**Bible Study Group** **Promise and Provision** **Ruth 3:10-18**




Time to Reflect

- What are some of the positive character traits that we would love to see in other people? In what ways do these traits impact the lives of others?
- How can we be more intentional at developing and maintaining our dignity, reputation and character?

In our previous study we reflected on the development of the relationship between Boaz and Ruth as a plan was devised (v1-5) and a proposal was given (v6-9). We considered what it really means to trust God and partner with Him. This week our attention is drawn to the second half of chapter three and we will focus on the themes of promise and provision.

**"A great movie director will often craft a scene with visual cues that serve to clue us into the director's agenda. And that is precisely how the author of the book of Ruth is operating here. Pay attention to the cinematography…and you will begin to understand something of the significance of what is taking place."**

(David Strain, *Ruth & Esther: There Is A Redeemer & Sudden Reversals,* pp53-54)

**Specifics**

- In the first half of Ruth 3 we saw how a plan was devised and implemented. We also discovered how Ruth made a proposal to Boaz (v9b). As we approach (v10) we see how Boaz responded to this proposition.
- We already know that Boaz was impressed by Ruth's kindness towards Naomi (2:11) and he made reference to this in his reply to Ruth (v10). The kindness that is mentioned here by Boaz is much more personal for him. He is genuinely moved by Ruth's thoughtfulness, care and love.
- Note the use of the word 'daughter' in (v10) and again in (v11). This is interesting as it tells us something about the ages of Boaz and Ruth.
- Tony Merida reflects, "Based upon this statement, it seems safe to assume that Ruth is younger than Boaz…We should not think of Boaz as some frail old man; he has demonstrated a robust work ethic. But he is older than Ruth…[1]"
- The fact that Boaz was older than Ruth also suggests that Ruth could have gone after younger men, whether rich or poor. This is another indication of her age and a suggestion that she was attractive.
- These revelations are deliberate and meaningful, particularly when as we move into (v11) and discover how Boaz praised Ruth's character (v11b). This is actually reminds us of the wonderful descriptors we read in Proverbs 31 when we hear about the wife of noble character.
- Boaz recognised that Ruth was truly authentic, the real deal.
- Boaz was really impressed by Ruth and he moved to make her a promise (v11). He indicated that he would do all that she had requested, which probably meant taking care of the Naomi and not just Ruth.

[1] Tony Merida, *Ruth For You* (The Good Book Company, 2020), p102.

- The story develops nicely but then a potential problem was highlighted by Boaz (v12). There was another man who was a closer relative and he had a stronger legal claim to be Ruth's guardian-redeemer.
- Despite this, "…Boaz pledges under God that if the other man is unwilling to redeem Ruth, he himself will marry her. Either way, Ruth will have a redeemer.[2]"
- As we pay attention to the cinematography, our passage then moves to tell us that Boaz invited Ruth to stay with him so that the issue of who will be her guardian-redeemer could be resolved the very next day. We are now moving towards the final act in the story.
- (v14) tells us that Ruth lay at Boaz's feet. There is no indication of any intimacy in the passage. In fact, Boaz was very careful to avoid the appearance of anything that could denigrate Ruth's impeccable character.
- For example, the reference to the early morning rise in (v14) is very importance. Merida focuses on this as he writes, "This early send-off is meant to preserve her dignity and reputation – things that obviously matter to Boaz.[3]"
- Boaz moved to protect Ruth and he was all too aware of the damage that could be caused to her reputation by prying eyes and careless chatter – hence his reflection as recorded in (v14b).
- He also provided Ruth with a gift of grain (v15). Boaz, once again, demonstrated his generosity. There are indicators in the passage that he gave Ruth a large amount of grain. For instance, the fact that he "…placed the bundle on her…" (v15) suggests that she needed assistance to initially lift the grain.
- Some scholars suggest that Boaz gave Ruth between 30kg and 40kg of grain. The fact that she carried this all the way home to Naomi also reminds us of Ruth's outstanding work ethic.
- It is worth taking a few moments to reflect on why this gift of grain was given. Firstly, and honourably, it was a generous provision for two widows. Secondly, and strategically, it would be an explanation as to why Ruth was at Boaz's threshing floor. Thirdly, and symbolically, it was a message to Naomi.
- The exact nature of that message is revealed in (v16-17) in the conversation between Ruth and Naomi. Notably, this is the last recorded dialogue between these two women in the Book of Ruth.
- In (v16) we discover that Naomi asked Ruth "How did it go, my daughter?" A more accurate translation would be, "Who are you, my daughter?" This is, more or less, the same question that Boaz asked (v9).
- Merida narrows in on this as he reflects, "Naomi is essentially asking, Did the plan work? Are you going to be his wife? Has everything turned around for us?[4]"
- Ruth told Naomi all that Boaz had done (v16b) and then she mentioned the grain. She added something that the narrator didn't previously include – Boaz's gift was intended to bless Naomi (v17).
- Naomi reflected on this quickly and ascertained the direction of travel. She knew she could trust Boaz and, as such, asked Ruth to wait (v18). Previously she had told Ruth to act. Now was the time to wait.
- Naomi realised that Boaz could be trusted and he would not leave this important work unfinished.
- And, behind all of this, God is moving purposefully and intentionally. His hidden hand is gradually accomplishing His sovereign purposes.
- As we conclude for this week, perhaps we also need to be faithful enough to learn how to wait – wait upon the Lord and be patient. Let's not rush ahead of Him or seek to take matters in our own hands.
- God's will is perfect and we need to wait patiently for the fulfilment of His will in our lives.

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[2] Merida, *Ruth For You*, p103.
[3] Ibid, p103.
[4] Ibid, p104.