

Ruth 2 - Ruth & Boaz; Kinsman-Redeemer

II. Ruth's plan to obtain food and her initial encounter with Boaz (Ruth 2:1-23)

(1) God's sovereignty guides Ruth to Boaz (2:1-7)

(2) Boaz assists Ruth (2:8-17)

(3) Ruth reports to Naomi (2:18-23)

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II. Ruth's plan to obtain food and her initial encounter with Boaz (Ruth 2:1-23)

(1) God's sovereignty guides Ruth to Boaz (2:1-7)

1 Now Naomi had **a relative** of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was **Boaz**.

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1 Naomi had a close relative of her late husband, a man of considerable wealth from the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

- "...a relative" - a kinsman; the term also implies a history of valor, strong in strength ("mighty man")

— The blood-relationship was with Elimelech (not with Naomi). Because of this, Boaz was eligible to perpetuate Elimelech's line, and resolve Naomi and Ruth's *biggest* need.

— He was also wealthy, meaning he could provide food and physical protection for Naomi and Ruth, their *immediate* need

— Potentially he could be a kinsman redeemer

- "...Boaz" - means "In Him there is strength"

— He was the son of Rahab and Salmon (Matt 1:4-5)

— His name is not only important in Ruth, but his name is also chosen by Solomon for one of the two pillars of the Temple

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and **glean** among the ears of grain following one in whose eyes I may **find favor**." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

2 Ruth the Moabite told Naomi, "Please allow me to go out to the fields and glean grain behind anyone who shows me kindness."

So Naomi replied, "Go ahead, my daughter."

2 And Ruth the Moabite said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

- There was a significant element of risk involved here: sending a young girl out alone to glean during the times of the judges put her in peril

- "...glean" - this was the welfare system of those days

— If you were a land owner, you were allowed to make only one pass through your field. You could not go back a second time.

— The concept was that what the reapers missed, or what spilled, was left for the widows and the destitute

- "...find favor" - unmerited favor (grace)

— Ruth's plan was to obtain food, but she did not realize how "favored" she would become

Law of Gleaning

Lev 19:9-10:

9 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.

10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

A Latin proverb says, "Providence assists not the idle."

Lev 23:22: 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the stranger. I am the LORD your God.'

Deut 24:19-22:

19 "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you are not to go back to get it; it shall belong to the stranger, the orphan, and to the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

20 When you beat *the olives* off your olive tree, you are not to search through the branches again; *that* shall be *left* for the stranger, the orphan, and for the widow.

21 "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you are not to go over it again; *that* shall be *left* for the stranger, the orphan, and the widow.

22 And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

3 So she left and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she **happened** to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

3 So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

3 So she went out, proceeded to the field, and gleaned behind the harvesters. And it happened that she came to the portion of land belonging to Boaz, of the family of Elimelech.

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

- "...happened" - *miqreh*, an unforeseen meeting or event, accident, happening, chance, fate; "happened"; happenstance, coincidence

— Ruth "happened" to pick a field that belonged to the family clan, owned by Boaz, however it's obvious that God's hand of blessing guided Ruth's choice to go to that particular "portion" of the field

— This meeting was an "accident" for Ruth and Boaz, but not for God; He was at work in Ruth's choice

— Remember, coincidence is not a "kosher" word! (coincidence means that God is working undercover)

4 Now behold, **Boaz** came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the LORD be with you." And they said to him, "May the LORD bless you."

4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the LORD be with you." And they said to him, "May the LORD bless you."

4 Now when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he told the harvesters, "The LORD be with you."

"May the LORD bless you!" they replied.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

- "...Boaz" - "Lord of the Harvest"

- What a great example of management-labor relations; Boaz' love for God and other people, most important from God's perspective (Deut 6:5; Lev 19:18; Cf. Matt 22:37-39), were obvious in Boaz' dealings with his employees

— Boaz treated his employees with kindness and consideration

5 Then Boaz said to **hisservant** who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

5 At this point, Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, "To whom does this young woman belong?"

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

- "...his servant" - what was the servant's name? Ruth is introduced to Boaz by an "unnamed servant"

— Cf. Eleazer (name means "Comforter"), Abraham's servant (Gen 24) to go find a bride for Isaac

— Whenever the Holy Spirit is used as a type, or in a model, He is always an "unnamed servant" (Cf. John 16:13)

6 And **the servant in charge of the reapers** replied, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

6 The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

6 The foreman of the harvesters answered, "She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

- "...the servant in charge of the reapers" - *naar*, the foreman

— He was responsible to supervise the workers, supply provisions for the reapers, and pay them at the end of the day

7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has remained **from the morning until now**; she has been sitting in the house for a little while."

7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while."

7 She asked us, 'Please allow me to glean what's left of the grain behind the harvesters.' So she came out and has continued working from dawn until now, except for a short time in a shelter."

7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

- Ruth asked the *naar* for permission to glean, and it was granted
- "...from the morning until now" - Ruth's character was of high quality as well, as the reaper foreman reported (Cf. v11)
- She worked from morning until evening, with only a short rest during that time. Ruth was a hard worker.

(2) Boaz assists Ruth (2:8-17)

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, **mydaughter. Do not go to glean in another field**; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but join my young women here.

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

8 Boaz then addressed Ruth: "Listen, my daughter! Don't glean in any other field. Don't even leave this one, and be sure to stay close to my women servants.

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

- "...my daughter" - Ruth was considerably younger than Boaz (Cf. 3:10)

- "...Do not go to glean in another field" - normally, the poor would move from one landowner field to another in order to glean

- In other words, the invitation is extended to continue gleaning in his fields permanently. This was a form of protection.

- She was free to continue throughout the barley harvest, which included March and April. She was also free to continue throughout the wheat harvest, which included May and June.

9 *Keep* your eyes on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have ordered the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."

9 Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."

9 Keep your eyes on the field where they are harvesting, and follow them. I've ordered my young men not to bother you, haven't I? And when you are thirsty, drink from the water vessels that the young men have filled."

9 Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

- The foreigner (Ruth) was integrating nicely into Israelite society, as her spiritual ancestors Sarah and Rebekah had done (Gen 20:6; 26:29):

(1) She was to stay in this field (provision)

- (2) She was free to follow immediately after the servant girls where the pickings would be the most numerous (favored position)
- (3) His intervention and provision on her behalf (protection)

10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

10 At this she fell prostrate, bowing low to the ground, and asked him, "Why is it that you're showing me kindness by noticing me, since I'm a foreigner?"

10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

- Ruth understood what Boaz had set up for her...provision, position, protection... and she wanted to know "why"

— The Israelites did not typically treat foreigners this way during the period of the judges

- Hebrew play on words: "You have noticed the unnoticed"

— Grace is the basis

11 Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

11 Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

11 Boaz answered her, "It has been clearly disclosed to me all that you have done for your mother-in-law following the death of your husband—how you abandoned your father, your mother, and your own land, and came to a people you did not previously know.

11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

- Boaz is impressed with Ruth's reputation...her reputation had preceded her

— It was not her nationality, but her unselfish love for Naomi and her trust in Yahweh that had moved him to bless her

— Boaz' kindness toward Ruth simply reciprocated Ruth's kindness toward Naomi

12 May the LORD reward your work, and may your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, **under whose wings** you have come to take refuge."

12 May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

12 May the LORD repay you for your work, and may a full reward be given you from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

12 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.

- Ruth had a tremendous umbrella over her at this point

— When she arrived in Israel from Moab, she was without land, husband was dead, and she and Naomi were destitute

— A short while later, she has provision, position and protection from Boaz, and from God Himself

- "...under whose wings" - a "zoomorphism," comparing an aspect of God to an animal

— "wings" - *kenapayim*, translated as "wings" here, but later translated as "skirt" (3:9; Cf. Deut 32:11; Ps 36:7; 57:1; 91:4)

The union of a believer with God is expressed in the same way as a union between man and wife.

13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not like one of your female servants."

13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

13 She responded, "May I continue to find favor in your sight, sir, since you've been comforting me and you have spoken graciously to your servant, even though I am not one of your servants."

13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

- Ruth had found the "favor" she sought (v2)

— She was no longer a lowly gleaner; her "lord" Boaz would take care of her physical needs

14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the **vinegar**." So she sat beside the reapers; and he **served** her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

14 At lunchtime, Boaz invited her, "Come on over, have some food, and dip your bread in our oil and vinegar." So she sat down beside the harvesters, and he handed her some roasted grain, which she ate until she was satisfied. She kept what was left over.

14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

- Note her position...she sat with the reapers, Boaz' actual 'employees' and not the other 'gleaners'

- "...vinegar" - *chomets*, a drink made from sour grapes

- "...served" - *tsabat*, Boaz provides bread and wine (with his own hands)

— The word *tsabat* is used only here in the Hebrew Bible; the verb is singular, which means that Boaz personally served her with his own hands [Fruchtenbaum]

— Boaz *personally* served Ruth lunch

15 When she got up to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.

15 When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.

15 After she had left to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, "Allow her to glean also among the cut sheaves, and don't taunt her.

15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

- By allowing her to work, Boaz preserved Ruth's dignity; by providing generously for her, he lightened her duties

- The Hebrew is emphatic: "even between the sheaves she may glean"

— Essentially, Boaz is telling his managers that if Ruth gets close to the harvesters, let her go...don't say anything or reprimand her

— It was unusual for a gleaner to be allowed to pick up grain this close to the harvesters. They were normally permitted to glean only after the harvesters had completed all their work.

16 Also you are to **purposely slip out** for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* so that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

16 Also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

16 One other thing—drop some handfuls deliberately, leaving them for her so she can gather it. And don't bother her."

16 And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

- "...purposely slip out" - *tzevatim* means "handfuls of ears" and is used only here in the Hebrew Bible; the KJV translation is "handfuls on purpose"

— They were to pull out a handful of stalks

— This is the amount of grain that would be grasped with the left hand as the sickler cuts with his right hand

— The fix was in...Ruth is being taken care of

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.

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.

17 So Ruth gathered grain out in the field until dusk, and then threshed what she had gathered—about a week's supply of barley.

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

- An ephah = 9 gallons: 10 ephahs = 90 gallons (Ezek 45:14) if Josephus' computation of the bath (ephah) as 9 gallons is correct [Ant 8:2, section 9]

— It is a dry measure of about three-fifths of a bushel capacity

— It corresponds to the bath in liquid measure and was the standard for measuring grain and similar articles

— It was equivalent to at least a half month's wages in one day

(3) Ruth reports to Naomi (2:18-23)

18 And she picked *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took *some* out and gave Naomi what **she had left after she was satisfied**.

18 She took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took *it* out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied.

18 She picked up her grain and went back to town.

Her mother-in-law noticed how much Ruth had gleaned and had brought back from what was left over from her lunch.

18 And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

- "...she had left after she was satisfied" - 30 pounds of barley, enough for five days for both of them

— Plus own her leftovers from lunch

19 Her mother-in-law then said to her, "Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz."

19 Her mother-in-law then said to her, "Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz."

19 So her mother-in-law quizzed her, "Where did you glean today? Where, precisely, did you work? May the one who took notice of you be blessed."

So Ruth told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked. She said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

19 And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz.

- Naomi twice blessed (v19,20) Ruth's benefactor, first praying that God would bless Boaz

— The evidence of provision was supernatural to Naomi; she knew there was something else going on here

— Every prayer in this book is a prayer of blessing, and God answered every one of them

20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn His **kindness** from the living and from the dead." Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our **relative**; he is **one of our redeemers**."

20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead." Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives."

20 Naomi replied, "May the one who hasn't abandoned his gracious love to the living or to the dead be blessed by the LORD." Naomi added, "This man is closely related to us, our related redeemer, as a matter of fact!"

20 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.

- "...kindness" - *hesed*, loyal love

— Previously, Naomi had asked God to deal “kindly” (*hesed*) with Ruth and Orpah, for them having dealt “kindly” with her husband, her sons, and herself (1:8)

— Boaz was God’s agent in extending kindness to Naomi and Ruth, and indirectly to their husbands

— Boaz extended to Naomi and Ruth the same lavish kindness he received from the Lord - “...relative” - *goel*, Boaz is now connected with the concept of the kinsman-redeemer

— Boaz is not the next kinsman (nearer kinsman; next in line); this is where the plot twists...

- “...one of our redeemers” - a “family redeemer”; someone who would protect impoverished families by repurchasing lost property, redeem relatives sold as slaves, and provide an heir

21 Then Ruth the Moabitess said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You are to stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

21 Then Ruth the Moabitess said, “Furthermore, he said to me, ‘You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.’”

21 Then Ruth the Moabite woman added, “He also told me ‘Stay close to my young men until they have completed my entire harvest.’”

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, so that *others* do not assault you in another field.”

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field.”

22 Naomi responded to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is prudent, my daughter, for you to go out with his women servants, so someone won’t attack you in another field.”

22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

23 So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

23 So Ruth continued to stay close to the young women who worked for Boaz, gathering grain until both the barley and wheat harvests were complete, all the while living with her mother-in-law.

23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

- Ruth did not view her relationship with Boaz as a way out of her own responsibility to provide for herself and her aged mother-in-law
- Instead, she was happy to continue to do her work in safety