

# LOVE'S REPUTATION

## RUTH 2



*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

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Love's Reputation: Ruth 2  
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## Ruth 2: Introduction

Chapter 1 of the book of Ruth covered many years, in which God sent bitterness to Naomi because of her husband's disobedience. Chapter 2 covers a few months. Naomi and Ruth have settled into a home in Bethlehem of Judea, and Ruth is busily at work providing for their needs.

The community of Bethlehem has indeed been visited by God; His grace is evident on every hand. And in this chapter we see the many ways the grace of God reaches to all people when they obey His Law and follow His Word.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 The Grace of Law

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 121.1, 2*  
I will lift up my eyes to the hills—  
From whence comes my help?  
My help *comes* from the LORD,  
Who made heaven and earth.

*Sing Psalm 121.1, 2*  
(Duke Street: [Jesus Shall Reign](#))  
I lift up my eyes up to the heights: Whence comes my help by day, by night?  
My help comes from the Lord above! He made creation by His love!

*Read Ruth 2.1-3*

*Preparation*

1. How did Ruth show her love for Naomi in these verses?
2. How did God honor her show of love?

*Meditation*

Gleaning is a provision of the Law of God (cf. Lev. 19.9, 10; 23.22; Deut. 24.19-22), and thus demonstrates that the Law is an instrument of God's grace to the poor, enabling them, within the framework of redemption, to work toward restoration and wholeness.

Ruth intended to go wherever she might find acceptance with some landowner. It just so "happened" (v. 3) – in the providence of God, of course – that she ended up in the field of a near kinsman of Naomi's husband. That the people of Judah observed this statute of God's Law perhaps tells us something more about the nature of God's visitation among His people there (1.6). The relief from famine in Judah must have included a measure of spiritual relief and renewal for the people as well.

From this point, grace begins to be the dominating theme of the Book of Ruth. We see grace at work in the actions of Ruth, as well as in the practice of gleaning as a statute of God's Law. Ruth may be a Moabitess, but she did not carry on the traditions of Moab with respect to the people of Israel. As we shall see, another power has been at work within her, transforming her in every way.

We gain a hint of grace in the man Boaz, who observes the Law of God and has prospered in God's gracious provision (v. 1). The sovereign guidance and care of God are also evident in these verses. The Hebrew emphasizes the complete lack of intention on Ruth's part to seek out the field of Boaz. She simply ended up there, and the only explanation we can give – short of mere chance – is the sovereign guidance of the Lord.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Indeed, the grace of Law. Ruth has seen the people of God and their actions towards her, Naomi, and one another. She understands that they are keepers of God's Law, and so bases her actions and decisions upon that knowledge. She has a peace about following God's Law into the fields to glean because she knows that others are following it too (Lev. 19.9, 10). She trusts that all will work out just as it should. And it does.

Keeping the Law might not always make sense; but it always proves trustworthy and right. "Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them" (Prov. 28.4). Keeping the Law of God speaks volumes to those around us, as does *not* keeping it. Wouldn't it be a beautiful thing to know that all believers in Jesus were dutifully keeping the Law of God? Wouldn't you feel safer at church? Wouldn't you be encouraged in your faith? Wouldn't the church be the "joy of the whole earth" if this were so? Wouldn't "all nations flow to it"? And "no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever" (Ps. 48.2; Is. 2.2; Mic. 4.4, 5).

Wouldn't that kind of obedience be pleasing to Jesus? (Jn. 14.15)

Ruth trusted and obeyed. We should too.

*Reflection*

1. From this passage, how can you see that the Law of God is a channel of grace to the world?
2. Review Ruth 1.1 and Judges 21.25. What's different about what we see in the people of Bethlehem in Ruth 2?
3. What should be the Christian's attitude toward the Law of God (Matt. 5.17-19)? How can you develop more of that attitude in your own walk with the Lord?

*Observe Ruth's humility. When Providence had made her poor, she cheerfully stoops to her lot. High spirits will rather starve than stoop; not so Ruth. Nay, it is her own proposal. She speaks humbly in her expectation of leave to glean. We may not demand kindness as a debt, but ask, and take it as a favor, though in a small matter. Ruth also was an example of industry. She loved not to eat the bread of idleness. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 2.1-3*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 121.3-8*

Commit your day to the Lord. Call on Him to guide, keep, bless, and strengthen you for the work before you this day.

*Sing Psalm 121.3-8*

(Duke Street: [Jesus Shall Reign](#))

God will not let our footsteps fall; He will preserve us all in all.  
He does not slumber, does not sleep; God will His chosen people keep.

You are our Keeper and our Shade; You have our debt of sin repaid!  
You will preserve us by Your might; naught shall afflict us day or night.

Lord, You will guard our lives from ill; You will our trembling souls keep still.  
All our endeavors You will guard; eternal praise be Yours, O Lord!

## 2 Blessed and Blessing (1)

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 133.1, 3*

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*  
For brethren to dwell together in unity!  
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—  
Life forevermore.

*Sing Psalm 133.1, 3*

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: [\*Children of the Heavenly Father\*](#))

Behold, how sweet, how pleasant, when the brethren dwell together;  
all in unity abiding find God's blessing there presiding.

*Read Ruth 2.4-7*

*Preparation*

1. How is Ruth referred to in these verses?
2. What did the foreman say about her?

*Meditation*

Again, note the emphatic reminder of Ruth's provenance. "Did I mention she was a Moabite, you know, from Moab?" the writer seems almost to be saying. We'll see why in due course.

In a workplace where the Law of God was honored and the favor of the Lord obtained, see, from their greetings, how all regarded one another (v. 4). The restoring grace of God was at work in the fields of Boaz. This is evident as well by the foreman's willingness to allow the woman from Moab to join in the gleaning. He had no doubt this would meet with the approval of his master. Grace is contagious that way. Ruth, except for a short rest (v. 7), labored faithfully and tirelessly to gain the blessings she would share with Naomi. The blessings of God come as we work faithfully for them.

Boaz was indeed a wealthy man (v. 1), but not in material possessions alone. He was rich in the covenant blessing and favor of God, as is evident by his actions toward those who were in his employ. The grace of Boaz, fostered upon the framework of obedience to God's Law, creates an environment of grace, safety, and prosperity for all with whom Boaz was associated, even though they were outsiders from an enemy nation.

In this setting, where the value of work is in view, we are reminded of one of the great redemptive themes of Scripture: God's favor comes upon us in our famine of righteousness, and He bestows His favor without merit upon those He has chosen to redeem. From that point on, His Law provides the framework within which the redeemed of the Lord must work out the details and obtain the blessings of the salvation He has freely given.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The Moabite from Moab. Indeed. But one who knew the Law of God.

Ruth was living by the Law and assumed that others were too. She was not wrong to think this; and was rewarded for her belief and her faith and her hard work.

We, like Ruth, are from a foreign land and need to be grafted into the opportunity for salvation. And God is able to graft us in (Rom. 11.23).

We, like Ruth, need to work out our salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure. And we, like Ruth, must do all this work without complaining or disputing (Phil. 2. 12-14).

Jesus says to the grafted in: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (Jn. 15.4). Ruth was blessed because of her belief and obedience to the Law. And she became a blessing. We are blessed because of our belief and obedience to the Law. And if we abide in Jesus, we too will be a blessing. Indeed, Moabites from Moab who love and live by God's Law. Blessed.

*Reflection*

1. How was the grace of God revealed in the conversation between Boaz and his workers? How does Colossians 4.6 help us in thinking about our own conversations?
2. What did Ruth's work of gleaning say about her?
3. Whom will you bless with your work and conversation today?

*The pious and kind language between Boaz and his reapers shows that there were godly persons in Israel. Such language as this is seldom heard in our field; too often, on the contrary, what is immoral and corrupt. A stranger would form a very different opinion of our land, from that which Ruth would form of Israel from the converse and conduct of Boaz and his reapers. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Ruth 2.4-6**

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 133.2, 3*

Think ahead to the people you will meet or be with today. Ask God now to give you grace to greet and relate to them with the love of Jesus.

*Sing Psalm 133.2, 3*

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: [\*Children of the Heavenly Father\*](#))

Like the precious oil of blessing flowing down on Aaron's vestment,  
God's anointing rests forever here His people dwell together.

Like the dew of Hermon's fountain falling down on Zion's mountain,  
so the blessing of the Savior dwells where unity finds favor.

### 3 Grace Confirmed and Abounding

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 19.12-14*

Who can understand *his* errors?

Cleanse me from secret *faults*.

Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;

Let them not have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless,

And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be acceptable in Your sight,

O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

*Sing Psalm 19.12-14*

*Read Ruth 2.8-13*

*Preparation*

1. How many ways can you see the grace of God at work in these verses?
2. How would you describe Boaz?

*Meditation*

Although Boaz knew who Ruth was, she did not, at this point, know him. Yet she surely must have recognized him as the owner of the field. We can only wonder about what may have been rising within her as the great man approached. How the grace of God must have washed over her to hear the kind and encouraging words of Boaz.

Note his role as owner and caretaker: He admonished his young men not to trouble her (v. 9) – further emphasizing their need to observe the Law of God (cf. Deut. 22.25-27). And He cautioned her not to stray from his fields. He could not ensure her safety beyond the reach of his own authority. It was still the time of the judges, as we recall, and lawlessness rather than faithfulness was the manner of most. Boaz even went so far as to make his servants her servants, when he authorized her to drink of the water they drew for themselves

Ruth was astonished at the grace and generosity of Boaz, and she responded as a grateful person should, bowing and humbling herself before him (v. 10). But she learned from Boaz that the grace being shown to her was only what she should expect because she had come to shelter under the wings of the Lord (v. 13). She had forsaken her former life Moab; now she would know the love and care God's Law provided for strangers and foreigners (Lev. 19.33, 34; Deut. 10.17-19).

Boaz encouraged her to expect more blessing from God in the days to come (v. 12), a foreshadowing of events about to ensue, but in ways neither Boaz nor Ruth could anticipate (Eph. 3.20).

Ruth's was amazed at the love shown her by one who kept the Law of God. Her response was fraught with humility and gratitude. The transforming power of grace makes a community a refuge of caring, generosity, industry, kindness, and hope. Ruth had never experienced the likes of this before, and yet, indeed, greater blessings were to come.



*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Where else would anyone want to be? Ruth had decided to seek refuge under the wings of God. We have the same decision to make. Where do we want to be?

“How precious *is* Your lovingkindness, O God!  
Therefore the children of men put their trust under  
the shadow of Your wings” (Ps. 36.7).

“For You have been a shelter for me,  
a strong tower from the enemy.  
I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;  
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings” (Ps. 61.3,4).

“He shall cover you with His feathers, and  
under His wings you shall take refuge;  
His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler” (Ps. 91.4).

And Jesus said, “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings...” (Matthew 23.37).

Where did Ruth want to be? Where do I want to be? Safely snuggled and sheltered under His wings.

“But to you who fear My name”  
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise  
With healing in His wings...” (Mal. 4.2).

*Reflection*

1. In Boaz we begin to see something of a Christ-figure, one who by his character and conduct points forward to Christ. Explain.
2. In Ruth we see something of a Church-figure, one who symbolizes how the Church should respond to her Lord. Explain.
3. What can we learn from Boaz and Ruth about showing and receiving the love of God, according to His Word?

*The blessing followed as Boaz said it would. For Ruth received the full reward from God, so that she was the progenitor of the blessing of the nations.* Theodoret of Cyr (393-466), *Questions on Ruth*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 19.7-11*

Thank God specifically for each of the attributes of His Law mentioned in these verses. Praise Jesus for fulfilling that Law and all its demands; and praise the Spirit, Who teaches and empowers us to live the Law of God (Ezek. 36.26, 27)

*Sing Psalm 19.7-11*

(St. Christopher: *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure;  
The simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.  
God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;

He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.

His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.

O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet;

Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

## 4 Grace upon Grace

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 23.4, 5*

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You *are* with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You anoint my head with oil;  
My cup runs over.

*Sing Psalm 23.4, 5*

The Gift of Love: [\*Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire\*](#)  
The Lord is ever by my side; His rod and staff with me abide.  
A table rich for me He spreads; with oil my Lord anoints my head.

*Read Ruth 2.14-16*

*Preparation*

1. How did Boaz provide for Ruth in these verses?
2. How did he enlist others in helping him to be such an agent of grace?

*Meditation*

All the gestures here signal Ruth's continuing reception into the covenant community, directed and facilitated by Boaz, who continues to prove that he is, indeed, a great man. It is not enough for Boaz to have welcomed her into his fields and spoken kindly to her. His gestures of grace continued reaching out to Ruth, bringing her into the covenant circle at mealtime and assuring a greater harvest from her gleaning than she might normally expect.

This is grace upon grace through small but significant gestures, which serve not only to extend the grace of God, but to signal to all involved the welcoming of a stranger into the community of grace.

We may be inclined to read into Boaz' gestures some indication of romantic attraction, but this is surely completely lacking. He is an older man (3.10) who is doing only what the Law of God requires of him. He treats Ruth as he treats his own servants; all experience his generosity, kindness, and love. Boaz' kindness at this point is completely disinterested; he is only concerned to carry out the requirements of neighbor love in the Name of the God Who has loved and blessed him so abundantly.

His "going the extra mile" with respect to Ruth's gleaning is doubtless only for the sake of ensuring that she and Naomi will have enough to eat, for he knows she gleanes not only for herself, but also for her mother-in-law, with whom she will no doubt be more than generous.

It is instructive to observe the way that one man's acts of grace and kindness can enlist others in providing God's shelter and refuge. This is how Jesus brings grace upon grace to His people, and through them, to the world (Jn. 1.16; Eph. 1.22, 23).

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Grace upon grace. Kindness upon kindness. Love. Care. Concern.

Ruth is hard-working, conscientious, and kind. And because Boaz knows this about her, and because he wants to obey God's commandments, he is kind and gracious in his behavior towards her.

He goes beyond the necessary, and abundantly blesses her steadfastness. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord...distributing to the needs of the saints..." (Rom. 12.10, 11, 13). God's grace to her, shown through Boaz, is meeting the needs that she and Naomi have; and in the process bringing joy into their lives. "Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*" (Ps. 126.5, 6).

His grace. Our abundant blessing.

*Reflection*

1. How would you describe Boaz' actions toward Ruth in these verses?
2. How do his actions foreshadow the work of Christ on our behalf (grace upon grace)?
3. How can believers encourage one another to more "grace upon grace" living like this?

*It well becomes us all to think humbly of ourselves, esteeming others better than ourselves. And let us, in the kindness of Boaz to Ruth, note the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to poor sinners. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 2.4-16*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 23.1-3, 6*

Praise God for His shepherding care, and for the fact that even now, Jesus is preparing an eternal home for you with Him forever.

*Sing Psalm 23.1-3, 6*

(The Gift of Love: [\*Though I May Speak with Bravest Fire\*](#))

Because the Lord my Shepherd is I shall not want, for I am His!  
He makes me lie in pastures full; I rest in Him by waters still.

My soul He quickens and will bless; He leads in paths of righteousness.  
Though I may walk through death's dark vale, I shall not fear – He will not fail.

Goodness and mercy, full and free, shall ever after follow me,  
and in the house of God, my Lord, shall I abide forevermore!

## 5 Blessed and Blessing (2)

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 126.4-6*

Bring back our captivity, O LORD,  
As the streams in the South.  
Those who sow in tears  
Shall reap in joy.  
He who continually goes forth weeping,  
Bearing seed for sowing,  
Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,  
Bringing his sheaves *with him*.

*Sing Psalm 126.4-6*

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reign*)

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King! Let grace like flowing streams prevail.  
All they with tears of joy shall sing who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow and cast their seed on every hand,  
with joy shall reach their heav'nly home, and bring the harvest of their land.

*Read Ruth 2.17-19*

*Preparation*

1. How did God bless Ruth's faithful work?
2. How did Naomi respond to Ruth's work?

*Meditation*

The abundant harvest of Ruth's gleaning – more than half a bushel – contrasts starkly with the opening words of this book. The famine that prevailed in Judah was replaced by abundance. When God visits His people to bless them, the effects of His renewing and restoring grace reach even to the sin-stricken creation, enabling it to recover some of its pristine purpose and potential.

Ruth surely must have been hungry at the end of the day, after reaping, beating out her harvest, and then carrying it all the way back to the city. Nevertheless, she gave her left-over meal to Naomi – evidence of the continuing work of God's grace in her life. Naomi's response to Ruth's gathering also indicates a heart of faith, as she blessed to the Lord the man who allowed her daughter-in-law to glean in his fields. The one who blessed is thus blessed himself, and the woman who introduced Ruth to the blessing of God's community received a token of blessing in the food, but a larger token in the woman who blessed her.

The writer continues to keep God in the background, but clearly very active in the developing story. God is always present in our midst, accomplishing His covenant purposes on behalf of His faithful people; however, His typical way of doing this is not through miracles and signs, but by His grace at work in the lives of His people, as they work, relate, and reach out to one another and to strangers. Ruth reported the name of her benefactor quite matter-of-factly.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Ruth gleaned until evening and her bounty of barley was an ephah. An ephah is around 5 dry gallons

weighing in at around 30 pounds.

So Ruth was carrying home all this barley plus her remaining lunch, which she had set aside for Naomi. That's a lot to carry! After a full day's work Ruth must have been exhausted; but each step, even with this burden, must have been filled with anticipation at Naomi's joy.

This outcome was exceedingly abundantly above all that Ruth could have asked for or thought (Eph. 3.20). That's what happens when God blesses. Think of the feeding of the five thousand with twelve baskets of leftovers from five loaves and two fish (Matt. 14.17-21). Or the feeding of the four thousand with seven baskets of leftovers from seven loaves and a few little fish (Matt. 15.34-38). And then the story of the disciple's unsuccessful nighttime fishing adventure. But in the morning Jesus arrived and everything changed. "No fish? Well cast your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." They did what He said and hauled in 153 fish without a tear in the net! (Jn. 21.1-11)

Gallons of barley, baskets of leftovers, untorn nets of abundant fish, and salvation. All of grace. All in love. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1.3, 6).

*Reflection*

1. What have we learned thus far from Ruth 2 about how the Lord extends His blessings to people?
2. How should we respond to the blessings the Lord extends to us through others?
3. Where will you be gleaning the Lord's blessings today? Whom do you expect to bless?

*It is a good question for us to ask ourselves every night, Where have I gleaned today? What improvement have I made in knowledge and grace? What have I done that will turn to a good account? When the Lord deals bountifully with us, let us not be found in any other field, nor seeking for happiness and satisfaction in the creature.* Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Ruth 2.17-23*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 126.1-3*

Thank God for all the blessings He gives you each day. Pray that you might use those blessings to sow seeds of blessing to the people you meet today.

*Sing Psalm 126.1-3*

*(Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns)*

When God restored our fortunes all, we were like those who sweetly dream.  
Our mouths with joy and laughter filled, made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said, "The Lord has done great things for them!"  
Indeed, great things our God has done, Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

## 6 It Is Good

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 19. 7-11*

The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul;  
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple;  
The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;  
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;  
The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;  
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.  
More to be desired *are they* than gold,  
Yea, than much fine gold;  
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.  
Moreover by them Your servant *is* warned,  
*And* in keeping them *there is* great reward.

*Sing Psalm 19.7-11*

(St. Christopher: [Beneath the Cross of Jesus](#))

The Law of God is perfect, His testimony sure;  
The simple man God's wisdom learns, the soul receives its cure.  
God's Word is right, and His command is pure, and truth imparts;  
He makes our eyes to understand; with joy He fills our hearts.

The fear of God is cleansing, forever shall it last.  
His judgments all are true and just, by righteousness held fast.  
O seek them more than gold most fine, than honey find them sweet;  
Be warned by every word and line; be blessed with joy complete.

*Read Ruth 2.20-23*

*Preparation*

1. Why did Naomi bless Boaz unto the Lord?
2. What did Ruth do after talking with Naomi?

*Meditation*

The story line accelerates, as we hear in Naomi's response the first suggestion of a possible linkage – more formal – with Boaz. He a "relation" (v. 20) and was showing kindness to the women by being kind not only to them but to her dead husband as well.

Ruth seemed excited by Naomi's enthusiasm, and offered a little more evidence of Boaz' kindness (v. 21). Naomi's response, "It is good", echoes God's comments in Genesis 1 concerning His work of creation. "It is good" – it is pleasing to the Lord – for this to develop further, for Ruth to glean in Boaz' fields, for the two of them to be there, for God's favor to be abounding to them, and for His blessing to be returning to Boaz.

The idea of the "kinsman-redeemer" (v. 4, the NKJV has "close relative") has its roots in the Law of God (cf. Num. 27.8-11; Deut. 25.5-10); but this practice antedated the giving of the Law (cf. Gen. 38). In a very real sense, we can say that God provides redemption for His people through the

faithful keeping of His Law. Jesus Christ is the ultimate “kinsman-redeemer” for He alone, as Son of God, kept the Law perfectly, thus fulfilling all the righteousness, and bearing all the judgment, that the people of God require to be redeemed and restored to Him (Matt. 5.17-19; Rom. 3.21-26).

The mention by Naomi of the word, “good,” is not accidental. The writer wants us to know that this situation, in which the Moabite woman is about to be received as full-fledged member of the covenant community, is entirely in line with God’s purposes and according to His plan. Why this matters so much will become clear as we discover the real purpose of this book.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

God’s kindness was shining forth through God’s people. And this kindness was directed towards a foreigner, a stranger, a person not of their region or religion. And this kindness, that started with Naomi and Ruth, continued through a “kinsman-redeemer”, his workers, and seemingly the entire town. The whole of Psalm 117 reflects on this theme:

“Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!  
Laud Him, all you peoples!  
For His merciful kindness is great toward us,  
And the truth of the LORD *endures* forever.  
Praise the LORD!”

We, as God’s foreign and strange people long to praise Him perfectly for His great kindness toward us. We rejoice in telling others of His truth, and we greet with grateful hearts the opportunity to praise and thank Him for saving us; and to show this same kindness to others who need to experience God’s kindness through us.

It is good that Naomi, Ruth, Boaz and all the people did this. It is good that we do it.

Praise the LORD!

*Reflection*

1. God’s grace is communicated through everyday acts of kindness. What opportunities for sharing such grace will you have today?
2. How should we think about the idea of “good” with respect to our Personal Mission Field?
3. Again, Boaz appears as a figure of Christ. Explain.

*When the Lord deals bountifully with us, let us not be found in any other field, nor seeking for happiness and satisfaction in the creature. We lose Divine favors, if we slight them. Ruth dutifully observed her mother’s directions. And when the harvest was ended, she kept her aged mother company at home. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 2.17-23*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 19.12-14*

Wait on the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to reveal any sins lingering in your soul; confess and repent accordingly. Then ask the Lord to show you what you can do to bring His goodness to light in the land of the living today.

*Sing Psalm 19.12-14*

(St. Christopher: [\*Beneath the Cross of Jesus\*](#))



Who, Lord, can know his errors? O keep sin far from me!  
Let evil rule not in my soul that I may blameless be.  
O let my thoughts, let all my words, before Your glorious sight  
be pleasing to You, gracious Lord, acceptable and right!

## 7 The Lord Repay

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 34.1-3*

I will bless the LORD at all times;  
His praise *shall* continually be in my mouth.  
My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;  
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.  
Oh, magnify the LORD with me,  
And let us exalt His name together.

*Sing Psalm 34.1-3*

(Alleluia [Lowe]: [Mighty God, While Angels Bless You](#))

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!  
My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!

*Refrain v. 3*

Magnify the Name of Jesus! Let us lift His Name in praise!

*Review Ruth 2; meditate on verse 12*

*Preparation*

1. How many different ways does the grace of God appear in this chapter?
2. What promise did Boaz hold out to Ruth?

*Meditation*

Ruth 2 is one of the most precious and important chapters in the entire Old Testament. Consider all that's happening here.

We are dropped down into a community of people devoted to following the Law of God, begrudging nothing, sharing everything, and blessing one another by their words and deeds. How many other chapters of the Old Testament are so lovely as this? How many churches could learn something from this?

Ruth 2 also shows us how grace stimulates us to good works of thanksgiving, which in turn bless the people around us. The grace Ruth showed to Naomi by her good work of clinging to her became a blessing to her as she was welcomed into the field along with the other gleaners. Word of her work of grace had already spread throughout the community, and this prompted Boaz to show her additional kindness. She did not take that grace for granted, but worked all the more diligently to bless herself and Naomi with an abundant harvest.

Here we also are shown two important “types” or “symbols” that instruct us today. Boaz demonstrates the redeeming and caring grace of our Law-fulfilling Savior, while Ruth typifies the Church's appropriate response to that grace – thanksgiving, humility, and energetic labors of love.

Finally, this chapter provides a glimpse into life in the Kingdom of God, where righteousness is the character of the Kingdom, peace is the condition that righteousness brings about, and joy is consequence of all we do (Rom. 14.17, 18). The NKJV translation of verse 12 can be improved if we understand the verb, *ישלם*, *yishalem*, as meaning “bring to completion” or even “perform” rather than

“repay.” One sense of this verb does mean “to reward”, but the more basic meaning is “to bring to completion, to complete or to perform.” Even, “to be at peace.” It’s the verb from which we get *shalom* – completeness, soundness, welfare, peace.

Boaz extends the blessing of God’s rule over Ruth, calling on the Lord to bring all her good work to completion, and to perform it in and through her. She has more good work to do than what she has done thus far for Naomi. She will be the one through whom David is born, and ultimately, our Lord Jesus Himself. God will honor the blessing of Boaz and complete His good work in Ruth, bringing the righteousness, peace, and joy of His Kingdom to the world through Jesus Christ and His saving and redeeming work.

What a great chapter! And there’s more yet to come.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

To repay is to do or give something as recompense. The blessing is peace. A reward is a thing given in recognition of one’s service, effort, or achievement. Again, the blessing is peace. Boaz was calling on God to bless, reward, and repay Ruth’s hard work with peace.

This same reward of peace is available to us from the LORD God, under whose wings we too have come for refuge:

“Do not be afraid...I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

“And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water*... shall by no means lose his reward.”

“Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers.”

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last. Blessed *are* those who do His commandments...” (Gen.15.1; Matt.5.12; Matt.10.42; I Cor.3.8, 9; Rev.22.12)

May the LORD repay your work, and bring it to completion; and may a full reward – God’s peace – be given to you as you work your Personal Mission Field for His glory and honor!

#### *Reflection*

1. To what work is God calling you today in your Personal Mission Field?
2. What “rest” awaits believers as their reward when all their work on earth has been completed?
3. How does your daily work for the Lord relate to the coming of His Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven?

*Ruth humbly owned herself unworthy of favors, seeing she was born and brought up a heathen. It well becomes us all to think humbly of ourselves, esteeming others better than ourselves. And let us, in the kindness of Boaz to Ruth, note the kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ to poor sinners. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 2.17-23*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 34.8-14*

I encourage you to read this lovely psalm in its entirety. Then focus your prayer on these verses. Having tasted of His goodness in the story of Ruth, commit your day to Him, to trust and fear Him, depend on Him for all your needs, follow His guidance and teaching, and seek peace all around.

*Sing Psalm 34.8-14, 3*

(Alleluia [Lowe]: [Mighty God, While Angels Bless You](#))

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.

None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.

*Refrain, v. 3*

Magnify the Name of Jesus! Let us lift His Name in praise!

Though the beasts succumb to hunger, all who seek Him all things have.

Listen, children, I will teach you how to fear Him who can save.

*Refrain*

Who loves life? Who longs for goodness? Keep your tongue from evil ways.

Turn to good, from wicked wand'ring; peace pursue through all your days.

*Refrain*

*For Reflection or Discussion*

1. In Ruth 2, gleaning is a symbol of this community's commitment to keeping the Law of God. Why is this important to the story of Ruth?
2. How can you see that Boaz is a type of Jesus Christ?
3. In what ways does Ruth symbolize the Church and its response to the grace of Jesus?
4. What do we learn from this chapter about the relationship between grace and good works in the community of God's people?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Ruth 2? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.