

Ruth

Boaz Meets Ruth

Ruth 2:1-2: Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." NASU

The Lord now tells of the relationship between Naomi and Boaz. Boaz was a wealthy relative or a kinsman of Naomi's deceased husband, Elimelech.

While it may seem somewhat out of place, as if God dropped this note of the relationship into the story out of nowhere, it holds significance not only in the immediacy of the narrative but also in the final-outcome of Ruth and Naomi's lives. The fact that Naomi, now a poor widow, never mentioned her relationship to Boaz, a wealthy and powerful relative, during her plight, speaks volumes about her high character. When she returned to Bethlehem, Naomi did not expect anything from or depend on her kinsman; she neither boasted about nor burdened others with her situation. She took responsibility for her care and provided no false hope to Ruth. Life in Bethlehem was going to be arduous, and both Naomi and Ruth needed to work hard and struggle to make it.

In verse 2, we gain an understanding of life in Israel during the times of the Judges. Despite the people of the village being taken aback at the appearance of Naomi (Ruth 1:19), no one took them in or cared for them. Ruth's statement to Naomi also gives us a view into her heart and her commitment to God and her mother-in-law. Ruth's offer to *go to the field and glean among the ears of grain* for the two of them speaks of her faith, humility, industry, and compassion.

Gleaning, which is in effect begging, was not beneath her. Ruth's earlier commitment to Naomi was true – she was not one to sit around and bemoan her situation. Gleaning was God's provision for the poor and stranger – it was part of the Mosaic Law and was not a welfare program. The poor had to go to the fields and work. ***Deuteronomy 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22; Mark 14:7***

Deuteronomy 24:19-21: "When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 "When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. 21 "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

Ruth

Leviticus 19:9-10: "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 "Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23:22: "When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleanings of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God."

Mark 14:7: "For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them; but you do not always have Me.

The fact that Ruth was willing to go and gather rather than wait for 'God to provide' reveals her faith and industry; she was neither slothful nor indolent. Additionally, her willingness to gather for both herself and Naomi demonstrates her compassion. By doing the work for two, Ruth relieved Naomi of the burden, which would have been harder for her. *Philippians 2:3-5, 14-15, 4:15-16, 19; James 2:14-18*

Philippians 2:3-5: Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:14-15: Do all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world

Philippians 4:15-16, 19: You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. ... 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Ruth

James 2:14-18: What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

Despite the difficulties, her faithfulness to God and Naomi, as she had stated earlier, is seen in her offer to stay and work to survive. She is not running back to Moab where there seemed to be plenty. Her faith in the LORD to provide for them is demonstrated in her statement, *after one in whose sight I may find favor*. The word *favor* is the word for grace; she was depending upon the grace of God to provide for her and Naomi, when she went to the field.

Ruth 2:3-4: 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. 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." NASU

Ruth lived by the old bromide, "Make hay while the sun shines." As stated in verse 1:22, when Naomi and Ruth *came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest*. Ruth was going to take full advantage of the situation before her; she was not going to let the favorable situation pass by her. Again, we see the faithfulness of Ruth to God, Who speaks frequently throughout the scriptures against laziness and presumption. ***Proverbs 10:4-5, 18:9, 21:25-26, Proverbs 24:30-34***

Proverbs 10:4-5: Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. 5 He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, but he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.

Proverbs 18:9: He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

Proverbs 21:25-26: The desire of the lazy man kills him, for his hands refuse to labor. 26 He covets greedily all day long, but the righteous gives and does not spare.

Ruth

Proverbs 24:30-34: I passed by the field of the sluggard and by the vineyard of the man lacking sense, 31 and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles; its surface was covered with nettles, and its stone wall was broken down. 32 When I saw, I reflected upon it; I looked, and received instruction. 33 "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest," 34 Then your poverty will come as a robber and your want like an armed man.

and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Ruth did as she had committed to Naomi; she went to the field and began to gather the food she could. In verse 3, we see the hand of God working in Ruth and Naomi's life as Ruth 'happened' upon the field of Boaz, her former father-in-law Elimelech's relative. Through Ruth's faithfulness and obedience, God is guiding her through the circumstances of her life. More often than not, God leads those who are His through His word and the circumstances of life. We walk by faith and not by sight, signs, visions, or messages.

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."

As with Naomi and Ruth, we see the character of Boaz through the life he lived. Boaz was a wise man, he watched over his fields (he *came from Bethlehem*); he was concerned for his assets, how things were going, and how his hired help was doing. Boaz respected and cared for his workers, both physically and spiritually; in turn, his workers respected him. Again, in the time of the Judges, the people, for the most part, had a very loose affiliation to the LORD. Boaz was not such a one. In fact, the introductory statement about Boaz, in verse 2:1, about Boaz being *a man of great wealth*, in the original, carries the idea of a man great in many facets of life: wealth, valor, and the Law. ***Proverbs 1:5-7; 3:27-28, 21:20; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22-4:1***

Proverbs 1:5-7: A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, 6 to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles. 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 3:27-28: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. 28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.

Ruth

Proverbs 21:20: There is desirable treasure, and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man squanders it.

Ephesians 6:5-9: Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. 9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

Colossians 3:22-4:1: 22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Ruth 2:5-7: Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” 6 The servant in charge of the reapers replied, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab. 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.” NASU

Upon his arrival, Boaz noticed Ruth, as others had. The servants of Boaz already knew who she was and how she had come to the area. Interestingly, *the servant in charge* made a somewhat derogatory comment mentioning to Boaz, that Ruth was from Moab. Kind of like, she is not one of us? He did add that Ruth was in fact the woman who had returned with Naomi, who everyone in Bethlehem knew. As we will see develop through the remainder of this story, Ruth had the right kind of reputation and her reputation had preceded her – she was known by her works. *James 2:14-18; 1 Peter 1:5-9; 2 Peter 1:5-11*

Ruth

1 Peter 1:5-9: who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

2 Peter 1:5-11: Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, 6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, 7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

Further evidence of the character of Ruth was, even though the law permitted her to enter the field to glean and required Boaz to allow her in the field, she asked before gleaning. In addition, she had gotten up early and gone to the field – she did not sleep in and expected things to fall her way. The overseer of the servants noticed, once she began, she worked throughout the morning. *Proverbs 6:6-11, 13:4, 19:24, 20:4, 22:13, 26:13-16; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12*

Proverbs 6:6-11: Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, 7 which, having no chief, officer or ruler, 8 prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provision in the harvest. 9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 10 "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest" - 11 your poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man.

Proverbs 13:4: The soul of a lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

Proverbs 19:24: A lazy man buries his hand in the bowl, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Ruth

Proverbs 20:4: The lazy man will not plow because of winter; he will beg during harvest and have nothing.

Proverbs 22:13: The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!"

Proverbs 26:13-16: The lazy man says, "There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!" 14 As a door turns on its hinges, so does the lazy man on his bed. 15 The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; it wearies him to bring it back to his mouth. 16 The lazy man is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-12: Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you; 9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example. 10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.