

ORDINARY FAITHFULNESS

FAVOR IN THE FIELD

RUTH 2:8-18

Stay Where the Favor Is

Ruth 2:8-9 NKJV 8 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. 9 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.”

- Boaz starts a conversation with Ruth, and says daughter, don’t glean in another field, but stay close to his other maidservants, I’ve commanded the young men not to bother you, and when you get thirsty, there’s water for you that my servants have drawn from the well
- But Boaz calls Ruth *daughter*, that’s a term of *dignity* and *respect*
- Boaz shows favor to Ruth by:
 - Inviting her to *stay* in *his* field with the handmaidens
 - Giving her the *opportunity* to work consistently
 - *Protecting* her from the young men in the field
 - *Providing* water whenever she gets thirsty
- Boaz moves from what is “legally required” to doing more than what’s required, that’s *favor*
- Biblical definition of favor: “*Favor is God’s gracious approval expressed through kindness, acceptance, beneficial actions toward someone, often beyond what they deserve or could obtain on their own.*”
- God’s favor often shows up in human kindness
- Ruth’s blessing was connected to *where she stayed*
- Boaz told Ruth to stay in *his* field, not because other fields didn’t exist, but because there was favor in *his field*
- Can I talk to somebody honestly tonight?
- Sometimes, we as believers “leave fields” God has planted us in
- We “leave our fields” not because *God* has moved us, but because *restlessness, discomfort, offense, and discouragement* did
- God is calling us to stay where:
 - your soul is *growing*,
 - your character is *forming*,
 - your faith is being *stretched*,
 - your covering is *protecting* you.
- Favor is not “random”, it is *relational*
- God is *not* calling anyone to remain in:
 - abuse,
 - manipulation,
 - spiritual harm,
 - toxic environments
- God’s favor *never* leads to your destruction
- Don’t walk away from the place where God is *already* working on your behalf
- Stay where the *favor* is!

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Receive Favor with Humility

10 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?”

- Ruth is overwhelmed by Boaz’s acts of favor
- Boaz did above and beyond what was required him to do legally
- Ruth is surprised and *humbled* by Boaz’s acts of kindness and favor
- Ruth knows who she is and where she is; she is Moabite living in Bethlehem
- Ruth knows she is a foreigner, she was not just from “another place.”
- Yet Ruth feels humbled, but not *entitled*
- Ruth knows this level of favor to her is completely undeserved
- Sometimes we miss God’s blessings of favor because we go through life assuming God “owes us something”, it’s a “entitlement mentality”
- Pride blocks favor, humility welcomes it
- Ruth reminds us that favor is a gift we receive, not a wage we earn
- Let gratitude *replace* entitlement

Faithfulness that God Rewards

11 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. 12 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.” 13 Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

- Bethlehem was a small town, and everybody knew everybody’s business
- Ruth’s reputation spread all over Bethlehem and it made it to the ears of Boaz
- Boaz tells Ruth, “It’s has been *fully reported* to me...”
- Last week, we learned about Ruth reputation as a *worker*, now learn her reputation as a *person*
- A good reputation is created when we consistently live our lives in away that honors God, regardless of what group of people or surroundings we’re in
- Boaz prays that God will *repay* Ruth for her work and that she would be *under wings of refuge*, not realizing that *he was the answer* his own prayer
- This is a picture of God’s divine protection ***Psalms 91:4 “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust...”***
- There is safety under God’s care
- Ruth responds by saying, “Let me find favor in your sight...you have comforted me...and spoken kindly to me”
- Ruth was not only saying thank you to Boaz for relieving the anxiety she was feeling, speaking nicely to her even though she’s not one his handmaidens, she was also asking for *continued favor* in field

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- Ruth's request is humility *shaped* by gratitude

Favor Provides Unexpected Fellowship

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

- It's mealtime and Boaz asks Ruth to join him and the reapers
- This is significant because eating together suggests acceptance, fellowship, belonging, equality, and community
- Ruth has moved from the corners of the field, to following the reapers in the field, the table of fellowship and community
- God's favor can move us from *the margins* (an outsider) to community (a participant)
- Boaz *personally* serves Ruth roasted grain
- It's a sign that Boaz is *interested* in Ruth

Favor that Overflows

15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her." 17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

- Ruth finished her meal and immediately went back to work
- Boaz commands his workers to let Ruth glean *among* the sheaves with stopping her
- Boaz also commands his workers to let some bundles fall on purpose so that Ruth get them
- Ruth worked from sun-up to sundown and beat the grain herself
- Ruth gathered and ephah of grain (approximately 30-50 pounds)
- God's provision often *exceeds* what survival requires ***Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,***
- Ruth went back home to Naomi and shared her blessings
- In Ruth 1, Naomi left Bethlehem *full* and returned *empty*
- In Ruth 2, Ruth left the house *empty* and returned *full*
- God's favor specializes in *reversing emptiness into fullness* through faithful obedience and divine providence
- Ruth did nothing spectacular, yet God *avored* her
- Yet God multiplied "ordinary faithfulness" into *abundance!*