



Time to Reflect

- How can we follow the example of Ruth and look beyond apparent problems, see potential and remain faithfully positive?
- What are some of the ways in which we are regularly reminded of God's blessings in our daily lives?

Last week we reflected on the nature of the human heart, as well as the reality of frustration and how it can be overcome. We considered what it means to journey into the unknown, trusting God entirely with our futures. This week our passage combines themes of providence, grace, humility and compassion. We are reminded that when we step out in faith, trusting God entirely, then He goes before us.

“The first chapter of Ruth dealt primarily with three women, but now the narrative widens to include the whole community. We are introduced to a ‘worthy man,’ Boaz, in the first verse (2:1). It is as if the author is saying, ‘Keep your eye on this guy!’”

(Tony Merida, *Ruth For You*, p61)

Specifics

- One of the first things that we discover in Ruth 2 is that Boaz was related to Naomi (v1). He is a legal relative and this will prove to be highly significant as Ruth's story develops and unfolds.
- The actual name 'Boaz' seems to mean strength. No one else in the Bible is named Boaz. However, one of the two bronze pillars that King Solomon placed at the porch or entrance of the Temple in Jerusalem was called Boaz – the other was Jachin (1st Kings 7).
- Note that the passage refers to Boaz as a man of standing. Some other translations of the Bible use the term 'worthy man.' He was a capable person and he was wealthy. Boaz was influential and he was tremendously faithful.
- Tony Merida writes, **“Boaz is not just a wealthy man; he is also a man with integrity and godliness. In short, he is a man of both moral worth and material wealth.”**¹
- (v2) draws our attention away from Boaz and back towards Naomi and Ruth. Ruth asked Naomi for permission to go to work and, in doing so, she demonstrated great faith.
- She was a foreigner and she had just moved to a new land. She is referred to as Ruth the Moabite (v2) and this is a deliberate reminder of the ethnic tensions that existed at the time.
- Remember that she was also a widow in a patriarchal society. Yet these potential barriers did not deter Ruth or hold her back. She looked beyond the problems and saw potential.
- Ruth made her way to a field and started to glean (v3). It transpired that she was in Boaz's field and he was a relative. Note the use of the phrase **“As it turned out...”** The literal translation of this from the Hebrew reads: '...and her chance chanced upon the allotted portion of the field of Boaz.'

¹ Tony Merida, *Ruth For You* (The Good Book Company, 2020), p63.

- However, this was not just a stroke of good fortune or some kind of lucky coincidence. This was a deliberate act of God, an enactment of His providence. What we see, very clearly, in this passage and in Ruth's life is the hand of God at work.
- Merida reflects on this and suggests, "God's quiet hand is always at work. He is not just at work in the miraculous, when water flows from a rock. He is also at work as a desperate Moabite widow finds her way to the field of a generous redeemer named Boaz."²
- Ruth trusted God and stepped out in faith. God honoured her faith and was with her every step of her journey. As she gleaned in Boaz's field, she was in God's place at God's time.
- We see a further example of God's providence in (v4) as Boaz arrived to his field at the exact time that Ruth was working. The verse begins with the phrase 'Just then' and some other translations use the word 'Behold.'
- We get an early glimpse into Boaz's character by how he spoke to his workers (v4). He greeted them in God's name and we should really take note of this.
- Merida unpacks the significance of this as he contends, "The narrator is frugal with his words: he leaves out many things, and so what he does include is always significant, including this little greeting."³
- Essentially, Boaz reminded his workers of the centrality of God in their lives and how God was the source of their blessing.
- Note how Boaz noticed Ruth. It appears, at this stage, that he didn't know exactly who she was (v5). In later verses (v11-12) it becomes clear that he had heard of Ruth but at this initial meeting in the harvest field he hadn't totally made the connection.
- His description of her as a young woman has led many biblical scholars to conclude that Boaz was older than Ruth. He was told by his foreman that Ruth was a hardworker (v7). When combined with her faithfulness and humility, this work ethic reveals that Ruth really had a depth of character.
- Boaz had an exemplary character. From the very outset, he provided work for Ruth (v8) and he protected her (v9). He demonstrated genuine care and compassion, and Ruth was deeply grateful (v10).
- Boaz also blessed Ruth with his words (v11-12). We can almost sense the relief and thankfulness in Ruth as Boaz, a godly and influential leader, affirms her faithfulness and dedication.
- Merida observes, "His (Boaz's) encouragement surely lifted her spirits and gave her a sense of dignity."⁴
- Boaz spoke of Ruth's reputation (v11) and he encouraged Ruth by praying that God would reward her faith (v12). He modelled the kind of leadership that gladdens God's heart and encourages God's people.
- Boaz truly was a worthy man and it is clear that he walked humbly before God. This is demonstrated in a number of ways in the Book of Ruth - not least in his consideration of Ruth, his treatment of his workers, his acknowledgement of the Lord's sovereignty and his pursuit of justice.
- It's hardly surprising that Merida concludes, "May the Lord raise up a new generation of men like Boaz...May the Lord give us a generation of men who display kindness and grace to all. May we pray for those men, and if we are men, strive to be them."⁵

² Merida, *Ruth For You*, p67.

³ Ibid, p68.

⁴ Ibid, p71.

⁵ Ibid, p75.