

## Ruth Chapter 2 Study Notes

- I. Divide into paragraphs and give titles to each paragraph.
  - A. 2:1-3. Ruth gleans in Boaz's field.
  - B. 2:4-7. Boaz found out Ruth was working in his field.
  - C. 2:8-13. Dialogue between Boaz and Ruth.
  - D. 2:14-16. Boaz invited Ruth for lunch, provided for and protected her.
  - E. 2:17-23. Dialogue between Naomi and Ruth.
  
- II. Basic observation based on 5 w's and one h.
  - A. Who appears?
    1. Boaz, Ruth, Naomi, harvesters, overseer of harvesters, the women of Boaz.
    2. Among them, the main characters are Boaz, Ruth, Naomi.
    3. We should note that Boaz was the son of Salmon, who had married Rahab, a Gentile prostitute (4:21; Mt 1:4-5).
  - B. What is happening?
    1. Ruth goes out to glean in what turns out to be Boaz's field.
    2. Boaz encounters Ruth and begins to protect and provide for her.
    3. Naomi realized that Boaz is one of their guardian-redeemers.
  - C. When does this take place?
    1. A one-day period during harvest time (1-22).
    2. Until the barley and wheat harvests were finished (23). This period was about 6-7 weeks from late April to early June. (A springtime romance budded and blossomed.)
    3. In the morning, daytime, lunchtime and evening.
  - D. Where does this take place?

1. Naomi's house (1-2).
2. Boaz's field (3-17).
3. Naomi's house (18-22)
4. Naomi's house and Boaz's field (23).

III. Further observation based on five fingers method: emphasis, repetition, relationships, comparisons, and contrasts.

A. Repeated words

1. Glean(ed) (ing) 10 times (ESV 2,3,7,8,15 [2],16,17 [2],18,19,23).
  - a) In Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22 God instructs his people to leave gleanings from their crops at harvest time for the poor and foreigners. God is compassionate on them.
  - b) Who are the marginalized? Poor, foreigner, fatherless and widow
2. Field(s) 8 times (2,3[2],7,8,9,17,22).
3. Harvest(s),(ers),(ing) 8 times (2,3,4,5,7,9,14,21,23).
  - a) We need to understand the agricultural society of the times. Almost everyone was involved in farming.
  - b) After a time of famine, there was a time of blessing when God provided abundant food (1:6). The atmosphere was joyful.
  - c) Harvesters should remember God's blessing and give thanks to God and also show concern for the needy, like the poor and foreigners, out of God's compassion.
4. The LORD 5 times (4 [2],12 [2],20).

- a) In the time of God's blessing people were happy to bless each other in the name of the LORD.
- b) They acknowledged the LORD as Sovereign Ruler and the source of blessing and reward.

#### B. Contrasts

1. Social hierarchy: landowner, overseer, harvesters, gleaning women, foreigners.
2. Boaz and Ruth: Jew and Gentile, man and woman, a man of standing and a poor widow, giver and receiver.
3. Boaz's field and Naomi's house. Boaz's field was abundant with crops. Naomi's house was poor and needed to receive benefit.

#### C. Relationships

1. Naomi and Boaz: Naomi's husband Elimelech was from the same clan as Boaz (1,20).
2. Naomi and Ruth: Ruth initiated going out to glean to support her mother-in-law (2); Ruth told her mother-in-law what had happened (19); they had a mutually supportive and genuine trust relationship
3. Israelites and Moabites. The author emphasizes the fact that Ruth is a Moabite (2:2,6,21). Historically, the Moabites were enemies of Israel.

#### D. Emphasis

1. Chapter two covers a one-day period in 23 verses. Nine verses, 8-16, describe a conversation between Boaz and Ruth.
2. Boaz is characterized as a giver and Ruth as a receiver.

### IV. Interpretation

As we have observed, a key word in this chapter is “glean.” In that agricultural society, gleaning was the common practice of marginalized people. They would follow the harvesters, picking up any crops that were left over. This was mandated by the Law of God and showed his concern for the marginalized (Lev 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt 10:18).

In this chapter we can see how God shows his compassion on the marginalized through the relationship of Boaz and Ruth. Boaz is the giver and Ruth is the receiver.

A. We can find Boaz’s character as a giver.

1. Boaz and his harvesters greeted each other in the name of the LORD (4). They feared the LORD. They saw each other in the LORD. They lived in the presence of the LORD and Boaz reflects the character of the LORD.
2. He noticed an unknown young woman who was working in his field (5). (This indicates that he paid attention to his servants and knew them.) His first response was to take care of her.
3. After hearing she was a Moabite, he called her “My daughter,” and permitted her to work in his field (8). He saw her with a father’s heart and treated her like a family member, without discrimination. She was vulnerable, but he protected her and provided water for her (9,15-16). In the Middle East, drinking water was vital and precious. He was generous (16). He was mindful and kind and had a compassionate heart for the poor and foreigners.
4. He recognized Ruth’s sacrifice and commitment in leaving her own family to care for Naomi and her own homeland to live in a different culture (11). He was also mindful of the fact that she was a widow. He did not view her through

the eyes of religious prejudice but on the basis of common humanity.

5. He blessed Ruth in the name of the LORD (12). He knew God's heart of blessing for anyone who comes to him by faith. He knew that God is not only the God of Israel, but the God of the Gentiles too. He knew that God rewards those who please him.
6. A gracious invitation to lunch fellowship
  - a) Ruth was not a harvest worker. She had not earned the right to eat lunch. But Boaz invited her to the same meal as the harvesters. This is grace.
  - b) This is a glimpse of Jesus' invitation to come and eat with him (Rev 3:20) and to attend the wedding supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9).

B. We can also find Ruth's character as a receiver.

1. She took the initiative to provide for her mother-in-law instead of depending on her (2). It was not easy for her to do this because she was a foreigner. She was brave. She was not passive and lazy. She had no sense of entitlement.
2. She was hardworking (7). A receiver should not have a beggar's mentality.
3. She was humble. She bowed down with her face to the ground (10).
4. She knew who she was: she was a foreigner who did not deserve to receive favor. Yet when it was offered, she was not offended. She humbly and gracefully received it. Still, she did not take Boaz's favor for granted.
5. Though she felt unworthy to receive it, she continued to ask to find favor. She also opened her heart and

expressed her genuine feeling that Boaz's words had put her at ease (13).

6. She was healthy and strong enough to carry 30 pounds of grain back to Naomi's house (17-18a). She was mindful of her mother-in-law (18b).

### C. Boaz and Ruth as a type of Christ and us

1. Spiritually speaking, we are like the Moabites, outsiders and sinners. Like Ruth, we were excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenant of the promise--without hope and without God in the world (Eph 2:12). Our lives were meaningless and fruitless and we were doomed to perish.
2. Christ came into the world to care for us out of his great mercy. He taught the word of life and gave us meaning and purpose of life. He comforted and encouraged us and gave us living hope of the kingdom of God.
3. Finally, he died for our sins on the cross and redeemed us from the power of sin and death and Satan. In this way he demonstrated God's love for us. He changed our status to be his beloved children, member of God's household and heirs of his kingdom. He gave all these privileges and blessings freely by his grace.
4. In short, Christ redeemed us. He saved us from our sins.

### V. Application

#### A. What do you learn from Boaz?

1. Boaz has God's character: gentleness, humility, understanding, kindness, compassion, and generosity. No favoritism, but embraces all.

2. Boaz is a type of the Messiah in initiating care for needy people. Jesus initiated salvation work by humbling himself and coming into the world. He always saw people with a compassionate heart. Jesus understands weak and vulnerable people and cares for them. He did not break a bruised reed or snuff out a smoldering wick (Mt 12:20). Jesus did not show favoritism but embraced all who came to him.

B. What do you learn from Ruth?

1. Ruth shows us how to receive favor or grace with humility, faith and thanksgiving. She knew who she was: a foreigner and a poor widow who had no claim on Israelite society.
2. She was not offended, due to her pride, when favor was offered to her. Nor did she take advantage of people's kindness or have a beggar's mindset. Rather, she was hardworking, thankful and mindful of others.

C. What can we learn about who God is?

1. The atmosphere of harvest due to divine blessing shows us that God restores his people to blessing after a time of suffering through famine.
2. God leads those who seek him to receive his favor, as God led Ruth to Boaz's field.
3. God protects, provides for and blesses and rewards those who come under his wings of grace (Heb 11:6).
4. God does not show favoritism, but gives grace to all those who come to him by faith. God is not only the God of Israel, but of the Gentiles too.

5. Naomi realized that God has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead (20). The word “kindness” is “hesed” in Hebrew. Its first usage occurred in 1:8. It is used here in 2:20, and appears again in 3:10. Naomi had received tough love from God through his divine discipline. But she did not harbor a grudge against God. Rather, she realized that God is kind and faithful to those who turn back to him. Through this we can see God is pouring his grace on his people from generation to generation. We also see his deep comfort for a poor, old widow woman. He turned her deep despair into hope.