

## Ruth 2016 2B

- We're turning back to the hidden story of End Times found in the book of Ruth
  - Last time we studied vs.1-13 in chapter 2...let's reread them

**Ruth 2:1** Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

**Ruth 2:2** And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

**Ruth 2:3** So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

**Ruth 2:4** Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the Lord be with you." And they said to him, "May the Lord bless you."

**Ruth 2:5** Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

**Ruth 2:6** The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

**Ruth 2:7** "And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while."

**Ruth 2:8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

**Ruth 2:9** "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."

**Ruth 2:10** Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

**Ruth 2:11** Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

**Ruth 2:12** "May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

**Ruth 2:13** Then she said, "I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

- Naomi and Ruth returned to the land in a time of harvest

- This will be a time of testimony in contrast to the prior years of judgment
  - After they arrived, Ruth began to seek support for herself and Naomi by working in a field collecting leftover grain
  - She happens to land in the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi
- After spending all day gathering the leftover grain for herself and Naomi, Ruth meets Boaz
  - He extends her great kindnesses
  - And commits himself to protecting Ruth as she gathers
- We've already studied how Ruth pictures the Gentiles attracted to the God of Israel as God promised would happen
  - And last lesson we saw how Ruth's time gathering in the field reflects the time we were once without hope in this world
    - In fact, in Matt 13:38 Jesus refers to the world metaphorically as a field
    - We sought our provision working in that world but it was work without hope
  - And by our own hands, we accomplished a certain degree of success
    - Just as Ruth is working hard in chapter 2
    - But it can't give her what she truly seeks: security
    - Then Boaz appears in verse 4, and with him the opportunity for true rest
- The next major detail is Boaz, and the relationship that develops between Boaz and Ruth
  - This detail offers us an opportunity to draw a new parallel to God's plan for Israel and the Church
    - As you probably know, Boaz, the kinsman redeemer in this story, is a type or picture of our Lord, Jesus Christ
    - If this is a new thought for you, don't worry
    - We will allow that picture to develop as we proceed through the rest of the story

- But for now it's enough to recognize that Boaz is the hero, the one who rescues both Naomi and Ruth from their circumstances
  - And through this relationship, we will learn something about the way God prepares a Bride for His Son
  - We already noted that Ruth, the Gentile, has been drawn to Boaz's field, as though by chance
  - Yet we know that chance had nothing to do with it
  - This was the field God intended Ruth to work
- And then we notice that relationship between Ruth and Boaz begins not because Ruth took note of Boaz
  - Ruth had no idea whose field she was in
  - But rather, Boaz takes notice of Ruth
  - And Boaz turns to his servant seeking an introduction to Ruth
  - That servant pictured the Holy Spirit, Who introduces us to Christ by causing us to be born again through faith
- So at this point in our second story, we have Christ, pictured by Boaz, having introduced himself to his future Bride, the Gentile Church, pictured by Ruth
  - And even before Ruth was aware of Boaz, Boaz had already made plans for Ruth
    - Boaz began his first conversation to Ruth by calling her my daughter
    - He welcomed her into his household
  - Secondly, he gives her access to his field indefinitely, without condition
  - Third, he makes her one of his maids
    - A maid was the female equivalent of a servant under his household
  - And fourth, Boaz tells her to work with His other servants who will protect her and care for her needs
    - When we looked at this last time, we noted these were all grants of Boaz's grace

- And they clearly picture the grace the church receives once we enter into the New Covenant by faith
- The Church enters into a relationship with our Redeemer on a moment and in a manner He determines
- Before we know it, we're given provision, protection and privilege
- But it also comes with an expectation of service
  - Notice that Boaz made Ruth a servant in his house
    - He didn't award her a bundle of money so she wouldn't have to work anymore
    - He didn't tell her to just enjoy the afternoon on the couch in the house playing X-Box and eating a box of Oreos
    - He still expected her to work everyday as a servant in his field
  - This is the call of every disciple of Christ...we work to serve the Master who has come to us and given us protection, provision and privilege
    - Serving Him is easy compared to the work we knew before
    - Just as Ruth worked harder for less, before she knew Boaz
    - As John said:

**1John 5:2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

**1John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

**1John 5:4** For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.

- The central error of the prosperity gospel heresy is overlooking that God has purposely left us in a state of need, so that we are motivated to serve
  - Christ assures us that our service will be rewarding, both now and in eternity
  - That work comes with promises and it will provide us rest

- We will have rest from the worries of eternity, of sin and judgment, of the endless rat race of seeking to please men
- But we must work nonetheless

[Matt. 11:28](#) "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

[Matt. 11:29](#) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and You will find rest for your souls.

[Matt. 11:30](#) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- Furthermore, when Boaz responded to Ruth's questions, he told her in v.11 that he had observed her actions
  - Boaz mentioned three things about Ruth that have parallels to Christ and the Church
    - First, he notes Ruth's association with Naomi
    - Naomi we know pictures Israel in this story: widowed, under judgment, seeking rest in her land
    - Every believer enters into a relationship with Christ because of Israel
    - We could say Jesus comes to us because of His relationship to Israel
    - Because of Jewish scriptures, the Jewish covenant and the Jewish Messiah
  - Secondly, Boaz mentions Ruth's willingness to leave her family
    - Just as it would have been impossible for Ruth to know Boaz without first leaving behind Moab, so it is for every disciple of Jesus
    - Our opportunity to know and follow Jesus begins with a call to repent and leave behind the world and its values and priorities

[John 17:16](#) "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

- Sometimes that will mean distancing ourselves from unbelieving family members if they force us to make that choice

[Matt. 10:37](#) "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

- More often, it means leaving behind earthly accomplishments, earthly pursuits, earthly identities so that we may live to please Christ
  - The Apostle Paul had much to lose by becoming a disciple of Jesus
  - Yet here's what he said about his loss

[Phil. 3:7](#) But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

[Phil. 3:8](#) More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ,

- Ruth traded everything she knew to gain something she had never seen
- So it must be for disciples today...let go of this world so you can take hold of what God has waiting over the horizon
- Finally, Boaz commends Ruth for attaching herself to a people she didn't know
  - Ruth threw her lot in with a despised people, the Israelites
    - She did so because she wanted to know Yahweh
    - Here she pictures the Church again
  - Every Christian has been grafted into the promises made to Israel
    - In a sense, we've thrown our lot in with Israel
    - We reject the false gods of other cultures
    - We acknowledge the one true God is the One Who revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- As we leave the world behind, we find new rewards to replace what we once valued
  - Notice in v11 Boaz told Ruth that ultimately the Lord would reward Ruth for her kindness

- Boaz's kindness was merely a downpayment on that future reward
- Here again we find a parallel between Christ and the Church
- The promises Christ made to us are merely a downpayment on a heavenly reward
- We will have a measure of reward now, including gifts of the Spirit, provision in one way or another, and the privilege of serving Christ

**[Mark 10:29](#)** Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, **[Mark 10:30](#)** but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

- As Jesus said, our full reward awaits eternal living in Heaven, where the Lord will recompense us for the deeds done in the body, good or bad
  - We never want to lose that perspective
  - What we have now is merely a foretaste of things to come
  - Don't try to make it more than it is, otherwise you're likely to trade something earthly for something heavenly
  - And that's always a bad trade
- We left off in chapter 2 at v13, so let's go forward a little further today
  - The next verse adds one more important parallel we need to consider

**[Ruth 2:14](#)** At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

- Boaz ends their conversation with a meal
- Meals had greater significance in ancient eastern cultures than our meals usually do today
  - It was a high honor to host someone for a meal in your home

- And meals were commonly used to seal solemn agreements or covenants
- Meals in our culture are increasingly informal
  - Families used to dress up for the evening meal, and not just on Sundays
  - Today we consider a meal to be formal if the food isn't served on a stick
  - Families barely sit down together much less attach significance to a meal
- I knew dinner had lost its importance in our culture when a friend told me about a practice of eating dinner at Sam's Club or Cosco
  - He said he often had a seven course meal at these clubs
  - I told him I didn't remember seeing a fine dining restaurant inside the club
  - He said it's not a restaurant...he visits all the food samplers working the aisles in the clubs
- He starts in the appetizer aisle then moves to the soups and seafood, followed by BBQ and pizza
  - He finishes off with the dessert aisle and sports drinks
  - He says if you arrive at the right time in the afternoon, you can be there for the shift change and take another lap for "seconds"
  - Meals just don't mean what they once did
- But meals were important events in this day
  - A meal was often an integral part of establishing covenants or new relationships
    - We can see that something important is happening in this meal when we look at the details
    - Notice something interesting in verse 14?
  - At the end of v14, we see that the evening meal was roasted grain
    - The meal was actually the roasted grain

- Ruth ate this grain and was satisfied
- Yet earlier it says she was given bread to dip in vinegar
  - The Hebrew word for vinegar here is a word that means sour wine
  - So before the meal actually began, Boaz instructs Ruth to take bread and dip it in wine and eat
  - This wasn't an appetizer
  - It was a ceremonial act before meal itself
- This ceremonial moment sealed the promises Boaz has made to Ruth
  - Boaz has entered into a covenant with Ruth
    - A covenant is a lifelong binding obligation
    - It ended only with the death of those who make it
  - Some covenants place obligations on both parties, while others only place requirements on one party
    - In this case it's clear that only Boaz has obligated himself in this covenant
    - Ruth had nothing to offer Boaz in any case
    - And all the promises have been made from Boaz to Ruth
  - So Boaz is voluntarily entering into a lifelong binding promise to protect Ruth
    - Clearly, Boaz is thinking well beyond this harvest season
    - He has determined he will be there for Ruth for the rest of her life
    - When the harvest ended and the opportunity to glean in the field ended for a season, Boaz would still be there taking care of Ruth
    - That's why we say Ruth has truly found rest!
- Once again, in all these details God has placed markers to draw our attention to His plan for the Gentile Church

- As Christ found us, he granted us protection, provision and privilege and He sealed these promises in a one-way covenant in His blood
  - The covenant places burdens on Christ but grants us His grace
  - It comes with no conditions
  - The certainty of our covenant with Christ is based entirely on His faithfulness
  - And He who has promised is faithful

**2Tim. 2:13** If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

- Which is why Paul expressed such confidence in our future in Christ

**Phil. 1:6** For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

**Rom. 8:38** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,  
**Rom. 8:39** nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- Understanding that our covenant with Christ is based on His work and His faithfulness explains why we have eternal security in our salvation
  - We aren't eternally secure because we have the strength
  - Or even because we are forgiven of sin
  - It's simply because our covenant with Christ is entirely a one-way agreement
  - Just as Ruth could rest knowing Boaz has made his promises, so can we rest knowing Jesus has promised to return and take us home
  - This is our source of rest while we wait

**Matt. 11:28** "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you **rest**.

**Matt. 11:29** "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and You will find **rest** for your souls.

- Finally, as we enter into this covenant, we commemorate it through a ceremonial meal just as Boaz did with Ruth
  - Boaz took Ruth aside and instructed her to eat of bread and wine to signify their new relationship, a relationship Boaz extended to Ruth
    - This moment pictures the Church participating in the Last Supper meal
    - Just as Boaz instructed Ruth, Jesus has instructed us
  - And just as their partaking of bread and wine was ritual rather than a full meal
    - So is our communion meal a ritual
    - We eat bread and wine (or grape juice) to remember the covenant in Christ's body and blood
    - That covenant brought us into a new relationship as it did Ruth
    - And it formed a new relationship
  - In our case, the communion meal is a reenactment of the meal Jesus shared with His disciples
    - Jesus couldn't put the entire Church around that one table, since most had yet to be born
    - So He instructed the church to repeat the meal regularly until He returns
- But there is yet one more detail that connects these characters and our story with Christ
  - Boaz's relationship with Ruth and this covenant meal take place during the barley harvest, as we learned at the start of this chapter
    - The barley harvest happens in the spring, in the months around the Jewish Passover
    - And of course, Jesus' death on the cross happened on Passover, since He was the Passover Lamb
  - Therefore, on God's prophetic time clock, we can say that this moment between Ruth and Boaz is a picture of the start of the Church age

- The Messiah, pictured by Boaz, has entered into a relationship with a Gentile woman, who pictures the Church
- It begins soon after Passover
- And it begins with the Last Supper meal, when the Church first dipped bread into wine, with Christ
- That detail explains why Ruth is here alone without Naomi
  - The Jewish woman pictures the nation as a whole
  - Naomi isn't in the scene at this point, because the Jewish people largely aren't a part of the Church
  - They are still back in the field, the world, without Boaz and without Ruth
  - They are still desperate and hungry
- Meanwhile, Ruth is secure and in a covenant relationship with the master of the house
  - And this master happens to be a kinsman of Naomi
  - Just as our Lord is a Jewish Messiah, a Kinsman to all Israel
- This one-sided relationship will continue for a while, just as the age of the Church lasts for a time
  - But eventually the time for the church will give way to a time for Israel
    - And that's where our story is going too
    - Next time we finish chapter 2 and enter into chapter 3
    - Where we see how the age begins to come to its end in preparation for Naomi to find her rest too