

Ruth 2

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. Our text for today is Ruth chapter 2. So let me invite you to join me there. Ruth chapter 2. Mark that spot and then go to Matthew chapter 6.

So Ruth chapter 2 is our text for today, but I want you to join me in Matthew chapter 6. Today we have the opportunity to consider the second act in the story of Naomi and Ruth.

Verse 1 of chapter 2 introduces the final human character in this drama, a man named Boaz. So we have Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

We will observe today the character quality of both Ruth and Boaz, but we need not lose sight that the major player in this narrative is God himself, as in all biblical narratives.

Recall I made the case to you last week that the primary work of the author of this book is to display God's sovereign goodness, his providential care for his people in the lives of these three characters.

[1 : 14] Chapter 1 and verse 1 sets the stage for the book of Ruth. There it says, In the days when the judges ruled. This is an unsettled time in Israel's history.

Widespread uncertainty, rebellion against God's good commands, power grabs and abuses. Here, though, in the book of Ruth, we zoom in and can and should appreciate God's loving kindness to these two widows and to their kinsman redeemer.

When Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, mere survival is on their minds. Without husbands or sons, they have no real mean for provision.

The narrator sets the scene for chapter 2 with God's providence provision in mind at the end of chapter 1. There he writes in verse 22 of chapter 1, And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

How are they to be provided for? Well, we get a clue here. God has orchestrated their arrival at a time of plenty, and he has a plan for their provision.

[2 : 37] This chapter is a wonderful, real-life display of the instruction that Jesus gives recorded in Matthew 6, beginning in verse 25.

I referenced this briefly last week. There he says, What shall we drink? What shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

God has promised to provide, and he does so providentially. Providence is God's provide-ence.

[4 : 34] Charles Spurgeon, the first part of this quotation is on the back of your bulletin, once wrote this, All things live and move in him, and have their being, nor could they live or move otherwise, for God hath so ordained them.

I hear one say, Well, sir, you seem to be a fatalist. No, far from it. There is just this difference between fate and providence.

Fate is blind. Providence has eyes. And then he goes on. Fate is blind, a thing that must be. It is just an arrow shot from a bow that must fly onward, but hath no target.

Not so providence. Providence is full of eyes. There is a design in everything, and an end to be answered. All things are working together, and working together for good.

They are not done because they must be done, but they are done because there is some reason for it. It is not only that the thing is because it must be, but the thing is because it is right it should be.

[5 : 49] God hath not arbitrarily marked out the world's history. He had an eye to the great architecture of perfection when he marked all the aisles of history and placed all the pillars of events

in the building of time.

Isn't that good? Purposeful. Purposeful. Sovereignty. And this included all of that planning, the minutia of our daily bread.

And so, we have no need, as God's people, to be anxious for anything. So let's look at the birds of the air and consider the lilies of the field and think about the lives of Naomi and Ruth and Boaz.

Ruth chapter 2. Before I read, beginning in verse 1, I'd like to remind you, beloved, that this is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good, and so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands.

Ruth 2. Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.

[7 : 17] And she said to her, Go, my daughter. So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered, The Lord bless you. Then Boaz said to a young man who was in charge of the reapers, Whose young woman is this?

And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, She is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.

So she came, And she has continued from early morning until now, Except for a short rest. Then Boaz said to Ruth, Now listen, my daughter.

Do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, But keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, And go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you?

[8 : 21] And when you are thirsty, Go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, Bowing 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?

But Boaz answered her, All that you have done for your mother-in-law Since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, And how you left your father and mother and your native land And came to a people that you did not know before.

The Lord repay you for what you have done, And a full reward be given you by the Lord, The God of Israel, Under whose wings you have come to take refuge. Then she said, I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord, For you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, Though I am not one of your servants.

And at mealtime Boaz said to her, Come here and eat some bread, And dip your morsel in the wine. So she sat beside the reapers, And he passed to her roasted grain, And she ate until she was satisfied, And she had some left over.

When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, Saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, And do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her, And leave it for her to glean, And do not rebuke her.

[9 : 37] So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, And it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.

She also brought out and gave what food she had left over, After being satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you. So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, And said, The man's name with whom I work today is Boaz. And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, May he be blessed by the Lord, Whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead.

Naomi also said to her, The man is a close relative of ours, One of our redeemers. And Ruth the Moabite said, Besides, he said to me, You shall keep close by my young men Until they have finished all my harness.

And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, That you go out with his young women, Lest in another field you be assaulted. So she kept close to the young women of

Boaz, Gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvest.

[10:46] And she lived with her mother-in-law. So the second act of this story Displays God's providential provision For the needs of his people.

But it's also important for us to note That this providential provision Works in congruence with human agency. God does not separate the ends from the means.

So with God's sovereign grace in mind, Let's also note the activity of the human players In this chapter in the following brief outline. Number one, we'll consider Ruth's diligent labor.

Secondly, Boaz's lavish generosity. And thirdly, and very briefly, Naomi's increased faith. So look firstly at Ruth's diligent labor.

The narrator makes it evident That Ruth does not wait for some solution To fall into her lap, But she is likely familiar with Jewish laws, Which we'll speak about a bit more in a moment.

[11:54] And so she asks permission of her mother-in-law, Of Naomi, To glean from the barley harvest. And we see that there in verse 2. Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain After him in whose sight I shall find favor.

So those things that were not picked up In the process of harvesting, That were dropped along the way, She was allowed to go and pick up After those harvesters.

Now, there doesn't seem to be a distinction of fields In the narrator's mind, Which I just thought was interesting, But simply a field. So she goes out to glean, Verse 3 says, In the field, After the reapers, Which seems to be a bit like saying She gleaned in the countryside.

Nevertheless, There is a distinction, And Boaz makes a distinction about his field. But here there's a distinction That at least a part of the field Belongs to him.

And we see that at the end of verse 3. She happened to come To the part of the field belonging to Boaz. And then this repetition of who he is Of the clan of Elimelech.

[13:06] The inclusion of the word happened Is not meant to make us think of this As an accident. It's kind of how I read it in English, right?

She accidentally, She stumbled upon this part of the land That belonged to Boaz. But recall that Boaz Has already been introduced At the beginning of the chapter.

And to the Jewish reader Introduced as a possible redeemer, Which we're going to spend a lot of time on In the coming weeks. He may be able, He possibly has the power To fix all of Naomi and Ruth's problems.

So he's been introduced in that way. And so it is no accident That Ruth arrived in the part of the field Belonging to Boaz.

The narrator then tells us That Boaz arrives at the field And asks who Ruth is. In verse 6, The servant who's in charge of the reapers Answered, She is the young Moabite woman Who came back with Naomi From the country of Moab.

[14:17] We talked at length about this In chapter 1. If you're here for the first time And unfamiliar, I would encourage you to go read Chapter 1. So, She comes in verse 7 And says, Please let me glean And gather among the sheaves After the reapers.

There's some debate about verse 7. The servant says, She came and she has continued From early morning until now Except for a short rest.

Either, Ruth has been gleaning this whole time. She came early in the morning. The assumption on my part Is that Boaz is not out late in the day But he's come out sometime in the morning.

So she's been there early And she's been gleaning the whole time Except for a short rest. Or, When she comes to this portion of the field She has asked permission to glean, We see, But she's been asking the permission Persistently.

Perhaps she's arrived at this Edge of the field Where this activity is going on And she doesn't think she has the right As a foreigner To step onto this land And to glean And so she's been asking to glean And she's been asking And asking and asking It almost seems like the servant is saying She's been asking Except for a little while She stopped asking But she's still been asking.

[15:42] Now, Either way, Whichever way you want to read it And again, It's kind of down the middle People think one way or the other. Either way though, She has been working. And she's been working hard To make provision for her And for Naomi.

She's been at it. She's been out there Trying to get this provision Pulled together. And this point is reinforced By the record of verse 17.

There it says, So she gleaned in the field Until evening. There's this great generosity On Boaz's part, But it's not without her work.

She continues to work Throughout the day And into the evening. And then we see that she Beats out what she had gleaned And it was about an ephah Of barley.

And once again, There's a disagreement here On how much exactly An ephah was. Some say it would have been Six gallons in total. Others say ten gallons.

[16:49] The former would have Either way, In response to the generosity Of Boaz, Ruth still did A lot of work.

Every bit of this Had to be picked up And carried And processed. There were no tractors. There was any kind of Implements being used.

It wouldn't have been used By her. This was all Labor done By her Hands. Ruth's persistent labor Serves as an example For us to be diligent In the work that God Has placed Before us.

And we all Have some Task To be faithful in. Whether we are Crunching numbers Or Manipulating spreadsheets Or Building houses Or Studying Textbooks Raising children Educating them Wiping their Noses Or Shepherding Souls All should be done With great Diligence.

She's just a beautiful Picture Of that. From early morning Until late In the evening As a response To this Generosity. And we are not To be diligent Just for our own Sake But also For the sake Of others.

[18:11] Normatively Not always But normatively Hard work Is rewarded. We want to Teach our children This. There's reward To good Steady Labor.

The author Of the Proverbs Speaks to this Very end. The goal Though Of that Reward Ought To be The good Of others.

Listen to Paul's Exhortation In Ephesians Chapter 4 In verse 28. There he says Let the thief No longer Steal. And What's often Written about This text That he's Addressing Those who Weren't Contributing To the life Of the church But were Taking from It.

They weren't Working but They were Receiving the Generosity Of the church. He says Let the thief No longer Steal but Rather Let him Labor Doing honest Work with His own Hands.

The implication There is for His own Provision. But Paul Goes on So that He may have Something to Share With anyone In need.

[19:18] I think That's just Astounding. The goal Of the Reward of Labor Not being Just Example of Diligent Work on Ruth's Part. It's the Human agency That plays Into God's Provision For her.

And then We get to See Boaz As a Wonderful Example Of generosity To those In need. So one Who also Is laboring Not in The same Measure.

He's now Managing A field Of Reapers But he's Doing This And serving Others In The process Let's look Secondly At Boaz's Lavish Generosity Before we Consider Boaz's Generosity Let's just Take a Moment to Consider Boaz The man Once again We see that Introduction In chapter Two And verse One That Naomi That Naomi Had a Relative Of her Husband's A worthy Man Of the Clan Of Elimelech Whose name Was Boaz There are Three observations Concerning Boaz Here The first And the Third Hint at A potential Family Obligation To Naomi And the Second That he Is a Worthy Man Suggests That he Has the Character And ability To fulfill That obligation He's worthy For this Task To be used By God To provide For Naomi And for Ruth This idea Develops Further In verse Four Here we see Boaz comes From Bethlehem He comes From the city Center Where he Would have Lived And he Comes out To his Field And he Says To the Reapers To his Employees The Lord Be with You And they Answer The Lord Blessed God Has granted To him And I Believe the Narrator Includes The greetings Of verse Four To show Us That Boaz Wishes Good for His workers And they For him By placing God At the Center Of their Interactions It's a Very tiny But very Encouraging Literal Interaction For those Who have Employees Under them And for Those who Are Employees The Lord Be with You And the Answer The Lord Bless You I think this One little Verse gives Us some Picture of

Boaz's Quality As a Manager Those employees Felt something Of him And for Him Remember This is taking Place in the Days when the Judges Ruled And the Days when the Judges Ruled Judges Chapter 21 And Verse 25 Tells Us Everyone Did What Was Right In His Own Eyes A Big General Statement Because it Doesn't Seem to Be So With Boaz Boaz Observes A woman In His Portion Of The Field And He Obeys God's Commands Concerning Her Keep Your Hand In Ruth Chapter 2 And Turn With Me To Deuteronomy Chapter 24 This is

[22 : 47] One of A Number Of Places That This Command Is Given I'll Begin Reading In Verse 19 Deuteronomy 24 Verse 19 Here God Commands When You Reap Your Harvest In Your Field And Forget A Sheaf In The Field You Shall Not Go Back To Get It It Shall Be For The Sojourner The Fatherless And The Widow That The Lord Your God May Bless You In All The Work Of Your Hands When You Beat Your Olive Trees You Shall Not Go Over Them Again It Shall Be For The Sojourner The Fatherless And The Widow You Shall Remember That You Are A Slave In The Land Of Egypt Therefore I Command You To Do This But Now Just Practically Speaking The Lord Is Not Commanding Here That You Be Lazy In Your Harvesting But Inevitably

You're Going To Leave Stuff Behind You're Going To Miss Something Don't Go Back Over It Again Leave It There It's A Measure Of Generosity Right That People Can Come Behind And Do That Careful Gleaning Of What's Left Over This Command Was A Practical Way That God Ordered For The Provision Of The Less Fortunate Right Those Who Are Being Listed Here Are Those Who Didn't Have Rights To The Land But Note The Founding Principle!

Of It In Verse 22 This Is Why I Wanted You To Turn There And See It Yourself Right So Do This Generous Work Of Leaving Behind Those Things That You Miss Because Verse 22 God States I Have Been Generous Toward You I Delivered You From Slavery Now You Are To Be Generous Toward Others Right You Were A Slave In The Land Of Egypt Therefore I Command You To Do This So We See This Boaz Right Being Obedient To This Command Right To Allowing For Naomi To Come Even As A Foreigner And To Glean In His Field So Boaz Knows This And He Provides For And He Protects Ruth So You See In Verse 8 Boaz Says

To The Ruth Now Listen My Daughter Do Not Go Glean In Another Field Or Leave This One But Keep Close To My Young Women And You See At The Very End Of The Chapter That She Does This Through The Barley And Then The Wheat Harvest For This Extended Period Of Time She Is Able To Come Back And Glean And Have This Provision!

He Says In Verse 9 Let Your Eyes Be On The Field That They Are Reaping And Go After Them Follow Them Around Then He Says Have I Not Charged The Young Men Not To Touch You And You See Him Pulling Those Young Men Aside And Saying Hey She Not To Be Touched And When You Are Thirsty Go To The Vessels And Drink What The Young Men Have Drawn The Work They've Done To Bring That Water Up Out Of The Ground And They've Stored It There For People To Participate And Being Refreshed In That Way!

[26 : 21] So She Sat Beside The Reapers He's Elevated Her To This Position And He Passed To Her Roasted Grain And She Ate Until She Was Satisfied And She Has Some Left Over So Much That She Takes It To Naomi And Shares It With Her So He's Providing For Her And He's Protecting Her Verse 22 We See This Instruction Given Beyond There Naomi Says To Ruth It Is Good My Daughter That You Go Out With His Young Women Lest In Another Field You Be Assaulted Everyone Doing What's Right In Their Own Eyes A Dangerous Place To Be And So We Have Boaz Who Both Provides For And Protects Ruth And By Extension!

Naomi And Boaz Does This Lavishly I Really Think That Boaz Gets Deuteronomy 24 Verse 19 Through 22 I Don't Think He's Merely Following The Letter Of The Law But The Spirit Of It Boaz You See Boaz Was Never Himself A Captive In Egypt That Command In Verse 22 To Remember That He Was A Slave In Egypt Doesn't Apply Directly To Him But He Sees The Principle At Play That God Is Displaying Here In That Text God Is His Provider And His Protector What He Has He Has Because Of The Gracious!

Kindness God And Therefore He Is To Be Used Of God To Bring The Same To Others Boaz His Understanding Of God's Sovereign Grace Is Reflected Proportionally In His Kindness Towards Ruth He Extends God's Been So Kind To Me Look What He's Done For Me And Then He Turns And Does This For Her Now Note That He Has He Left

Your Father And Mother And Your Native Land And Came To A People That You Did Not Know Before I've Seen I've Heard Tell Of How You Gave Up And Sacrificed For The Sake Of Your Mother In Law And He Speaks This Blessing The Lord Repay You For What You Have Done And That's Not An Empty Blessing He's The One Bringing!

The Provision And A Full Reward Be Given You By The Lord The God Of Israel Under Whose Wings You Have Come To Take Refuge Remember From The First Chapter Who Saying To Naomi That Her God Would Be Hers She Has Come With Her Expecting The Provision And Here It Is Being Provided For Her So We See At The End Of The Chapter She Keeps Close To The Young Women Of Boaz Gleaning Until The End Of The Barley And Wheat Harvest And We Close!

[30 : 01] Out The Scene And She Lived With Her! In Law That's With Naomi Just As We Have Lessons To Be Learned From Ruth We Also Have Much To Learn From Boaz We Who Have Been Shown Such Generosity We Ought To Be Generous We Should Identify With Both Of These Characters And Find Instruction For Us And You May Say I Do Not Own Fields Some Of You Do Most Of Us Do Not Own Fields And That's So Certainly True Then What Do You Have To Give Stop And Think How Has The Lord Blessed Me What Is It That I Also Have To Give And I Want Your Thinking To Be Led Broader Than Just Financial Resources Although Certainly That's

On The Table As Well But To Time And To Talents And To Energy How Has God Resourced You That You Might Use Those Resources To Be A Blessing For Others!

Well But I Can Tell You That One Of My Great Concerns About American Christianity Is How Self Oriented It Is As People Involve Themselves In The Life Of The Church They're Looking For What They Get Out Of The Church And You Could Be A Consumer Of Good Things Things That Are Proper!

And Ordered! You Ought To Be Served! When You Come And Gather With God's People But Your Mindset Should Be How Do I Show Up And Serve?

What Has God Given Me That I Might Contribute For The Sake Of Others? And I Think We Would Find The Church To Be Such A Beautiful Growing Organization If Everybody Had That Mentality When They Came I Think We Would Find Our So Receiving Far More Than We Ever Would Have!

[32 : 11] Expected To Receive If We Would Show Up With A Mind Toward What Can I Contribute To The Kingdom Of God Christian People Should Be Marked By Manifold Generosity Generosity At Every Single Turn The Principle Of The Gleaning Commandment Applies To Us Today Who Have Been Delivered Not From Slavery In Egypt But From The Slavery Of Sin We Have Everything In Christ Which Includes Our Temporal Needs But It Also Includes Those Needs That Are So Much Weightier Paul Writes In 2nd Corinthians Chapter 8 And Verse 9 For You Know The Grace Of Our Lord Jesus Christ That Though He Was Rich Yet For Your Sake He Became Poor So

That You By His Poverty Might Become Rich And This Has Nothing To Do With Financial Provision This Is All About Christ Emptying Himself Giving Up His Place With The Trinity That He Might Come And Live And Die On Our Beh That We Might Have Restored Relationship With God We Are A Rich Rich People If We Are Gods Regardless Of Our Financial Status We Have Things To Give To Others Oh May We Spend And Be Spent For The Temporal And More Importantly Eternal!

Good Of Others Now Finally Let's Note Just In Brief A Result Of Ruth's Diligent Work And Boaz's Lavish Generosity And I Just Love To See This Little Brief Moment In Chapter Two We See An Increase It Seems To Be An Expression Of Increase In Naomi's Faith And Remember You May In Ruth Chapter One When She Arrives In Bethlehem Everybody Is Abuzz They're Saying Isn't Isn't That Naomi But She Says To Them In Verse 20 And 21 Do Not Call Me Naomi Which Means Pleasant Call Me Mara Which Means Bitter For The Almighty Has Dealt Very Bitterly With Me I Went Away!

Full And The Lord Has Brought Me Back Empty Why Call Me Naomi When The Lord Has Testified Against Me And The Almighty Has Brought Calamity Upon Me Now I Don't Want To Minimize In Any Way That The Loss Of Her Husband And Her Two Sons Was Not A Great Tragedy In Her Life But We Are Now Ten Years On From The Loss Of Her Boys And She Has Returned Back To Bethlehem In A Time Of Plenty There Is This Potential To Be Redeemed In This Place And She Would Rather To Be Called Bitter Than Pleasant And Her Faith Just Seems To Be So Thin At This Point In The Narrative She Seems Naomi But

Then We See In Verse 20 Of Chapter 2 Ruth Returns With This Provision She Hears Who Gave It To Her Boaz And Naomi Said To Ruth Verse 20 May He Be Blessed By The Lord Boaz May Boaz Be Blessed By The Lord Whose Kindness Has Not Forsaken The Living Or The Dead There Is Some Uncertainty Here About Whether Naomi Is Saying That Boaz Kindness Has Not Forsaken Them Or If The Lord's Kindness Has Not Forsaken Them But Either Way She Sees This Provision As Coming From God She's Beginning To Utter Blessing As A Result Of It We See This Little Hint Of Naomi's Increased Faith And It Is A Result Of Ruth's Diligent Work And Boaz Is Lavish Generosity All Taking Place In The God

[37 : 00] Has Promised To Provide He Provides For All Our Spiritual Needs In Christ Jesus Amen He Provides For All Our Temporal Needs By The Same Mighty Hand Weary Christian Rest In God's Providence For Your Provision This Morning Weary Sinner These Promises Are Not True For You Repent And Believe In Christ For The Salvation Of Your Soul Let's Pray Together