

**"Gleaning in Grace"**

**Part 2**

**Ruth 2:17-23**

**Introduction:** Today is our 6<sup>th</sup> study in the book of Ruth. We have been slowly working our way through this letter and along the way we have been gathering spiritual lessons for our own lives. Last week in our study of the book of Ruth we looked at Ruth 2:1-16. In these verses we were able to see that Naomi had returned home following the 10 year journey to Moab. She and her husband and 2 sons had gone to sojourn in Moab in order to escape the famine which was in Bethlehem. While they were down in Moab her husband and her 2 sons all died. Naomi was then left with her 2 daughter-in-laws who were Orpah and Ruth. Under the advice from Naomi Orpah chose to return back to Moab but Ruth chose to stay with Naomi until they were separated by death.

When they came to Bethlehem the people of the city were quick to recognize Naomi. Naomi told them not to call her "Naomi" but they were to call her "Mara". Naomi meant "pleasant" but Mara meant "bitter". Naomi was full of bitterness because of the loss of her husband and her sons. She viewed their deaths as God's judgment on the family.

**Ruth 1:20-21**

*<sup>20</sup> And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.*

*<sup>21</sup> I went out full and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*

When they came to Bethlehem it was the beginning of the barley harvest. Last week in our study we followed Ruth into the field. God had made provisions for the poor and the fatherless and the widows. When the fields were harvested they were to not harvest the corners but they were to let them for the needy.

**Leviticus 19:9-10**

*<sup>9</sup> And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.*

*<sup>10</sup> And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.*

**Deuteronomy 24:19-22**

*<sup>19</sup> When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.*

*<sup>20</sup> When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*

*<sup>21</sup> When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.*

*<sup>22</sup> And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.*

As Ruth made her way out in search of a field to glean it was God who guided her steps and brought her to the fields of Boaz. He showed her special attention and instructed his men to not touch her and to allow handfuls to fall on purpose for her to gather.

When we left Ruth last week she was still in the field of Boaz and she was gathering barley for her and Naomi.

Today as we get back into the study we shall see more lessons from Ruth gleaning in grace.

**I. Ruth was Productive**

**Notice Ruth 2:17**

Ruth had been treated very well by Boaz and his men but she never once took advantage of them. She labored until the evening or until the light was gone and she then beat out the chaff on what she had gathered. When she was finished for the day she had about enough barley for her and Naomi for 10 days.

When I look at this verse I see Ruth was a lady who wasted nothing. She used all the light of the day and she would use every piece of barley that she had gathered.

Remember last week I told you that Ruth is a picture of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31.

**Proverbs 31:27**

*<sup>27</sup> She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

**Application:**

When I look at Ruth I see a woman who was not wasteful. She knew there was only so much time in the day and she knew that her and Naomi would need everything she could possibly gather.

This is exactly the way we are to live our lives.

I want to take you into John 6 where we find the feeding of the 5000.

**John 6:10-13**

*<sup>10</sup> And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.*

*<sup>11</sup> And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.*

*<sup>12</sup> When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, **Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.***

*<sup>13</sup> Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

After the feeding of the 5000 Jesus commanded His disciples to gather up the fragments that remained so that nothing was lost.

This is a reminder to you and me that we are not to be wasteful. There are many fragments within our lives that we could gather and put them to good use.

1. **Fragments of time.**
2. **Fragments of money.**
3. **Fragments of talents.**
4. **Fragments of opportunities.**

The point is that our time to serve here in this life is very limited compared to eternity so we need to use everything that has been entrusted to us to count for eternity.

There is something else which I see here about Ruth that is very important.

Last week I told you that she was a woman of faith and she knew the provisions which God had made for the widows and the poor. She had come to trust in the God of Naomi so she was a woman of faith.

So here we see that true faith produces faithfulness.

**James 2:17-20**

*17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

*18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*

*19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*

*20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*

Ruth was a woman of faith but that did not mean she sat around waiting for God to fulfill His promises. She knew that God had made provisions for the widows but she also knew that she had a responsibility.

**Application:**

Let me just say that there are many promises with God's Word that we can apply to many situations which we face in life. But we must also remember that in order to see those promises fulfilled we must do 3 things:

1. **Believe**
2. **Pray**
3. **Move**

**Listen to the words of Matthew Henry;**

*"Ruth took care not to lose time, for she gleaned until evening. We must not be weary of well-doing, because in due season we shall reap. She did not make an excuse to sit still, or go home, till the evening. Let us work the works of Him that sent us, while it is day. She scarcely used, much less did she abuse, the kindness of Boaz; for, though he ordered his servants to leave handfuls for her, she continued to glean the scattered ears."*

**II. Ruth was Caring**

**Notice Ruth 2:18**

Now here in this verse we see that Ruth gave to Naomi that which she had reserved after she was sufficed. This is not talking about the left over barley.

**Notice Ruth 2:14**

Ruth had been given a meal earlier and when the meal was over she gathered some of the left over's and took them back to Naomi.

**Application:**

There are many ways to apply this thought but God has laid it on my heart to apply it in a spiritual manner. Now we are to be generous with that which God has blessed us with in this life. But there is another way in which we are to be generous which is even more important than sharing the material blessings.

We are to share the spiritual food that God gives to us when we sit under the teaching of the Word. You come here and God fills up your cup on Sundays and Wednesdays and then it is your responsibility to take what He gives to you and to do 2 things:

1. **Apply it to your own life.**
2. **Invest it into the lives of those around you.**

**Matthew 25:14-19**

*<sup>14</sup> For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

*<sup>15</sup> And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.*

*<sup>16</sup> Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.*

*<sup>17</sup> And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.*

*<sup>18</sup> But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.*

*<sup>19</sup> After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*

### III. Ruth was Blessed

#### Notice Ruth 2:19-20

Naomi inquired where Ruth had gleaned and when she found out she was overjoyed. In verse 20 the phrase "who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead" is referring to God.

Now let me point out something here that is very important. Ruth walked by faith and the Lord led her to the field of Boaz where she was treated very kindly and at the same time she came in contact with Boaz who was of the family of Elimelech. All of this was of God.

#### Application:

When we walk by faith and we walk in obedience to the Word of God we can also expect to be blessed greatly. I am not talking about material blessings but spiritual blessings.

Now Naomi realized God was at work and that He was working out His plan. This then caused Naomi to praise God.

But remember what her attitude was in chapter 1? She was bitter and she saw herself under the affliction of God. But now her attitude has truly changed.

Listen to the words of Warren Wiersbe:

*"It is encouraging to see the changes that have taken place in Naomi because of what Ruth did. God used Ruth to turn Naomi's bitterness into gratitude, her unbelief into faith, and her despair into hope."*

**One person, trusting the Lord and obeying His will,  
can change a situation from defeat to victory.**

*Ruth's faith in God's Word led her to the field of Boaz. The love of Boaz for Ruth compelled him to pour out his grace upon her and meet her every need. (Grace is love that pays the price to help the undeserving one.) Ruth's experience of grace gave Naomi new hope as she anticipated what her kinsman redeemer would do."*

The lesson here for us is this:

**"When we walk by faith God works through us to change the hearts of those who we have contact with."**

So many times we do everything we can to help change the heart of someone we love who has grown cold or bitter. But let us learn from Ruth that God is the One who changes hearts and our responsibility is to walk by faith and let Him work through us. Too often people are tempted to compromise to help a loved one. Don't do it! Walk by faith and let God do the work in their heart.

#### **IV. Ruth was Patient**

##### **Notice Ruth 2:21-23**

Now Naomi would have told Ruth all about the kinsman-redeemer and the possibilities that could unfold. So like any person who desired to have a bright and prosperous future she would have lived in great anticipation of the possibilities.

But here in verse 23 we read that she worked until the end of the wheat harvest. This means she worked for about 3 months between the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. This was 3 months of anticipation. How did she just continue to glean day after day?

She had learned to trust in God with the situation that was before her. She patiently waited for God to do what He knew was best.

##### **Conclusion:**

There is something said in verse 23 that is very important and easy to look over. We are told she dwelt with her mother-in-law. This tells us Ruth was a righteous woman. This is happening in the days when the judges ruled.

Gideon had many wives and Samson was notorious for his affairs with women. But Ruth would not be like the others around her. She dwelt with Naomi and Boaz stayed at his home. What a testimony to the character of Ruth.

It would be this lifestyle that would bring honor to God.

#### **Baby Dedication:**

**Casey and Jess Herbert**

**Noelon, Sugaree, Breckin**