secondary school I still remember this and I was walking along the corridor and a notice board and a simple invitation from the scripture union said if you're free on whatever day it was come along to the scripture union I thought oh well I'm a Christian I can go along to that that one act of providence that one note I would tell you now has changed my life it's quite incredible from that point how I look back on my life and seen God's providence from there the scripture union's met together in

Edinburgh in an organisation called Torch and all the scripture unions from Edinburgh went to that one union scripture union meeting and a younger uncle Daphne I met there and that providence led me into the free church and that providence led me to read an article in 1977 of the need for missionaries in Peru so that we went to Peru and so I could go on to you talking to you about the providence of God just to highlight the fact of how one simple thing we noticed on this board it just happened to be there I happened to see it and how it's completely redirected my life recently well I'll talk about six years ago just roughly six years ago

Kenneth her third son was buried and she married a girl called Anne Marie and she said I want to go to Peru to see where you brought up so they invited us to go with them and Peru has changed tenfold since we were there if it had been like that in the 1970s I don't know how we would have survived we were there at the right time and it was quiet and the kids could enjoy the environment and it hit me then it was incredible how things work out in God's providence and I pray that as you look like you're nice like Ruth here she has happened to come to that part of the field look what happened to Ruth I'm sure you know the story what happened to Ruth because the providence of God was active and it's just encouraging about being God being active in our lives you know it's incredible how active he's been in people's lives and really was active so anyway pardon that personal reference but I thought

I would bring it out just to illustrate something of God's providence I think that was it the confession of praise from the greatest even to the least a wee note it's quite incredible anyway so this meeting was no accident that Ruth ended up in that field it was God's providence I believe that and how God is active remember we touched on this this morning about God Almighty he's God Almighty he's the great God and we have to hold on to that how he can direct our lives even though we're unaware of it at the time he's directing us so she meets up with Bose and we know the story he was a relative on our husband's side and from Illinois X clan and we were told that he was a man of standing probably wealthy he was in charge of these fields influential he was worthy of respect you can see that in the account he was quite prominent a noble character that was the type of man was independent and that's who Ruth met that day as the story develops he gets to know who this stranger in his field is he talks to the reapers and asks them questions and it's interesting the way he greets

Ruth as he meets her he calls her my daughter and that's I think because when the reapers explained who Ruth was who came back with Naomi and I think there Boaz recognizes the family connection by using that my daughter that's just by the way but I think it's recognizing this wasn't just a stranger it was somebody related to her to him in an indirect way and very protective of Ruth but then Ruth is puzzled and this is the verse 10 after this encounter of how he came about to know who Ruth was verse 10 after hearing you know he was offering help to her taking care of her comforting her so she fell on her face behind the ground and said to him why have

[ 22 : 59 ] I found favour in your eyes that you take notice of me since I am a foreigner did you notice our reading in Ephesians 2 it said he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near for through him we have both access to the father by one spirit consequently you are no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household and this here Paul in Ephesians reminding us that we one time were like Ruth in some similarities we were foreigners and strangers just like Ruth but we were far off but he brought us near and Ruth is saying why have I found grace in your eyes have you ever asked that question why me why has the sovereign almighty God revealed himself and reached out in his providence and I have found grace in the Lord's eyes why me

Ruth was puzzled and I think it's a good question to ask yourself why have I found grace in your eyes that's what she was asking to Bo that's what I'm saying to you tonight is ask that question of God and that's what Ephesians 2 teaches us recently in our prayer meeting Colin took us through Deuteronomy 7 and verse 6 of that chapter says the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth it was not

because you were more in number than any other peoples that the Lord set his love on you and chose you for you were the fewest of all peoples but it was because the Lord loves you isn't that sum it up for you tonight way back in Deuteronomy that verse talking about it's nothing to do with what you can bring to God he's reached out to you in his love why have

I found grace in your eyes that's a good question but the answer is the Lord your God has chosen you for a people a treasured possession and he's brought you into the covenant he's become his children and Ruth was soon to be blessed by coming into this different family and because she had left so much she had left her homeland she had left probably future any future she had there she was willing to forsake all that and follow God but out of that Boaz assured her because of that attitude she would be blessed Matthew 19 29 says everyone who has left houses her brothers her sisters her father her mother her wife her children her fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life that's what

Ruth saw she'd forsaken these things but she was blessed and the New Testament teaches us if we too put the Lord first we'll be blessed a hundred times over and then there's that wonderful prayer of Boaz in verse 12 there may the Lord repay you for what you have done may you richly be richly rewarded by the Lord the God of Israel under whose wings you have come to take refuge this is the imagery of that tiny bird coming snuggling under the wings of the mother bird and it was prayer that God would make up what was due to Ruth for all the pain she had suffered may she be paid sufficiently and restored to a sense of completeness and peace again that was the essence of his prayer as he prayed over

Ruth the image of course is a new one again in Deuteronomy 32 we read for the Lord's portion is his people Jacob has allotted inheritance in the desert land he found me in a barn howling waste he shielded him and cared for him he guarded him as the apple of his eye like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them aloft the Lord alone led him no foreign God was with him and we sang that didn't we in Psalm 91 under his wings a refuge you will find his faithfulness will be your strong defence but in a strange way in verse 12 when he says may the Lord repay you under whose wings you have come to take refuge she took refuge under the

[ 28 : 28 ] Lord's wings but also Boaz answered that prayer himself Boaz was the answer to that prayer in some respects he took Ruth under his wing as it were and it's interesting that as he prayed the prayer he was the answer to that prayer and God maybe surprised him at that but it's interesting as he comforted Ruth and looked after her and knowing me in verse 19 when she hears all about this prays a blessing as she hears the story even before she knew who it was was helping Ruth in verse 19 there she says where did you glean today and where have you worked blessed be the man who took notice of you it's interesting that it was through the human agency of

Boaz kindness that Ruth was helped God almighty used somebody like Boaz to help Ruth in their need and this I've discovered throughout my life again I'll never forget another illustration for you it was a man we grew to love very much and where we worked a man called Don Napo as we called him Don Napoleon Lathama and Don Napo was very ill one time and I managed to get him down to a hospital in Truqueo there wasn't much hospital care where we were there were some but not very good so anyway I took him down to the hospital in Truqueo and I'll never forget what he said he said now I understand that God uses people and here was God using people to help Ruth and God can use us to help other folk just like

Boaz wasn't used by God in his work then as we come to the conclusion of chapter 2 we've looked at these various aspects of God's grace but it's there in verse 20 that this word is first used in Ruth the man is a close relative of ours one of our redeemers I checked up when this word redeemer is used the core word redeemer is actually used 21 times just in the book of Ruth it's a key word in the book of Ruth it's redemption this kingsman redeemer it's a key word talking about redemption that he was going to act as a redeemer because he was a close relative and it just reminded me of a greater redeemer in 1 Peter 1 18 we read for you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from this empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors but with the precious blood of

Christ lamb without blemish and defect so by being called he's one of our redeemers it points us forward to the great redeemer as we read there in Peter one who can redeem us from our empty way of life and save us from our sins and because she was redeemed in this way she was blessed as you know the rest of the story with a great inheritance so we see something as I said to you

about the redeemed by grace and I think that's what we saw that's the main thought of chapter two here that the redemption of God has brought out and the grace of God intervening in his providence in these things be thankful this evening that we found grace in God's eyes grace and just think about that as you go home why have I found grace why have I found favour in your eyes it struck me that verse and it stuck with me think also that you have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb have you come under his wings as those of Ruth have you embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as your saviour have you come to know something of this providence I've been talking about about redeemed from your sins and brought into this covenant family have you come under his wings come then and be blessed may God add a blessing to these few thoughts tonight we're concluding with this hymn that you find on your notice sheet  
[ 33 : 58 ] O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end be thou forever near me my master and my friend I shall not fear the battle of thou art by my side nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my guide let's sing this hymn to his praise and conclusion