

Ruth Ch 2

The other day (it was prior to deer season) I ran into Wal-mart with my dad we were going to get our deer tags and while I was there I just happened to run into an individual that used to go to church here and I got to spend just a few minutes speaking to them and encourage them to come back around. About a week later I was at the mall eating in the food court and I saw another family that was in the same situation, (meaning for whatever reason I hadn't seen them around lately) and so I spoke to them and encouraged them to come around. And then just the other night I ran into Wal-mart after church on a Wednesday night to get some formula because Elizabeth still isn't a big fan of milk and I saw the lady from that same family again. And I'm sure you've all been in similar situations where it would seem as though random chance just happened to cause you to be in the right place at the right time, or in some cases the wrong place at the wrong time. But because of that something took place and you just sort of go, "wow, that was weird", or, "man, what a strange coincidence." And then as you go on about your life it suddenly hits you (because if you're like me you're not too bright and so occasionally it takes awhile for things to sink in) and you go, "hey, that was the Lord, He's been directing my life and ordering my steps to put in a certain place at a certain time so that either my or someone else's life will be impacted in a certain way."

And this is where we find ourselves this evening in our text concerning Ruth's life. She just "happens" to stumble into a certain place that's going to impact not only her life and the life of a man by the name of Boaz that's introduced to us, but also your life and my life and virtually every life that's ever lived on the topside of this planet in some way or another. Because out of this "happenstance" encounter will eventually spring the savior of the world Jesus Christ.

You recall that I told you that the book of Ruth sort of lays out like a play that has 4 scenes and each ch sort of sets the stage for a different scene, ch 1 "in Moab", scene 2 ch 2 "the fields of Boaz" ch 3, "the threshing floor of Boaz" and ch 4 scene 4 "the city gate of Bethlehem."

We left off in our last gathering (if you remember right) with Naomi singing, "The bitterness blues" off of her hit cd "Blaming God." But such (unfortunately) seems to be human nature we credit ourselves for every bit of good fortune that comes our way and blame God for anything else. When the reality of it is that every good and perfect gift comes down from above from the Father of lights, and more times than not when something crumbles in our lives we're only reaping the harvest of the seeds that we ourselves have sown. So really we credit *ourselves* when *God* blesses us, and blame *God* when *we* mess things up.

Naomi means “pleasantness”, but when the ladies saw her coming back to town after 10yrs and said, “Is this Naomi”? She said, “Don’t call me “pleasantness”, call me “bitter” or “Mara” because the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. And then she went on to define for us the profound affect of sin in our lives, she said, “I went out full, but came home empty” Anytime we leave that place where God would have us be, in close communion with Him we go out full, but like the prodigal we come home empty.

But the bible warns against bitterness, bitterness is a choice that we make, we can become better or bitter, “I” being what makes the difference. Bitter roots, produce bitter fruits, Heb 12:14-15 says, *“Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.”*

You see Naomi just didn’t place her faith in Rom 8:28 which states, *“we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”* And do you know why she didn’t place her faith in that scripture? Because it wasn’t written yet, but the principal was still in effect, and that is, that God has a plan for each of our lives and is able to manipulate the circumstances of our lives for our eternal best interest. If things hadn’t happen just the way they did in Naomi’s life, then Ruth wouldn’t have been where she was at, and if Ruth hadn’t been where she was at then that would’ve been bad news for all of mankind. And so you see how (in retrospect) God is even orchestrating the tragedies of our lives ultimately to His glory.

And the curtain closed on ch 1 with a bit of refreshing news, look at the last sentence in vs 22 (read).

It was springtime; the barley harvest marked the season of new beginnings, and so don’t miss that profound detail because these ladies were just around the corner from a new beginning. The bible tells us if anyone is in Christ old things pass away behold all things are made new, we serve a God of new beginnings, notice vs 1 of ch 2.

Vs1

So in walks this man by the name of Boaz. And we discover a couple of things about this man in vs 1 here and that is #1 he’s a kinsman to Naomi through her deceased husband Elimelech, and #2 he’s a man of great wealth. Now both of these points are significant for a few reasons, 1st of all we remember that when Elimelech took his family and moved to Moab he sold his land and took off (remember what Naomi said, they went out full but came back empty.) Well, in the law there was a clause (more or less) that stated that apart from the yr of Jubilee, (which was the yr that came about once every 50yrs that cancelled all debts and if you’d sold your land, it would revert back to you at that time). But apart from that law (seeing as how 50yrs is a lot of harvest times to miss out on) there was another clause that stated that at anytime during that 50yrs should your nearest of kin desire to, he could redeem your property so that it stayed in the family (you can check up on this in Lev 25).

So the inference here is that Boaz has the propensity that should he desire to, he could possibly redeem Elimelech's property so that hope could be restored to his family. 2^{ndly} We see that he was a man of great wealth, which speaks of a couple of things, #1 it shows us that he had the means to be that kinsman redeemer and #2 it shows us how God blessed his faithfulness and his obedience to Him, when tough times came. You recall that the reason Elimelech left Bethlehem was because a severe famine hit the land. But Boaz stayed behind, stayed in that place where he was called in the land of Promise, the house of bread and the place of praise, and notice how God honored that. The one who forsook the place he was called to be went out full, but came back empty, the one who endured, trusting in the Lord, was blessed immeasurably. You see they left over the fear of famine, but the people of Bethlehem didn't perish, as a matter of fact, they're blessed, more so than those who made the decision to take off during the tough times. How easy it is to justify wrong decisions in tough times, but how we need to be careful to maintain that close communion with the Lord, and not forsake His direction and order for our lives and in due season God will bless and honor our commitment to Him and His will for our lives.

Now on the typology side, we'll find that Boaz becomes a wonderful picture for us of Jesus Christ Who became a man, in essence becoming the kinsman to mankind, and how He is a man of great wealth and power who is willing and able to redeem us. You see, we're bankrupt and destitute, having nothing to offer, but He stands in strength and power and is able to bring us under the shadow and covering of His wings, redeeming us from our despondency.

Vs2

Real quick, what she's in reference to here is the law that God had instituted regarding the poor among Israel regarding gleaning in the fields of the reapers, it was more or less God's welfare program. When a man harvested his fields he had to make a round sweep when it came to the corners so that they were left, and God said that that was to be for the poor. And also he could only go over his fields and olive trees and all 1 time, and anything that he missed was to be left and if a bundle fell off his cart or after they'd picked up all the bundles in the field they look out in the south 40 and realized they missed 1, they weren't to go back and get it. There were to be the gleanings for the poor, it was there's by right, but I love the balance that God makes because they still had to work for it.

Now, no doubt those who are unable to take care of themselves we're called to tend to, but the bible also says if a man won't work, then neither will he eat. So provision was made for the poor, but they had to work for it, they couldn't ache by month-to-month swilling beer in front of the TV waiting for their next well-fare check. And this is what she's in reference to, they don't own any land, they have no husband to tend for them, and so she says hey, how about I go and glean from the fields today and see who's sight I might find favor in. She's trusting God to lead her where she needs to be, we see here the balance of faith and works, she has faith that God will provide and so she gets out there and goes to work, faith with out works the bible tells us is dead.

Vs3

I circled this word “happened”, she just “happened” to come to Boaz’s field, and from the human perspective I have no doubt that that’s the way it went. But as we know there’s really no such thing as “happenstance” or “coincidence” with the Lord, and so what we’re seeing here is the supernatural hand of God moving in her life in a very practical way. She’s just trusting the Lord, planning her day to provide for her and her mother and God orders her steps, the bible says that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. You think you’re just going about your day, but God has preordained appoints for you all over the place that you’re simply fulfilling. And so enters the age-old brain bender of free will and God’s sovereignty.

God allows us to plan our day or our life or whatever, but ultimately he orders our steps, so if you want to get up in the morning and run a couple of errands go to work and eat wherever, you can do that. But God’s up there going, tomorrow I’ll have them run a couple of errands before work, eat at this place and so on, hey I don’t know how it works I’m just telling you that you’ll never do something that causes God to go, “What’s he doing, what’s she doing?! That’s not part of the plan, what am I going to do?” His will, will be done. And you’ll fall right in line with it (ultimately) as long as you’re open to Him directing your life.

Prov 16:9 says, “*A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.*” Prov 20:24 “*A man's steps are of the LORD; How then can a man understand his own way?*” And I’ve wrestled with that at various times in my life, because sometimes (make that most of the time) I feel as though I lack understanding regarding a lot of things going on in my life, but who can know the mind of the Lord? And I’m His, so I’m just along for the ride. Jer 10:23 “*O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*” Ruth planned her way, but the Lord directed her steps.

Vs4

What do we see here? The “lord of the harvest” moving in the midst of his reapers, pronouncing blessing on their lives, I love this.

God has always desired to walk among men, He desires to fellowship with the reapers of the harvest and on a practical side we see the type of man that Boaz was, a God fearing man who loved the Lord, he was a good boss. And those who were under him loved, and respected him, and you can often tell the character of a man who’s in authority by the way his employees or staff respond to him, and here we see a wonderful relationship. He said, “The Lord be with you” and they said, “The Lord bless you.”

Vs5

Here we have another detail concerning our typology, we have Ruth, our gentile bride to be, Boaz, the kinsman redeemer who will graft her into the covenant promises of God through marriage, and now here we have an unnamed servant who’s introducing him to her, who do we see in this?

The work and ministry of the Holy Spirit, not drawing attention to himself but simply introducing the bridegroom to his bride. And notice that he's also "over" the reapers; he's the one that tells them what to do, when to do it and how it's to be done.

Vs 6-7

So as Boaz is just moving among the reapers in the midst of his fields, this girl catches his eye and he says, hey, who is this (you know, she's good looking (kind of a deal)). And this unnamed servant tells him her story. And notice how she was unknowingly under inspection, this guy was keeping his eye on her and the way that she worked made an impact on him. She's been here since sun up and has labored intensively even until now only resting for a little bit, and you know what? As Christians you may not know it, but the way we present ourselves in the work place is under inspections and the way we work will make an impact on those who are watching our lives, be it to the good or the bad. What if she'd been just sort of sloughing off all day just kind of kicking dirt and picking up some grain here and there? Boaz would've more than likely just blew her off and let her go her way, but her testimony gripped him in such a way that he couldn't just ignore her, but rather he responded in a way that will in due season exalt her.

Vs8-9

What's happening here? Well, practically speaking he's blessing one who has no means with which to bless him back, and the Lord is the same way with us. What do we have to offer Him? And yet He does good to us, blesses our lives and shows mercy Luke 6:35 says, "*love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High.*" But on a little bit deeper level, now that she's gleaning in the field of her redemption, the Master, the lord of the harvest bids her to glean and look for her sustenance nowhere else. Don't go looking for that exciting new experience or some new slant on doctrine, just stay in the field of your redemption. Find all your needs met right here, and notice he promises her the provisions that she needs and the protection that she needs, all she has to do is stay right there and look no further. Now that you're in the place of sustenance, blessing, provision and protection, don't go looking other places, stay right here. She doesn't even have to draw her own water, she can drink freely of the living waters, now notice vs 10; I recommend underlining it.

Vs10

I pray that we would have such a beautiful perspective, not shocked or embittered over the tragedies of her life, she never asks why things went a certain way or why these things have happened to her. But rather she's staggered and asking why any favor would befall her or kindness would come upon her. Because she knows who she is, where she's come from and what she's done, she knows she doesn't deserve it, and his kindness toward her, brought her to her knees, as she fell on her face before him.

Vs11-12

Now we might have tendency to think, hey Boaz, you seen a good-looking woman and you're taking care of her, we got your number. But the scriptures here tell us why he did what he did, and in short it was because she had forsaken all others, left her home, her family, her friend, for the God of Israel. She lost her life for His sake, in order that she might be brought under His covering and in vs 12 we see that God will be a debtor to no man. You've given up everything for the Lord, may the Lord repay you and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel under whose wings you have come for refuge.

Vs13-14

When we partake from the Master's table, we can always eat to the full with plenty leftover to bless the lives of others. The bread of life will always satisfy your soul and there will be plenty left to impart to others out of the overflow of your life.

Vs15-17

So she gleaned about 6 gallons, about a week or better's worth of grain in a day's work, not bad gleanings. She probably thought that they were the worst reapers she'd ever seen, just slopping it up everywhere, but the master had commanded them to make sure that her life was blessed. We serve such a loving God, He wants to make sure that our needs are tended to, simply out of His grace and love for us, and let me tell you that there's a profound lesson to be learned in taking after and following along the reapers of the field and gleaning from their lives. There's lessons to be learned in gleaning the necessary sustenance from the Word of God and feasting on the tasty morsels of truth to be found there. God wants to throw gleanings all over the place for you out of His Word, but you need to be there to pick them up, beat them out and take them to heart that they might nourish your soul.

Vs 18-20

Boy now she's singing a different tune isn't she; she went from "The bitterness blues" to the sweet songs of blessing. From bitterness to blessedness, in the matter of a day, but she's gone from helpless to hopeful and that makes a world of difference, and notice it's through Boaz, this type of Christ that she finds hope.

Vs21

Notice the discrepancy, she said, "young men" but the wisdom of her elder (what he actually said) was "young women" and Naomi reinforced that, stay accountable and blameless, young ladies don't need to be out "reaping the harvest" and "gleaning from the fields" with young men and visa versa, but rather young men with other men and young women with the other ladies, and she did the right thing and followed that advice, notice.

Vs23

And the curtain closes and it's the end of act 2, God is setting up the scenario to do an awesome work in their lives.