

Ruth 2 – “The Kindness of a Worthy Man”

Introduction: **Because God is faithful to those who love him, we take shelter under his wings.**

1) Ruth Takes Initiative

- What is emphasized over and over in the book of Ruth is that she is a Moabite (see 1:22, 2:2, 2:23). This is a problem because they are singled out in Deuteronomy as especially unwelcome in the assembly of the Lord (Deut 23:3-6). Moabites were considered enemies of Israel. The question now is: how will this Moabite fare in Israel?
- At the end of Ruth 1 we also read that it is the end of the barley harvest. This was a good time for the poor because God made provision for the poor with the practice of gleaning (see Lev. 19:9-10). Don't forget, though, this is in the time of the Judges, and it was rare that people would do what they were supposed to. Nevertheless, Ruth takes the initiative to glean in the fields

2) Boaz Responds With Kindness

- We come across this interesting phrase: “she happened to come.” This means that it was not her plan to seek out Boaz, but it was certainly God's plan. In his providence he has brought Ruth to the perfect place. Even though things seemed so dark for her and Naomi, she trusted that God would care for her, and he does.
- This is what we need to recognize about God. He has given us the greatest gift we could ever be given. He is not withholding in his gifts, so why would we doubt his care for us? (see Romans 8:32) Often we can only see God's providence looking back. It seems like things are happening by chance, but really God's fatherly care is directing our path, just like Ruth.
- This is the perfect field to arrive at, because Boaz is a worthy man. He demonstrates this by the way he speaks to his workers, but more by his treatment of Ruth. He extends his protection over her because she has abandoned everything to come to a new people, and to take refuge under the wings of the Lord. It is this that breaks down the barrier between Moabite and Israelite (see Ephesians 2:13-22; Galatians 3:28-29).

3) Naomi Sees God's Hand

- Boaz lavishes barley on Ruth and Naomi. She gleaned about an ephah (20 litres, 30lbs) of barley. This would have kept them fed for probably 10 days. Naomi had low expectations, and is amazed at what Ruth has brought home.
- Her words could be taken as attributing kindness to either God or Boaz. However, this is a false choice. God works through means in providing for his people. Naomi begins to see the Lord's kindness in the actions of Boaz. This is a hopeful development for the woman who thought that God was *against* her. She is learning that God is *for* her, and is going to give her more than she could hope for.