

Lesson 2: Ruth Chapter 2

Ruth's Devotion Goes to Work

In the first chapter of Ruth, we were introduced to Elimelech of Bethlehem, Naomi his wife, their two sons Mahlon and Chilion, and the Moabite wives of the two sons, Orpha and Ruth. Tragedy befalls the family as first Elimelech and then both of his sons die leaving the three women away from their families and clans, with no means of support, and grieving the loss of their husbands. Naomi had decided to return to Bethlehem and Ruth decided to accompany her rather than return to her own family. Ruth vows to support Naomi as an act of love and loyalty. Orpha decided to return to her own people. Naomi and Ruth travel from Moab to Bethlehem. It is the spring harvest season in Israel.

1. Read Ruth 2:1-7 and footnotes. Share any footnotes with your group.

- a. Compare the wording of verse 2:1 with other translations used by your group. How are the translations similar? How do they differ?**
- b. What do we learn about Boaz in verses 2:1-7?**

c. Read Deuteronomy 24:19-22 here, then discuss the question that follows.

Deut. 24:19-22¹⁹ When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²¹ When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. ²² Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.

What is *gleaning* and why is it important? (See also Mark 2:23-24)

- d. Read Ruth 2:6-7. What do we learn about Ruth in these verses?**
- e. Read again Ruth 2:3. How did Ruth happen to wind up in the fields of Boaz and not the fields of another clan?**

2. Read Ruth 2:8-16 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

- a. How does Boaz treat Ruth? See verses 2:8-9 and 14-16. Make a list cite verses.**
- b. Reflection: Ruth is a poor, homeless, foreign, widow who is *not even Jewish*. How might others treat such a woman?**
- c. Why does Boaz say he treats Ruth with compassion? See 2:11-12.**

3. Read Ruth 2:17-23 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes.

a. How do Ruth's actions in these verses illustrate her faithfulness and loyalty to Naomi?

b. Does Naomi seem surprised by the food that Ruth brings her?

c. Read the Ruth 2:11b-12, 2:14, and 2:19b-20 below: (NABRE)

2:11b -12 ...you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom previously you did not know. ¹² May the Lord reward what you have done! May you receive a ***full reward from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.***

2:14 ¹ At mealtime Boaz said to her, **"Come here and have something to eat; dip your bread in the sauce."** Then as she sat near the harvesters, he handed her some roasted grain and she ate her fill and had some left over.

2:19b-20 "The man at whose place I worked today is named Boaz," she said. ²⁰ "May he be blessed by the Lord, ***who never fails to show kindness to the living and to the dead,***" Naomi exclaimed to her daughter-in-law. She continued, ***"This man is a near relative of ours, one of our redeemers."***

What do these verses say about Boaz? How do his actions prefigure the actions or teaching of Jesus Christ?

4. Reflections on this chapter.

a. What practices in our 21st century have replaced *gleaning*?

b. How can we reach out and help others today who are in situations similar to those of Naomi and Ruth?

c. How do Ruth's work ethic and initiative help her situation?

d. What in this lesson points to God's providence?

e. What in this lesson shows a Gentile in a positive light and worthy of God's blessings? (see question 3c)