

Ruth 2

February 23, 2012

2:1

Here we have a simple introduction of a character with character, a relative who's going to be relative to the story – a man named Boaz. According to Wiersbe and William MacDonald, his name means, "*in him is strength*." Jon Courson says his name means, "standing in strength."

Later, Solomon will name one of the pillars in the temple after his great-great grandfather Boaz - we read that in 1 Kings 7:21.

Here we see he's described as "a man of great wealth."

In other places of the Bible the exact same Hebrew combination is translated, "a mighty man of valor..." As you get to know Boaz, you'll see that he was both.

2:2-3

The more we read of Ruth, the more admirable she becomes. Here we see she's willing to work, and work hard. Not everyone is willing to work, but everyone should be. The Bible says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10, "...if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." We need to teach this to our children, huh?

Ruth obviously was a hard-worker, not one of those who sat back waiting for things to come to her. **Now** I think I know why Ruth left her idols – cause she wasn't idle ☺

There's a Latin proverb that says, "*Providence assists not the idle.*"

It's pretty clear that Naomi and Ruth were poor. In those days, one of the ways God commanded the people to provide for the poor was to allow them to come and glean whatever the reapers dropped or missed.

Leviticus 19:10 "And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

You can study this further in Leviticus 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:19.

So the men would be working in the farm, let's say they miss a couple of grapes here, they drop a couple of grapes there, God says "don't go back and clean it up, or pick it up, leave it for the poor." And this is so cool, because it was not simply a hand-out to the lazy, no, the poor had to go and work for it.

David Guzik said, *"This is a wonderful way of helping the poor. It commanded the farmers to have a generous heart, and it commanded the poor to be active and work for their food – a way for them to provide for their own needs with dignity."*

We read in v. 3 that she "happened" to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.

The Hebrew word (04745 *mikreh*) speaks of an, "unforeseen meeting or event." The Hebrew lexicon even uses words like "accident, chance, fortune or fate."

Now, we know there are no accidents with the Almighty, there are no such things as fortune or fate with the Father.

No, the Father personally guided Ruth to this field, of the family of Elimelech. It was totally the LORD, and at the same time I must say, partially the LORD's response to Ruth. It was both divine and human. A very cool verse that has these side by side is over in Genesis 24:27, "And he said, "Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, ***being on the way, the LORD led me*** to the house of my master's brethren.""

This was the story of Abraham seeking a bride for his son Isaac. He sent his servant out by faith, to his homeland, to find that bride. You need to read the story to see that God perfectly, amazingly, supernaturally guided him straight to the house of the family of Abraham, straight to a beautiful young and available woman named Rebekah, the ***one***, God chose for Isaac.

Now none of that would have happened, if Abraham did not send his servant, and if the servant was not ***on the way***, and that's why he said, "being ***on the way***, the LORD led me..."

God usually leads us 1 step at a time. I encourage you to walk in the Spirit, putting one foot in front of the other, with both eyes on Jesus!

2:4

Wouldn't it be cool if this was the type of greeting exchanged between employers and employees nowadays?

If you're one who has been given authority, listen to the words of David Guzik who said, *"You can often tell the real character of a man in authority by seeing how he relates to his staff and by how they think of him."*

2:5-7

Boaz notices this young girl in the field gleaning, so he inquires about her. The guys

respond, "She's that young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from Moab. She's been working all day, with the exception a short break."

2:8-13

After Boaz finds out who she is, he goes to her and says to her, "Listen my daughter, you don't have to go and scrounge around anywhere else. Stay here close by my young women. You have a **Place** here, you have **Protection** here, you have **Provision** here."

Boaz blessed her, big-time!

When Ruth hears all this, she doesn't understand, how can this be, she asks in v. 10, since "I am a foreigner?" Not only is she a foreigner; but she's a foreigner from **Moab**.

We know according to Deuteronomy 23:3-4 that, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, "because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you."

The Moabites did bad, the Moabites were therefore cursed.

But Ruth would experience **not** justice, **not** mercy, but grace. She lives a life that shows she was truly taught and touched by the LORD, the God of all grace - and what we find is that she's a perfect picture of the church, the Bride of Christ.

You see, we did bad, we were cursed, we were Gentiles deserving judgment; but Jesus Christ, our Boaz, lifted the curse, and He no longer condemns us, but commends us. Where there's faith in Him, there's forgiveness and fruit.

Just make sure you come to the Lord, like Ruth came to Boaz, with the same humble heart. She didn't come and say, "finally, someone notices how good I am."

Nor does she say ask, "Why have all these bad things happened to me?" Instead, she has a heart that wonders, "Why would anyone notice me, why has any good happened to me?" What beautiful, powerful humility.

Boaz says in v. 11, "I've heard all about it. All that you've done for your mother-in-law, since the death of your husband, how you've left your homeland, and all that's familiar, to come here to take care of her."

I love the way Boaz prays for God's blessings upon Ruth in v. 12 (read again).

Notice this verse in reverse.

This is what **Ruth** did: Ruth had come under the wings of the LORD for refuge

And so, Boaz knew, this is what **God** does: He repays the work, and He gives a full reward. Don't you love the love of Ruth? The care, the concern, the commitment, towards her mother-in-**law**, of **all**, people;

And when you think about it, it's a very practical challenge for all you ladies that have mother-in-laws...huh? But then again we know a relationship with God is not **dull**, it's **practical**.

Ruth had come to know the LORD, not just in lip service like others, like Orpah did who kissed Naomi, but with a whole heart and complete commitment, she was able to cling to Naomi, cause she clung to the LORD.

To come under the wings is probably a picture of a tiny bird snuggling under the protective wings of it's parent. This is what Ruth did, and this is what we should do:

Pray - Psalm 17:8 "Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings,"

Put your trust in God - Psalm 36:7 "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings."

Psalm 57:1 "<<To the Chief Musician. Set to "Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave.>> Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until *these* calamities have passed by."

Psalm 61:4 "I will abide in Your tabernacle forever; I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah"

If you do, God will cover you, and He often times uses the truth's of His Word to do that.

Psalm 91:4 "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler."

Unfortunately most will not come under the wings of God, and this breaks God's heart! Jesus wept in Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!"

Ruth **was** willing, she had come under the wings of the LORD for refuge...and God would reward her for her good works! And He will reward you as well.

1 Samuel 24:19 ""...may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day."

Hebrews 6:10-12 "For God *is* not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

God rewards obedience - Psalm 19:11 "Moreover by them Your servant is warned, *and in keeping them there is great reward.*"

Proverbs 11:18 "The wicked *man* does deceptive work, but he who sows righteousness *will have* a sure reward."

2 John 8 "Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that we may receive a full reward.*"

2:14

Have you ever had that fresh bread; you dip it in oil, spices and vinegar? Good stuff.

(Some see communion here)

Boaz was just blessing Ruth, even giving her roasted grain, of which she kept some back (she saved some...for Naomi) I don't know if that touches your heart, but it sure does mine.

(Some say she didn't want to look like she eats a lot, not too sure about that)

2:15-17

She ended up with 5 1/2 gallons of barley – a good days work! Proverbs 21:31 "The horse *is* prepared for the day of battle, But deliverance *is* of the LORD." God blesses our obedience; He's a compassionate and caring Father.

Deuteronomy 10:18 "He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing."

The stranger is a reference to the foreigner.

Philippians 4:19 "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

2:18-20

We're starting so see a different Naomi.

The love and life of Ruth was making a difference; not her lips, not her words, not her preaching or teaching, but her living, brought blessings from the living Lord, evident for all to see.

2:21-23

Something interesting here is that Ruth tells Naomi that she was instructed to stay by the, "young men." And perhaps she was, we don't read that in the text. (v. 8)

Now, it's possible, if you were to simply let the text speak for itself, that this relationship between Ruth and Boaz was not necessarily "love at first sight." It's possible that Boaz saw her more as a daughter (v. 8), and he was just being kind to her. It's possible that Ruth was open to the possibility of maybe being with a "young man," if that was God's will...and so she mentions the young men.

I don't know. But if that's true, I like it. I like what it teaches. Because here was a man with no ulterior motives, he was just being kind; and here was a young woman, who understandably sees good-looking young men around her, but in the end it wasn't the looks, or the muscles that brought her to marriage, it was the kindness of Boaz, the character of Boaz, and most importantly Ruth's beautiful obedience to God.

Another interesting element here is how Naomi sees who Boaz is, what Boaz does, even taking note of what Boaz says - and then she offers her counsel there (v. 22).

This is so cool when you realize that Boaz represents Jesus. And you discover:

Who Jesus is - our Kinsman-Redeemer.

What Jesus had done - He's provided for us: body, soul and spirit.

What Jesus has said:

John 6:63 "...the words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life."

Mark 13:31 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

Matthew 28:20 "...and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." Amen."

Jesus will never leave us, so let's rest and be blessed, let's yield in His field and nowhere else. If He will never leave us, let's resolve to never leave Him.

"Naomi's counsel to stay in the fields of Boaz was prudent. Since he had shown himself gracious, why should Ruth insult him or spurn his protection by going into another's field? We too should not wander from the Lord's promised provision and protection into the fields of worldly pleasures." - MacDonald, William

I pray that all who read this would repent of their sin, and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior!