

ORDINARY FAITHFULNESS

FAITHFULNESS IN YOUR WORK

RUTH 2:1-7

Introduced to Boaz

Ruth 2:1 KJV 1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

- Ruth 2 opens with the introduction of Boaz
- Boaz means in him is strength
- Boaz is a *mighty man of wealth*
- Wealth here is more than Boaz's financial strength, but also his worth as a person
- Boaz is a *kinsman* (means relative) of Naomi's husband Elimelech
- Boaz belongs to the same *covenant family* as Naomi's deceased husband, Elimelech
- In Israel's covenant structure, family mattered *legally, economically, and spiritually*.
- A kinsman (also called a kinsman-redeemer) is a close male relative had responsibilities:
 - To protect family inheritance
 - To redeem land that had been lost
 - To marry a widow to preserve family lineage
 - To restore what death or poverty had threatened
- Naomi and Ruth are widows, poor, with not inheritance, no power or protection; but God has been working behind the scenes
- God working behind the scenes is called His providence
- The providence of God is God sovereignly ordering of events for His purposes ***Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.***
- God says through His divine providence, "I am positioning you for something you cannot yet see."
- Ruth chapter 1 ends Naomi is *empty* and Ruth is an *outsider*, but God is *already* planting the seed of provision!
- Before Ruth ever steps into the field, He has already arranged provision through Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer
- We too have a kinsman-redeemer in Jesus

Faithfulness Takes the Initiative

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

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- When the wheat and barley was ready to be harvested, reaper/harvesters were hired to cut down the stalks and tie them into bundles
- The Israelites lived under the Mosaic system that required farmers not to completely harvest their fields, but leave grain in the *corners* of the field for the poor, the widow, and the stranger
- Ruth was *all three*, poor, a widow and a stranger
- It was also a way for the poor to provide for their own needs with dignity
- To eat, the poor had to work or glean the fields after the harvest
- Ruth, on her own initiative, told Naomi, *let me go* to the field and *glean* for food
- Gleaning was *hard work*
- Gleaners did not *reap*, they gathered “the leftovers”
- Gleaning in the field after the reapers, let *everyone* know what your economic status was
- Ruth was not waiting for someone to rescue her, she went to work
- Ruth did not stay at home and “wait on God to provide”, she to work
- Ruth did not let her pride get in the way, she went to work
- Ruth said, *Let me go* to the field and maybe someone will allow me to glean from their field
- Ruth’s character is revealed in her desire to do hard, but *ordinary work* for Naomi and herself
- Even low-level work has great value when done faithfully
- Faithfulness is not “passive”, faithfulness *moves*
- Ruth teaches us that God blesses *movement*

Faithfulness Trusts God

3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

- Ruth wasted no time, she left Naomi’s house on her way to work in the field
- If you’re waiting for God to provide, maybe God is waiting for you to take the first step to demonstrate how important your need really is
- The text says, Ruth *hap* (happened) on the field on part of the field that belonged to Boaz
- This sounds like Ruth “accidentally” ended up working in Boaz’s field

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- From Ruth's perspective, it's a "coincidence"; from God's perspective, it's *providence*
- How did Ruth end up in Boaz's field? She just went to work, nothing spectacular
- Ruth went to "work", but God determined *where* she went to work
- When we are faithful where we are, God will guide us where we land
- Faithfulness *positions you* where favor can *find you*
- Promotion is the product of being faithful where you are
- Ruth experienced the supernatural guidance of God by doing something "ordinary and routine", going to work
- The unseen hand of God is arranging the future if the faithful

Faithfulness is Visible to Others

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. 5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? 6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7 And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

- Boaz comes to the field from Bethlehem, and he greets the reapers with *the Lord be with you*, and the reapers respond with *the Lord bless thee*
- This is the 1st recorded words from Boaz is *a blessing*, and it says a lot about him
- It shows that Boaz:
 - Honors his workers
 - Naturally uses the name of God in his speech
 - He is dignified but approachable
 - Genuine in his faith by his greeting
 - Boaz's character shows up in small greetings
- Boaz looks around and sees Ruth and asks the supervisor, *whose is this damsel?*
- In these times, identity was *not* primarily individual it was based on family connections
- Boaz was asking what family, tribe, clan covers her?
- Boaz was asking because he was concerned about her protection

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- An unmarried woman gleaning alone was vulnerable.
- The supervisor says she is from Moab, she belongs to Naomi, and Naomi has no husband.
- Ruth is legally attached to a household with no male covering.
- Without being asked, the supervisor added that Ruth *asked* for permission to glean in the field, she's been working *from morning until now*, and she only took a small break
 - What *stood out* to the supervisor about Ruth that Boaz needed to know
 - She showed up
 - She worked hard from morning until now
 - She barely rested
 - She was consistent
- Before Boaz ever speaks to Ruth, he hears about her "ordinary" work ethic, not anything *spectacular*
- Faithfulness speaks before you do
- Ruth's reputation preceded her introduction
 - Your diligence introduces you before you speak
- Promotion often comes through observation
- Faithfulness in "ordinary work" invites *extraordinary favor*