



Gleaning in the Fields of Boaz Ruth 2

Introduction

Ruth had made a courageous, wise, and life-changing choice. She had left her pagan home and joined herself to her mother-in-law, Naomi, Naomi's people, and Naomi's God. She was fully committed to her new life in Israel among God's people. Naomi was surely glad to be home, but she had no family of her own except Ruth the Moabitess, an outsider. What would the two women do? How would Ruth be accepted? What would be the outcome of Ruth's decision? Chapter 2 gives us a picture of Ruth's life after arriving in her new home.

Outline of Ruth Chapter 2

- I. Making Her Way in Israel - Ruth 2:1-3
- II. Meeting the Owner of the Field- Ruth 2:4-17
- III. Receiving Her Mother-in-law's Approval- Ruth 2:18-23

I. Making Her Way in a Israel- Ruth 2:1-3

A. God's Man – Ruth 2:1

We are introduced to Boaz in verse one. *There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.* He must be important. How will Ruth meet him? Where will he figure in this story? Will the story of Ruth have a larger significance than meets the eye? If so, what will that be?

B. God's Provision for Strangers, Orphans, and Widows – Leviticus 19:9-11

It is clear that Naomi and Ruth needed some means of support. Fortunately, the law made provision for aliens, widows, and fatherless children. Leviticus 19:9-11 commanded, *When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.* Deuteronomy 24:19 adds, *When you reap...and forget a sheaf...you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*

The term used for the leftover grain was *gleanings*. The act of gathering the leftovers was called "gleaning". The word "glean" means "to collect gradually and bit by bit".

C. God's Compassion

God is a God of compassion and the harvest belongs to Him. He commanded that the landowners recognize that fact by not reaping all of it for themselves. They were to leave the corners untouched, and they were not to go back over the land to pick up (glean) the grain that was missed the first time. Nor were they to retrieve any sheaves that fell from the wagon. That meant there should be enough from all the fields for those who were needy. It was a compassionate system.

D. God's Requirement

On the other hand, the grain was not a handout. It had to be gleaned. It was not packed and delivered. People had to come and get it for themselves. This principle is reflected in Paul's command to the new believers in Thessalonica, *work with your own hands* (1 Thessalonians 4:11) and again, *If anyone will not work neither shall he eat* (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Paul was having a problem in Thessalonica with a few who wanted to drop everything and just pray and wait for the Lord's return. The problem persisted to the second letter so he had to spell it out as a command and reinforce it with a penalty. Each one must do as much as possible to provide for himself or herself and any dependants.

E. God's Leading – Ruth 2:2-3

Ruth, as the younger woman, asked Naomi's permission to go into the fields and glean, for it was harvest time (Ruth 1:22). Naomi granted her request, *Go, my daughter.* Ruth knew she would have to find a safe field where she would be allowed to glean. She knew it might not be easy. This is reflected in her words, *and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.*

It was very important that Ruth arrive in Boaz' field or this story is ended. However, she was unaware of this on the day she started out for the fields. Did she pray and ask heavenly guidance? Were all the angels looking over the parapets of heaven to see which road she would take as she came to the crossroads? *Commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass.* These are the words her great grandson, David, would write in Psalm 37:5. Ruth had committed

her way to the Lord and so she “*happened*” to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz. Did the angels in heaven rejoice? The little town of Bethlehem and those fields beyond would one day hear the angels’ choir announce the birth of the Great Descendant of Ruth and Boaz, Jesus the Messiah. But this is way ahead of the story.

Have you committed your way to the Lord? Do you believe today that He will bring His plan for you to fruition? When you commit your way unreservedly to the Lord, amazing things happen down the road. God leads in extraordinary ways.

II. Meeting the Owner of the Field - Ruth 2:4-17

A. Arrival of Boaz – Ruth 2:4

The owner of the fields, Boaz, arrived from town with hearty greetings to and from the reapers. *The Lord be with you* shouted Boaz as he approached. *The Lord bless you* responded the reapers. How labor and management could use such a relationship today! There was respect on both sides. There was harmony as they worked toward mutual goals. God was acknowledged.

B. Boaz Notices Ruth – Ruth 2:5-7

As Boaz surveyed the fields, he quickly noticed someone new among the gleaners. *Whose young woman is this*, he asked? The foreman told him it was the young Moabite woman who had come back with Naomi from Moab. The foreman related how she had asked to glean and commented on her work. She had been busy at work from early morning, with only a little rest period. The foreman seemed impressed with her.

C. Boaz’ Conversation with Ruth – Ruth 2:8-13

1. Boaz’ kindly remarks – 2:8-9

Boaz spoke to Ruth directly, asking her to listen carefully. She was not to glean anywhere else, but she was to stay close by his female servants who were reaping. He assured her that he had commanded his young men servants not to touch her. He even gave her permission to drink from his water jars when she became thirsty. This was not only a kindly, good man, carrying out the law of Moses with respect to strangers and aliens, but a perceptive man on whom Ruth’s attractiveness and demeanor were not lost.

2. Ruth’s humble response – 2:10

Ruth bowed to the ground (*fell on her face*) and asked how she, as a foreigner, had not only received his notice but had found favor in his eyes. Are we not in the same position with respect to God? We are outsiders and

foreigners to His kingdom. We have no right to heaven nor to acceptance by Him. Worse still, we were *enemies* of God. The apostle Paul says, *For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled we shall be saved by His life* (Romans 5:10). It took the death of Christ to remove us from our enemy status! *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ* (Ephesians 2:13). We were far off when we were *without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world* (Ephesians 2:12). Have you ever fallen on your face before God and asked Him how He could take notice and show favor to you as a poor sinner?

3. Boaz’ blessing – 2:11-12

Boaz told Ruth that he knew of her goodness to Naomi. He knew she had left her country and kindred to come to a people she had not known before. Then he gave her a beautiful blessing which was far more than custom. *The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.*

4. Ruth is comforted – 2:13

Ruth retained her humble attitude while acknowledging his comfort and kindness to her. She would not even aspire to the status of one of his maidservants. Ruth knew she had no rights to plead or claim just as we have no rights and no claims on God, but can only cast ourselves on His mercy and grace. In the words of the 18th century hymn writer, Robert Robinson, “Oh to grace how great a debtor, daily I’m constrained to be” (“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”).

D. The First Meal Together – Judges 3:14-17

At mealtime Boaz paid special attention to Ruth in the sight of the workers. This was important for her protection. As he left he gave special instructions that she was to be allowed to glean among the sheaves and not just in the overlooked grain. Moreover, they were to drop some “handfuls on purpose” for her alone. No one was to rebuke her for what she gathered. She finished the day with all she could carry home, about an ephah. An ephah is roughly one half a bushel or five gallons.

The “handfuls on purpose” is a beautiful picture of mercy and lavished grace. As Boaz’ workers purposely let extra grain fall for Ruth, so God often lays unexpected blessings in our paths. Sometimes prayers are answered far above and beyond our expectations and longings. At other times, just when we think our prayers will never be answered and we humbly surrender our desires to

God, He bestows a gift far better than what we could have imagined. What "handfuls on purpose" has God lavished upon you with lately?

III. Receiving Her Mother-in-Law's Approval- Ruth 2:18-23.

A. A Good Day's Work – Judges 2:18-19

Back in the city of Bethlehem, Naomi must have waited anxiously. Ruth had been gone the entire day. What had she experienced? Naomi was probably not prepared for what she saw, her daughter-in-law carrying all she could handle. Ruth, tired but happy, deposited her gleanings in front of Naomi. She also gave her the roasted grain which was left over from her lunch. *Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.* Naomi could tell that this was no ordinary gleaning. Ruth reported that she had worked in the field of Boaz.

B. The Kinsman Redeemer – Judges 2:20

Naomi immediately saw God's hand in this and praised Him. *Blessed be he of the Lord, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead.* Suddenly, Naomi's bitterness was replaced with gratitude. God gives *beauty for ashes* (Isaiah 61:3). Then Naomi explained to Ruth

that Boaz was a relative, in fact, a close relative, a kinsman, who could redeem them. The Hebrew word is "goel" meaning "a redeemer". The law gave relatives both the right and duty to keep a dead relative's land and name perpetuated in a family by redeeming the dead person's right to it (Leviticus 25:25). The one who did this was a "kinsman redeemer". Boaz was in that position.

C. Naomi's Advice – Ruth 2:21-23

No wonder Naomi agreed with Boaz' advice to Ruth that she stay close to his servants. She added that Ruth should not be seen in any other field. So it continued through the season of the barley and wheat harvests. Any further possibilities must wait the right time.

Applications

1. Do you acknowledge God's goodness and kindness or are you bitter at life's hard places? Will you pause now and think of examples of God's kindness to you? What do you find to be grateful for?
2. Will you share with your family or friends ways in which God is working for you and blessing you?
3. Will you continue in patience until God shows you the next step?

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QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read all notes and references.

1. What provision in God's law applied to Ruth?
2. a. How did Ruth help herself and Naomi?

b. How is this a picture of God's grace and our grateful response?

DAY TWO: Read Ruth 3:1-5.

3. What happened that made Naomi think it was time for action? Underline the correct answer and give the verse.
 - a. Boaz was becoming interested in another young woman. Verse:_____
 - b. Naomi was tired of living with Ruth. Verse:_____
 - c. Boaz would be winnowing barley at the threshing floor that night. Verse:_____
 - d. Ruth was ill and could not work any longer. Verse:_____
4. a. According to verse 1, what did Naomi want for Ruth?

b. What do you think this means?
5. There were five important points in Naomi's plan. List them by answering the questions below.
 - a. How was Ruth to prepare herself?
 - b. Where was Ruth to go?
 - c. What was Ruth to do while Boaz ate and drank?
 - d. What was Ruth to do when Boaz lay down to sleep beside his grain?
 - e. What would Boaz do if Ruth obeyed?
6. a. Do any of the above instructions seem strange to you? If so, which one(s)? Why?

b. From Ruth's response, do you think the instructions seemed strange to her? Why or why not?

DAY THREE: Read Ruth 3:6-9.

7. a. In verse 6, what action did Ruth take in response to Naomi's plan?

b. What is a threshing floor? You may use a dictionary or Bible dictionary for your answer.

c. What place did Ruth take on the threshing floor?
8. In verse 9, what question did Boaz ask? From verse 8, why did he ask it?

9. a. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do for her? Give verse:_____
- b. ? (Thought Questions) Using Leviticus 25:25 and Deuteronomy 25:5-6, try to explain what Ruth was asking.
- c. How is this a picture of what God does for His people? See Ezekiel 16:8, Psalm 36:7-9, and Malachi 4:2?

DAY FOUR: Read Ruth 3:9-13.

10. In Boaz' response to Ruth's request, what did he say about:
 - a. the kindness she had shown?
 - b. her chasing after men for their money?
11. According to Boaz, did Ruth have reason to be anxious or fearful? Why or why not?
12. Fill in the blanks.
 - a. Boaz told Ruth, all the people of my town know that you are a _____.
 - b. ♥ (Heart Question) People know that I am _____.
13. a. From verse 11, what did Boaz need to find out?
- b. What would he do about it?

DAY FIVE: Read Ruth 3:14-18.

14. What happened in the morning? Mark each statement T (true) or F (false). Give the verse for the true statements and correct the false statements.
 - a. T or F vs._____ Ruth and Boaz arose before it was light.
 - b. T or F vs._____ Boaz walked Ruth home.
 - c. T or F vs._____ Boaz instructed Ruth not to let anyone know she had been to the threshing floor.
 - d. T or F vs._____ Boaz had Ruth fill her pockets with grain for Naomi.
15. a. When Ruth arrived at home, what did Naomi ask?
- b. What did Naomi receive?
- c. What instruction did Naomi give Ruth?
- d. What confidence did Naomi have?
16. Senior Review Question
In verse 9, the word used to describe Boaz is the Hebrew term "goel." It is translated differently in various Bible versions: close relative (KJV, NASB), redeemer (ESV), and near kinsman (KJV)). The root of the Hebrew word is "gal'al" which means "to redeem". This is the same word used in Leviticus 25:25. In what ways is Boaz a picture of Jesus Christ as a "close relative," "kinsman," and "redeemer?"