

# Ruth 2:10-23

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, in these quiet moments, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight.

! Amen. We're continuing our series in the book of Ruth. They are already bookmarked to Ruth chapter 2, and that's where we will be.

We're going to be starting in verse 10. If you haven't been with us up to this point in the book of Ruth, it's been a story of loss and then of love.

In the first five verses, Naomi and Ruth have lost everything. They have lost their homes, they have lost their family, they have lost their ability to provide for themselves.

And as Jackson said, even faithful people can have dark times, and they're certainly in a dark place. They're in a foreign land, and they don't know how they're going to care for themselves.

[ 1 : 17 ] Naomi returns to Bethlehem because the famine is over, and Ruth, her daughter-in-law, accompanies her. Ruth comes from the land of Moab and is coming to Bethlehem, and so she is now a stranger.

They still, they're two widows, they don't have really the means to provide for themselves. And last week we saw that she went out into the fields to glean, that's to basically pick up after those who are harvesting the grain.

God provided for the poor and the destitute by allowing them to go in and take the gleanings of the crops. And she met Boaz, who owned the field in which she was gleaning.

And he did something incredible, and instead of saying, you know, okay, you've gleaned here, move along, move along. He said, don't leave. Stay here. Stay in my field.

I'll protect you. I'll make sure that no one bothers you. And he said, even, I'll make it easier for you. Well, my men will make sure that you have something to drink so that you can stay out here and provide for yourself.

[ 2 : 33 ] Now, how would you feel if you were in that spot? If you went from no security to some security? If you went from no stability to a hope for some stability?

If you went from no social standing at all to warm words from a prominent and important member of the community? How would you feel?

How would you respond? Well, Ruth responds with confusion. In verse 10, she said, we read, In her world, the powerful didn't serve the weak.

In her world, the respected didn't take notice to stoop down and pay attention to the insignificant.

And in her world, the successful didn't have time for the downtrodden.

The dignified didn't reach out to the beggar. And the insider, in her world, she had no concept of the insider reaching out and having time for the outsider.

[ 3 : 53 ] And so in her world, none of it made sense. It was wonderful to her, but it didn't make any sense. Because that's not how the world works. And so she says, Why, why have I found favor in your eyes that you should take notice of me since I am a foreigner?

And we know the answer to that. We arrived at it last week. We saw that the Lord shapes his people to look more and more like him.

And we said, Christ shines through his people. And so Boaz is putting God's love on display. Because he is looking back and seeing God's love in the very same way to him and to his people that he can now, in a smaller way, show to her.

He remembered when his people had been weak. They were slaves in the land of Egypt. And the Lord saved them in power. And as the Lord worked in him, Boaz directed his power, his strength, his ability toward restoration too.

In a small way, in Ruth's life. He remembered that his people had been insignificant. That they had been downtrodden. That they had been outsiders. That they had been the beggars.

[ 5 : 11 ] But the Lord had lifted them up and given them a home. He had made them a whole people. And so Boaz is the kind of man who remembers his redemption.

And reflects it back into the world. It made him love God. And God used that love to mold his heart. Into something new. Into something that allowed his character to shine through Boaz.

But interestingly, that's just a shadow of where we stand today, isn't it?

The Lord didn't rescue us from slavery in Egypt. He provided for us a much bigger, greater freedom. If you're in Christ, it means that he carried his cross to Golgotha. And he rescued us from slavery to sin.

[ 6 : 19 ] Both its guilt and its power in our lives. He didn't just provide for us when the crops were bad. He provides for us the bread of life.

He walked out of that tomb alive so that we can be alive with him forever. And so if Boaz had reason. And if he had strengthening to reflect God's love so much more.

Do we have reason to do the same? So Boaz mirrors God's love to him. We are to mirror God's gospel love to us.

And we're also to learn from Ruth here, too. She models how our hearts should respond to God's love. God's provision. God's care for us.

With the words, how? How could this possibly be? That our king would die for us. That he would make a way for us. You know, she says, I'm a foreigner.

[ 7 : 26 ] How can you pay attention to me? We're foreigners by our own making. Our own sin separated us from the Lord. And actually, each day, if we're honest with ourselves, each day, we take steps away from him.

We take steps apart from him. We need to, each day, though, fall on our faces and marvel at his kindness to us.

His grace and his love, they come to us free of charge, but they cost him dearly. One ancient writer put it this way.

When you take into account your own ingratitude, under the sunshine of his love and favor, will not the question again and again arise, Lord, why have I found grace in your eyes?

That you would take notice of me, seeing I am a stranger. Stranger, stranger indeed, by nature and by practice. Living without God and without Christ in the world, yet his compassions have failed not, but have been new every morning.

[ 8 : 41 ] It might have been supposed that the Lord's long and unceasing grace would eventually have grown us to live entirely for him, who has also loved us, as to give himself for us on the cross.

But alas, every day we need his mercy, because every day we are unthankful, so that the heart is constrained every day to cry out, why have I found grace in your eyes?

Precious Jesus, the only answer is because you are. You are the Lord, the one who is faithful.

What's Hawker saying there?

Every day we walk away from the Lord, and every day he is faithful to us. And so every day, Ruth's words should be on our lips, words of thanksgiving.

How does Boaz respond? Verse 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.

[ 9 : 48 ] 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. 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.

Boaz looks past the surface, past what's the easy thing to look at. And in that day, and in that culture, the easy thing to look at was, she's from Moab, she doesn't belong here.

That's the first thing everybody would have thought about her. In fact, that's how his servants identify her earlier in chapter 2, she's from Moab. And it colors everything that they think about her.

That is the entry point for every relationship she has now in the land of Israel. And maybe you have something hanging over your head. Maybe something that colors the way that people see you, or the way that you see yourself.

Maybe it's something about your history, or something about your body, or something about your desires. Something that, when people think about you, they say, this one thing, that defines that person.

[11:18] And it colors the way that they engage with you. And it might feel like no one is willing to look at you for you.

When they see you, or when you see yourself, perhaps, all they see is that issue. But Christ shines through Christians.

The Lord shines through his people, and Boaz sees past just the label Moabite. He saw Ruth for who she was.

All that you have done, not all about where you came from has been told to me, but all about what you've done has been told to me.

And he recognized in her something that actually mirrored Israel very, very much. In Genesis 12, Abraham is called out of the land of Ur to the land of Canaan, which will become Israel.

[12:29] And something about that call looks very similar to Boaz's words here. Genesis 12, chapter 12, verse 1. Now the Lord said to Abraham, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land I will show you.

And here is what Boaz says in verse 11. How you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

He sees in her basically the same faith that led Abraham to the founding of the nation of Israel.

And so he recognizes something in her that goes beyond the surface, that goes beyond just her own labels. and he sees her heart. He saw her faith.

He saw her love. All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me. And this reminds me of 1 Samuel 16.

[13:32] The Lord sees not as man sees. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. Trilline, let's be a people looks beyond the outward appearance.

Let's be like our Lord, our Redeemer. Let's look past the outside to the heart. And when Boaz sees Ruth's heart, what does he say?

He says, 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. And this is actually really important, what he says here, because we're going to see his actions in response to it.

It's going to be very interesting. It's going to be the main point of this passage, I think. He blesses her and entreats the Lord to reward her. He asks the Lord to reward her, the Lord to bless her.

What happens in the very next verse? Verse 14, and at mealtime, Boaz said to her, come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.

[14:44] 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. Boaz asked the Lord to bless her and immediately he blessed her.

He invited her to sit with him. God's people are the instrument of God's blessing in the world. He asks God to bless her and then as God's person, God's man in the world, he blesses her.

He doesn't wait for God to somehow fortuitously down the line, bless her. He blesses her immediately. James chapter 2, if a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

The Bible isn't here only to tell us not to sin. It's not here only to tell us to praise the Lord. Those are really important things.

It's also here to teach us to act like the Lord, our Lord, to be his hands and feet in the world, to be the instrument of his blessing.

[16:23] He blesses the world in many ways and the church is chief among them. That means that you and I, we are responsible just like Boaz to be the one's blessing.

This week I was visiting another pastor in the area. I went to his office. We had a conversation. He had recently taken a spill and bruised a couple of his ribs.

At the end of our meeting we prayed. I prayed for healing for him. I said please don't send anything that will aggravate this. Keep him from those things.

And we left. As I was walking to the parking lot I realized he was walking to his car to pick up these giant crates of paper. And they weighed like 40 pounds or something.

And I was like wait here is an opportunity. A very small one. I am no hero. But I had just prayed to the Lord that he would keep him from aggravating the injury.

[ 17 : 29 ] And I saw a situation in which he was about to aggravate the injury. And so that was just a tiny window. I can carry some boxes. Like that's not a big deal. But this is exactly what Boaz did.

He prayed to the Lord that he would bless her. And then he blessed her. And it can be small simple things. It doesn't have to be grand gestures.

All he's doing here is passing her some food. For most of us that's not a big deal. To hand somebody a meal. But to somebody receiving it, like Ruth, that's a huge thing.

And so God has placed us in the world to be his hands and feet, to be the instruments of his blessing. To love and serve like he loves. God's people are the instruments of God's blessing.

But Boaz doesn't stop there. Look at verse 15. 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 from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean and do not rebuke her.

[ 18 : 49 ] What does that mean? I'm not a farmer nor the son of a farmer. Many of you are probably not from agricultural families. I had to look it up myself. Gleaning was essentially after the harvesters went through and cut down the stalks!

and bundled them up that was the idea and that is how God provided for destitute people. There was always something for them. The landowners were not allowed to go back and scoop up every last grain.

But he says something very very different to his servants. He says okay all that stuff you harvested let her glean from among that. And in fact don't even make her walk to it.

As you're harvesting it throw some on the ground for her. That is wildly generous. I mean he wanted her to glean even among the stuff that he had already taken for his harvest.

So letting Ruth glean his field like normal really that didn't cost him anything. He probably wasn't even sending his servants back out for that anyway.

[ 20 : 02 ] But taking the already harvested grain and giving it to her putting it in her way placing it in her path that was costly. It took time it took effort and it took away from his own harvest.

It was expensive it was a sacrifice. He was the instrument of God's awesome blessing to her.

See the Lord who sacrificed to bless us he desires that we sacrifice to bless others. Christ shines through Christians.

What does that result in? Verse 17 So she gleaned in the field until evening and she beat out what she had gleaned and it was about an ephah of barley and she took it up and went into the city.

Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned and 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?

[ 21 : 15 ] 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 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.

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 women lest in another field you be assaulted so she kept close to the young women of Boaz gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests.

Ruth worked in this very advantageous situation that Boaz had put her in until evening. Then she took it and beat away all of the stalks and the chaff from the grain and gathered the grain together. Now exactly how big an ephah is a unit of volume is hard to establish exactly. It's somewhere between six and ten gallons of grain which that's huge.

[ 22 : 34 ] That's a month's supply of grain easily for her and Naomi. Not bad for one day in the field. Even for his servants that wouldn't have been bad for one day in the field.

And so he has provided for her not just for today but for weeks. And that's not at all what Naomi was expecting.

Likely her highest hope was that Ruth wouldn't be harassed in the fields that day and that there would be enough so that they didn't go to bed hungry that night.

But the Lord through Boaz does something very different. She never dreamed that her daughter-in-law would come home with a month's worth of food. And that's why she exclaimed where did you go glean today?

And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. First Ruth and now Naomi they've both expressed thankfulness for such a wonderful provision.

[ 23 : 48 ] And God has provided so abundantly for us. Even when it feels dark. Remember that very first sermon that we preached and those first five verses of Ruth of loss?

Even in the dark times in the Lord our story is not over. Well he has blessed us incalculably in his son.

And so getting this overabundance of greatness is a picture of God's incredible love for us his incredible generosity to us. And like Ruth and like Naomi who are thankful are we thankful daily for that wonderful blessing that he has given us.

And then Naomi sets the stage for the second half of the book of Ruth. The second half of verse 20 says Naomi also said to her this man is a close relative of ours one of our redeemer now what does that mean?

The Lord cares about families he really does even when they're hurting even when they're missing members he instituted a redeemer system in the fabric of the law of the land of Israel.

[ 25 : 15 ] In times of trouble a near relative would act as a redeemer in a number of ways to buy the freedom of a family member who out of poverty had to sell themselves into slavery to ensure that justice was served in a lawsuit involving a relative ensure that the hereditary property that the Lord gave to each clan never passed from that family and that's the one that we're thinking of here Elimelech Naomi's husband must have either sold or mortgaged or somehow given away their land before they left in chapter one to go to the land of Moab Naomi and now Ruth had no home to come back to when they came to Bethlehem but now they had run across a relative one who had the right to redeem them to give them a home again and he had already shown unbelievable generosity now we stand in a very similar position our redeemer has come for us and he has shown incredible generosity for you and for me and so where

Naomi and Ruth have a hope for the future we have far more hope for the future ourselves and that is where we are going to see God acting in the next two chapters as we close off the book of Ruth God has to love to be a love to love to move aside from that main thrust of thanksgiving of being a blessing as God is a blessing to us and recognize that this is a love story God is God and God has put on display some key characteristics of a good spouse in the midst of this passage in particular generosity and thankfulness and actually they're two sides of the same coin aren't they thankful people are generally generous people selfish people are generally not thankful people if you are single and you are thinking about marriage someday these are very very important qualities for your future mate and for you be on the lookout for them and be on the lookout for their opposites if you are considering someone who is very generous that's a good sign but if they're selfish in any kind of way in their relationships especially that's scary same thing with thankfulness don't marry a complainer right it's just miserable for everyone but it's also an admonition to us it's also an admonition to people like me

I already have a ring on my finger but I need not to be a complainer I need to be thankful in and for my marriage and same thing too I need to be generous not selfish in and for my marriage so let's be on the lookout for generosity and thankfulness in the hearts in the words in the actions of potential suitors and in ourselves coming back to the main thrust of this passage what shall we say about this passage I think there are three things to say like Boaz did to Ruth the Lord took notice of us and blessed us when we were strangers strangers of our own making separating ourselves from him and so we are like Ruth and Naomi called to be people of thanksgiving and third like Boaz we are called to be the instruments of God's blessing in this world now the final words of the passage are!

and she lived with her mother in law now I promised my wife I wouldn't make a mother in law joke so let's pray Lord we are Lord we should be astonished at your great love for us each day Lord I pray that you would make us like Ruth and Naomi people who are thankful for your blessing everywhere in our lives and Father I pray that that would in our hearts make us look like Boaz who shines your love through his generosity in all sorts of ways Lord we want to be like you we want to serve you and we want to show you to the world let us be

[ 31 : 07 ] Christians through whom Christ shines and we pray these things in his glorious name  
amen