

## GLEANNING IN THE WORD BY FAITH

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### Ruth 2:1-12

There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered him, "The Lord bless you!" Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 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."

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The story of Ruth, which can be found in the book of Ruth, begins by saying this was in the period of the judges, which you can read more fully on the time of the judges in the book of Judges. The time of the judges was just before the beginning of the time of the kings in Israel and Judah, which you can read about the time of the kings in the book of, actually the books starting with 1 & 2 Samuel, then 1 & 2 Kings, the 1 & 2 Chronicles, and then in the books of the prophets. The book of Ruth then is right after Judges and right before 1 Samuel. There is a reason I say all that and it pertains to our message today, the story of Ruth, from the book of Ruth. The Apostle Paul told his spiritual son Timothy, "**All Scripture** [Old and New

Testament alike] **is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**1 Timothy 3:16-17**) God's Word is not intended to make us sanctimonious (hypocritically religious) know-it-alls. God's Word teaches us to know Him, to be able to put our trust in Him, and then to honor Him as our God, Lord, and Savior, and also as our Heavenly Father. The Apostle Paul also tells us of four essential things that we can only get from God, through Christ Jesus, in **1 Corinthians 1:30**. Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. God's wisdom therefore is imparted to us through His Word. As His Word tells us it will make you "complete" and "thoroughly equipped for every good work". Once again, can one be more complete than "complete"? Can one be more equipped than "thoroughly equipped"? Can one be made complete and thoughly equipped outside of the Word of God? It wasn't just the Apostle Paul who had a unique reverance for the Word of God. Jesus Himself tells us, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (**John 14:23-24**)

Some of you can testify to this, I hope, that it doesn't matter how many times you have read through the Bible, that as you read God's Word, it comes alive and ministers to our hearts and minds, as a child of God, with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that works in us. That is where we can find the application of the Word for us, as we looked at last Sunday, from Hebrews that says, "For the Word of God is living and powerful [active], and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (**Hebrews 4:12**) That separating of the soul and the spirit is the separating of the soul, the mind and heart and emotions, from the spirit that has been made alive in Christ Jesus. How that matters, Paul tells us, where we are ultimately being led by God through the working of His Holy Spirit is to acknowledge as Paul did, saying, "I have been crucified with Christ [the soul]; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by **faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (**Galatians 2:20**)

Gleaning of the fields was what was done behind those who were harvesting the crops. God's law had told the Israelites to not go over their fields multiple times but to allow the poor people to glean of what was missed by the harvesters. For our story today, it made a huge difference for Ruth in gleaning from the field of Boaz versus any other fields, as she would have definitely missed out in the blessings and provision from God. Boaz went so far as to tell the harvesters to drop some of the good bundles so that Ruth could get

them. That speaks to us, in that what we are gleaning from is evidence of who we are, whether we are a child of God, being made complete and thoroughly equipped in His Word, living in His Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, or whether we are gleaning primarily from the ways and wisdom of this world, as we have a choice, a decision to make, each and every day, of what field we will glean from. You know where the world is heading don't you? The Apostle John tells us. "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17) You can add to that the distinct difference between the wisdom of the world versus the Wisdom that comes from God. As it is written, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (1 Corinthians 3:19)

An interesting side note to this being in the time of the judges, the last true judge being Samuel, who was also a prophet and a priest, when he was old and his sons were wicked, the people of Israel cried to Samuel to give them a king. Samuel tried to tell the people that God was their king but the people insisted that they wanted to be like the other nations and have their own king. God Almighty told Samuel that the people were not rejecting him (Samuel) but they were rejecting God. Where we are headed with this message is in asking ourselves, being honest with ourselves and with God, who are we looking to as our king? Who are we putting our faith in? Who or what are we relying upon for our wisdom? What is on the throne for us, God in Christ, ourselves, or someone or something else?

The fullness of the doctrine of Christ Jesus is summed up in what Jesus said was the great commandment of God's and the second commandment that is like unto it. That is, to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then to love others as ourselves. That is in keeping, what Jesus said, was His Word. (Mark 12:30-31) We are also told by the Apostle John, in agreement with Jesus saying we are to keep His Word, "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 1:9) That is, in relation to our story in Ruth, us gleaning from the Word of God. As Jesus prayed to our Heavenly Father, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Essentially we're evaluating, considering each day, what reigns over our hearts and minds. Is there anything that is keeping us from loving God wholeheartedly and loving others as God loves them? Then also, if we are looking to God as our true King, meaning for us that we are living our lives unto the Lord as our King, our Lord, our God, and our Savior, what fields are we gleaning in? Answering the second question can usually give us the answer to the first question. Are

they the Lord's field? Are we gleaning from His Word that promises us to make us complete and thoroughly equipped in Christ Jesus?

The story in Ruth begins by saying there was a man named Elimelech, who had taken his family to the land of the Moabites, from the town of Bethlehem, as there had been a famine in the land. So, Elimelech and his wife Naomi, with their two sons Mahlon and Chilion, uprooted themselves and went to Moab country, which was east of Judah and was separated from Judah by the Dead Sea. In time, Elimelech died and then also both of his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, leaving all three women as widows, Orpah and Ruth who had been married to the sons, and Naomi who was their mother-in-law. By then, after all the guys had died, it had been reported that the famine was over on the other side of the sea, in the land of Judah. So Naomi, the mother-in-law, decided to go back to her own people and live out the remainder of her life there. She was too old then to consider remarrying and having more children, and she did not have any grandchildren to keep her grounded so she told Orpah and Ruth to go back to their people and that she would go back to hers. While Orpah is said to have wept and kissed Naomi goodbye, Ruth was determined to go with Naomi. Ruth pleaded with Naomi to let her go, saying, "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; **your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.** Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me." While Naomi was undoubtedly quite special to Ruth, as Ruth expressed her love and devotion to her, there was a much deeper thing going on with Ruth and what was in her heart. Yet little, I'm sure, did she realize what awaited her on the other side of that Dead Sea. What she was doing, was living by faith in the one and only true God, to where Naomi's people would be Ruth's people, and Naomi's God would be her God. I'm sure Ruth considered that she would stick out like a sore thumb as a Moabite woman amongst a bunch of Israelites. Little did she realize though that she would marry Boaz who was the son of the harlot Rahab, of whom is written of in the "hall of faith" in Hebrews 11, as she was the one who helped the Israelite spies in the conquering of Jericho. Little did she realize that her child would become the grandfather of King David. Little did she realize that King David would be the seed to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Christ, the Son of the Living God!

Boaz became to Ruth what was called a kinsman redeemer for Ruth's dead husband. That was where the next closest relative to the deceased would take the widow to continue that man's name and inheritance through their children. While Ruth had no idea that all that would take place, it can speak to us in that we too are living our lives by faith. Our faith is the forward side of that Dead Sea, in the revelation of THE REDEEMER of all who will believe on and

receive Christ Jesus, as He died on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself, so that we can be forgiven of our sins, reconciled to God to become a child of God, as then He rose from the grave on the third day, conquering death, sin, and evil, paving the way for us to overcome death, sin, and evil and to have life everlasting in God's eternal kingdom. All because of the faith of Ruth that was orchestrated from the incredible love that God has for His people. That was by design by God! As Jesus tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17) We come to love God as He has first loved us. (1 John 4:19) We love God because He loves us, and we then lay down our lives for God as He has laid down His life for us, through Christ Jesus. We are firstly then being led to believe on Christ for dying for our sins, raising from the dead, and then we are receiving Him into our hearts. Part of that process is that we are led by the Holy Spirit to have a heart of repentance, remember Jesus saying "if you will keep my Word?". Once again, repentance is the Greek word metanoeo which means to recognize a need for change (Meta) and then have a willingness to heed to that change (noeo) as the Holy Spirit leads us, as Peter described it, "out of the darkness and into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

"Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn." So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

You see the similarity to us? Gleaning from Christ Jesus' field staying close to His people and then also, like Ruth, asking God, "how have I found favor from You, since I am who I am?" You know what He would say to you don't you, what He is saying by His Word? God loves you because of who you are, His creation, (Psalm 24:1) and He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), but it is also because of who HE IS. God is love (1 John 4:8) and He loves us and has made a way for us in Christ Jesus and has given us another incredible gift, besides our gift of salvation in Christ Jesus, His Word so that we don't have to glean in any other field but His, and that we have a place in His family amongst His people. Thank You Jesus my Redeemer!