

# Ruth is Introduced to Boaz – Part 3

## Introduction

### a. objectives

1. subject – Ruth is introduced to Boaz, who shows great kindness to her, a foreigner and widow
2. aim – to cause us to recognize the immeasurable kindness of God in his providence towards us
3. passage – Ruth 2:1-23

### b. outline

1. The Gleaning of Ruth (Ruth 2:1-3)
2. The Introduction of Boaz (Ruth 2:4-16)
3. The Report to Naomi (Ruth 2:17-23)

### c. opening

1. the **structure** of this chapter
  - a. the chapter is divisible by the individuals *emphasized* in the sermon title above
    1. first, Ruth is introduced to Boaz, as he discovers her gleaning in his field (**vv. 1-7**)
    2. second, Boaz is introduced to Ruth as she discovers his kindness (**vv. 8-16**)
    3. now, Boaz is introduced to Ruth as Naomi discovers his position in the family (**vv. 17-23**)
      - a. **IOW**: a second introduction to Ruth – the first to the man himself, the second to his *position*
  - b. so ... we will *continuing* working through the storyline (**i.e.** what is happening) verse-by-verse, discussing certain **theological** realities that appear along the way (**i.e.** as a running commentary)
    1. a discussion of the **providence** of God = his work in time and space such that his sovereign will is accomplished; his involvement in such a way that events lead to his desired outcome
    2. a discussion of the **kindness** of God = his nature such that he acts in ways that bring about good in the life of the individual, good that is always *towards his goals* in that individual even when it “appears” difficult or painful *in the moment*
    3. (**now**) a discussion of another aspect of God = seen specifically in the **combination** of *providence* and *kindness* as the chapter concludes

## III. The Report to Naomi (Ruth 2:17-23)

### Content

#### a. Ruth returns home with her results (vv. 17-18)

1. **note**: all of this chapter occurs in a *single day* – the very first day that Ruth goes to glean?
  - a. she works “*until evening*” (**i.e.** until sundown, or until the reapers end their day)
2. she “*beat out*” what she had gleaned = for a gleaner, the process of separating the kernels of grain she had collected from the “full” heads – a simplified version of *threshing* the grain
3. she collects about an “*ephah*” (ee-fuh) – measuring around  $\frac{3}{8}$  bushel or 20 dry quarts (**ESV note**)
  - a. as of Wed, Oct 2, 2019: US 1 Malt Barley = trading at ~\$8.55/bu (Montana Elevator Cash Price)
    1. meaning that Ruth had collected ~\$5.00 worth of food (can you live on that much per day?)
  - b. possibly enough grain for 2-3 *weeks’ worth* of bread – a *significant amount*:
    1. based on the inclusion of this total (and Ruth gleaning ahead of others) it seems *reasonable* to conclude that her total was *significantly* higher what the “typical” gleaner would gather in a day
    2. and, Naomi’s response in **vv. 18b, 19** seems to imply a bit of surprise on her part (**see below**)
  - c. thus, the amount she gleaned was another act within the *providence* of God – what fell from the sheaves clearly would have been **dictated by the providence of God moment-by-moment**
4. she takes it back into the city (Bethlehem) to where she and Naomi are living
  - a. it is *implied* that she gives this grain to Naomi, probably for *her* to make bread from it
  - b. she also gives to her “*what food she had left over after being satisfied*” = the extra food (**i.e.** roasted grain, bread, etc.) that she could not finish at lunch and had stuffed in her pockets (**see v. 14b**)
  - c. **IOW**: her *intention all along* has been to take care of Naomi (**1:16f**), and she does not hold back anything from her mother-in-law – the entire purpose of her going to glean was to feed Naomi

## b. Ruth learns of the position of Boaz (vv. 19-20)

1. Naomi responds to the success of Ruth with:
  - a. **a question:** “where did you glean today?” – **LOW:** where did you manage to find such success?!?
    1. the phrase “blessed be the man who took notice of you” is probably best interpreted as:
      - a. “someone surely was kind to let you stay in their field and glean so much!”
      - b. not, “did someone *specifically* see you and put you in a special position before others?”
      - c. **LOW:** Naomi is *not yet* making the connection of Boaz as a redeemer (**see below**)
    2. Ruth answers the question by telling Naomi that the name of the field owner is Boaz
      - a. **remember:** it is highly unlikely that Naomi sent Ruth *specifically* to his field – **v. 1** is an “insertion” by the author for the reader, but *not* an indication of familiarity by Naomi or Ruth
  - b. **an exclamation:** “may he be blessed by the Lord ...” – **LOW:** an expression of *great gratitude*
    1. **question:** to whom does Naomi actually give credit for this kindness?
      - a. the phrase “whose kindness” is somewhat ambiguous – does “whose” refer back to “he” (**i.e.** Boaz) or does it refer to “the Lord” (**i.e.** from God through Boaz)?
      - b. **IMO:** Naomi is giving credit to God, although she is certainly grateful to Boaz
        1. because the conjunction “whose” is *closest* in the sentence to the noun “Lord”
        2. because Naomi has previously *complained* that God had forsaken her (**1:20f**), thus her attitude *here* seems like a “mirror” to that sentiment (**i.e.** God has “remembered” her)
        3. because Naomi gives credit for this as a kindness to both “the living and the dead”
          - a. it is a kindness to the living (her!), but it is also a kindness “extended” to the dead
          - b. God is showing kindness to the *descendants* of a deceased individual – **i.e.** Naomi is the widow of Elimelech (and Ruth of Mahlon) and God is showing kindness to *him* by taking care of his family (**i.e.** something the dead man can no longer do)
          - c. (**true**) Boaz knows these two women are widows, and is kind to both because of it ...
          - d. so the exclamation *can* be read as gratitude to Boaz too!
      2. **principle: God works his kindnesses through the secondary means of people going out and showing his kindness to others – therefore, our motivation (the why!) to be kind to others ought to be a testimony to the goodness of God as God**
        - a. not *just* because God has been kind to us or commands it from us, but because God (by his nature) *is* kind – to proclaim *his* kindness through *our* **testimony of kindness**
        - b. **LOW:** not just *rote* obedience or an attempt to “repay” – rather a desire to show the world “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (**Matt. 5:16**) – this verse is followed by a whole series of practical outworkings of that in reality (**e.g.** love your enemy)
    - c. **a revelation:** “the man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers” – **LOW:** a connection
      1. “redeemer” = someone who can recover (redeem) property belonging to a family member that is now in the possession of another
        - a. it is highly likely that Elimelech was forced to sell his land during the famine of **1:1** to support his family – when it became obvious he could not purchase it back, he left for Moab
          1. and, he *stayed* in Moab for 10 years because there was nothing to come back to
        - b. Israelite law assumed that land was essential for survival, and that land must remain connected to a family for its continued survival generation-over-generation
        - c. thus, Israelite law provided a means by which a man could “redeem” back his property if he was forced to sell it during times of trouble (**Leviticus 25:23-25**)  
“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption of the land. If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.”
        - d. the concept of redemption is based on **universal ownership** by God – in the theocracy, the land belonged to God and was only “owned” by *extension* – thus it could be redeemed
          1. obviously, all that we “own” actually belongs to God, thus we should be generous with it
          2. **N.T. redemption in Christ is based on the same principle – Christ redeems those who belong to him, who are included in him by the Father as part of his plan – God “owns” all men, but has a specific ownership of the elect and redeems them**
      2. **IMO:** the statement of Naomi here is a *new revelation* – it is something that “comes to her recollection” as she feels the kindness of Boaz *under* the kindness of God (**see above**)
        - a. sure, Naomi knew of the family position of Boaz all along (as a distant relative), but she *only now* makes the “connection” that he could act as a redeemer
        - b. **LOW:** the kindness she has experienced “opens her eyes” to a new possibility – something *e/else* is possible, and this new possibility fills her (and Ruth!) with **hope**
        - c. the remaining conversation of the women is *best* understood from this perspective – they now speak as though there is more than grain to be “gleaned” in the days ahead!!

### c. Ruth finds hope in the role of Boaz (vv. 21-23)

1. Ruth's response: "*Besides, he said to me ...*" – **IOW**: a very real possibility
  - a. a response of *hope*: Boaz has *already* invited me to continue to glean behind the reapers; maybe this means that he will do something *even greater* in the future (**i.e.** to step up and redeem)
  - b. **i.e.** his generosity towards me *might* indicate a willingness to do *even more!!*
2. Naomi's response: "*It is good ... you go out with his young women ...*" – **IOW**: stick close to him
  - a. (**again; see v. 9**) "*assaulted*" here *probably* doesn't mean sexual assault; it is more likely a form of physical ejection from a field where the owner or the reapers do not want gleaners around
  - b. **i.e.** accept the generosity of Boaz and stick close to his workers – he has already been kind to you, maybe he will be kind to you *in even greater measure* once the harvest is over!!
3. **question: what do you get when you cross the providence of God (i.e. his working in the world to bring about his purposes) with his kindness (i.e. his desire to do good over his own)?**
4. **principle: the combination of providence and kindness is the foundation of hope – those who "embrace fully" these two aspects of God's nature are those who find real hope in the world**
  - a. to hope means to believe that God, in his kindness, is working out everything around us to perfect goals – to reject that God is at work, or to blame God in bitterness, is to lose hope (**1 Tim. 4:10**)  
*"For to this end [godliness through training] we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe."*