

THE PROMISE
OF REDEMPTION
RUTH 3



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

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The Promise of Redemption: Ruth 3
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Ruth 3: Introduction

The action accelerates now as Naomi offers a plan to bring Ruth under the caring love and protection of Boaz. The plan might seem strange to us, but its meaning would have been perfectly clear to those involved in it at that time.

Boaz proves himself to be the model citizen, a man committed first to God then to whatever God requires in loving his neighbors. He and Ruth will be a good match. But they will need to wait.

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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 Rest and Wellbeing

Opening Prayer: Psalm 37.7-9

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—it only *causes* harm.
For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.

Sing: Psalm 37.7-9

(Neumark: *If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*)

Rest in the Lord and wait on Jesus; fret not at those who practice sin.
Forsake all wrath till anger ceases; let anxious fears not enter in.
The wicked perish from the Lord, but they are blest who heed His Word!

Read Ruth 3.1

Preparation

1. What was Naomi seeking for Ruth?
2. Why did she want to do that?

Meditation

The first two chapters of Ruth cover many years. Even the time from Naomi's and Ruth's arriving in Bethlehem to the end of chapter 2 occupies many weeks. From this point forward, however, time is compressed, and the plot hastens to its conclusion.

Naomi's question to Ruth reveals the attitude of the heart of grace. It was her duty to look out for Ruth's wellbeing and to take whatever steps she could to make sure her daughter-in-law became nested in the rest and wellbeing of God. The terms "rest" and "be well" (Hebrew: "be good") recall, in order, Lamech's prayer of gratitude for the birth of his son, Noah (Gen. 5.28, 29) and God's assessment of His work of creation (Gen. 1.31). These terms were deliberately chosen. The writer was seeking to establish covenant legitimacy for Ruth, and for what may have been a very good reason.

Naomi returned to Bethlehem a bitter, albeit repentant woman, shamed by her circumstances and the judgment of God on her family, but relieved to be back to the place of God's favor. In chapter 2 she was dependent on Ruth to care for her. But here, at the beginning of chapter 3, the roles are reversing, as Ruth must depend on Naomi for counsel and direction. This is how grace works within the community of God's *shalom*. Sometimes we are channels of grace. At other times we are recipients. At all times we look to the Lord for our rest and good.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Rest and wellbeing. These are good things to seek both in the physical/material and spiritual realms of life. Naomi could seek physical security for Ruth; but only God could fulfill her need for spiritual

rest. We can, of course, encourage one another to seek these things; but no person or situation can provide what only God can. The difference is nuanced, but exists, nonetheless. David explains the subtleties well in Psalm 37.3-7:

“Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.
He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.
Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...”

Personal kindnesses are always nice, and earthly love and comforts dear; but only God can give us the eternal desires of our heart – Jesus.

Reflection

1. What does it mean to rest in the Lord, to rest in Jesus? What are we resting from? Unto?
2. How do you see the grace of God at work between Ruth and Naomi here, as compared to chapter 2?
3. We can give rest and wellbeing at one level, and we ought always strive to do so. But why can God alone give the deeper rest and wellbeing our soul desires?

Once again, Naomi returned to the subject of security or rest, which she addressed in 1:9. In the first instance, she had asked God to provide her daughters-in-law the “rest” of marriage. Now she was determined to seek this rest for Ruth. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Notes on Ruth 3.1

Closing Prayer: Psalm 37.1-6, 34-40

Commit your day and all your activities and needs to the Lord. Ask God to give you courage and strength to do all His will.

Sing Psalm 37.1-6, 34-40

(Neumark: [*If Thou But Suffer God to Guide Thee*](#))

Let not the wicked make you worry; envy not those who break God’s Word.
Like dying grass will they be sorry, and fade like every dying herb.
Trust in the Lord and do His will; dwell in His grace, be faithful still.

Delight yourself in God’s salvation; He’ll give you all your heart’s desire.
Commit to Him your every station, and His good purpose will transpire.
Your righteousness a blazing light He will bring forth against the night.

Wait on the Lord, His way observing, and He will lift you up on high.
Those prone to wicked ways preserving, your eyes shall see cast down to die.
The blameless man shall stand upright, for God preserves him by His might!

Salvation comes from Christ our Savior; He is our strength in time of need.

On us does He bestow His favor, who all His holy judgments heed.
He is our help in troubled times; our refuge He, in Him we hide.

2 The Obedience of Faith

Opening Prayer: Psalm 105.6-8

O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations...

Sing Psalm 105.6-11

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read Ruth 3.2-5

Preparation

1. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do?
2. How did Ruth respond?

Meditation

Ruth's response to Naomi (v. 5) echoes the ancient words of Israel in response to the command and promises of God's covenant: "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" (Ex. 19.8). This is deliberate on the writer's part. He wants the beauty of God's covenant to be before his readers as the story of Ruth moves into its most important phase.

Naomi's plan (vv. 3, 4) must have seemed bold, even audacious, to Ruth. There were no guarantees here; Naomi was trusting in the goodness of Boaz – his character as a man of faith and obedience to God's Law – but she could not give Ruth any assurances of what might happen beyond what she prescribed.

The journey of faith is like this; mostly we only know the next step, which, taken in faith, will open the door of opportunity for whatever the Lord is pleased to do next. We trust Him to be a gracious God, so we obey in faith, expecting His Word to lead to blessing.

Naomi did not leave any of the details to chance. She was very specific in explaining to Ruth how and when to proceed. While it was a bold plan, it wasn't "pushy." Ruth would have to obey explicitly and rest in the grace of God, waiting to see what Boaz' response might be.

By submitting to her mother-in-law's instructions, Ruth demonstrated the faith and trust that allow grace to flow to its proper ends. Without faith we bottle-up grace; with it, we release grace to do its transforming work in our lives and, through us, in the lives of others.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Obedience. Grace. Faith.

Precisely. Lovingly. Determinedly.

In some past cultures chewing vigorously and loudly was OK.

Not so now.

Bold burping even was considered proper etiquette.

Not so now.

The scenario that Naomi plotted out for Ruth was a good idea then.

I'm pretty sure it wouldn't be a Cosmo guide to getting a guy now.

But back then, yes.

It may have even been unheard of in Ruth's Moabite culture then, but she, in her trusting and loving way, did exactly what Naomi prescribed: "All that you say to me I will do" (vs. 5), confident that Naomi would never ask her to do anything outside of God's perfect Law.

That is exactly the way that we are called to obey God's Word.

Precisely. Lovingly. Determinedly.

"I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes forever, to the very end" (Psa. 119.112).

It is exactly what Jesus told Peter, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" Basically, if this doesn't make sense to you, that's OK. "You follow Me" (John 21.22)

And as Job cried out in the midst of his suffering, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13.15).

The Obedience of Faith.

Precisely. Lovingly. Determinedly.

Reflection

1. Ruth may have been shocked or perplexed about what Naomi told her to do. But she readily agreed to obey. Why?

2. Should we always expect that we can perfectly understand what God commands us in His Law? Why must we obey it anyway?

3. Use Ruth's response to Naomi to write a brief prayer that you can use before your daily Bible reading.

The course Naomi advised appears strange to us; but it was according to the laws and usages of Israel. If the proposed measure had born the appearance of evil, Naomi would not have advised it. Law and custom gave Ruth, who was now proselyted to the true religion, a legal claim upon Boaz; It was customary for widows to assert this claim, Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 3.1-5

Lord, give me grace to obey You explicitly and immediately today as I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 105.1-5

Thank God for His precious and very great promises, all of which are ours in Jesus (2 Pet. 1.4; 2 Cor.

1.20). Offer your day to Him, and ask Him to help you submit to His Word in everything you do.

Sing Psalm 105.1-5

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the Lord Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!

Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.

Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

3 The Risk of Faith

Opening Prayer: Psalm 142.6, 7

“Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are stronger than I.
Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may praise Your name;
The righteous shall surround me,
For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

Sing Psalm 142.6, 7

(Dix: [*For the Beauty of the Earth*](#))

Hear my cry, Lord, I am low! They are strong who seek my soul.
Jesus frees from every foe; He will keep and make me whole!

Refrain

Lord, You are my Refuge strong!
O receive my plaintive song!

Out of prison lead me, Lord; thanks and praise to You shall be.
Righteous men armed with Your Word will Your grace bestow on me.

Refrain

Ruth 3.6-10

Preparation

1. What happened at midnight?
2. What did Boaz say to Ruth?

Meditation

Faith often requires boldness and risk (cf. v. 14), and Ruth was willing to take that risk, both out of love for her mother-in-law, and for the prospect of the further grace – rest and wellbeing – that she might find. There is nothing symbolic in Ruth’s actions here; Boaz, sated and content when he lay down to sleep, might well have slept through the whole night, unless some disturbance should have awakened him. Cold feet in the middle of the night would prove to be just the thing.

Here is a rather surprising twist (v. 10). Ruth went up to the threshing-floor seeking some blessing, and it turns out she gave blessing as well. This must have been a surprise to her. But this is often the way of blessing. Those who seek the blessing of the Lord often find that they themselves are a source of blessing as well, precisely as God had promised in His covenant (Gen. 12.1-3).

Her request of Boaz appears to have been rather general – that he might extend the blessings of his provision and care to her, since he was a redeemer for her and Naomi. Did she wonder if this protection might involve marriage? It seems likely since it would have been in line with the teaching of God’s Law, as we shall see. Boaz certainly took her overture in that way. He was humbled by her request, even, we might say, honored, for Ruth preferred to pursue redemption through following the teaching of God’s Law and the protection of an older man, rather than by seeking a husband

more her age.

By submitting in faith to the Law of God, Ruth would know all the blessings of God for those who seek restoration according to His statutes.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

It is interesting to note that Ruth's response to Boaz is in many respects a repeat of his blessing to her: "The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (Ruth 2.12). Okay. "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative" (vs. 9). Ruth was calling upon Boaz to show her God's love. Fulfill your blessing to me.

God calls us to show this same love to others, as we are bearers of the Name of Christ. Especially those to whom we have used words to tell them of His love for them.

Jesus says to us: "If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (Jn. 13.14, 15). And Peter says to us: "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps..." (I Pet. 2.21).

Faith is risky because our lives need to match up to what our mouths are saying. What would Ruth have thought of Boaz if his blessing to her was merely perfunctory? What do people think of us when what we say and what we do are not compatible? That we are merely spouting words with no action to back them up? Boaz fulfilled his blessing upon Ruth. We have the same opportunity to make good on our words.

Let others see Jesus in us: alive and active!

Reflection

1. What do we learn from Ruth's submitting to Boaz about our own submission to Jesus Christ?
2. What do we learn from Boaz' commitment to Ruth about what Jesus has committed to us?
3. In what ways is faith a "risky" enterprise for you? How do you face the risks of faith that confront you each day?

*The conduct of Boaz calls for the highest praise. He attempted not to take advantage of Ruth; he did not disdain her as a poor, destitute stranger, nor suspect her of any ill intentions. He spoke honorably of her as a virtuous woman, made her a promise, and as soon as the morning arrived, sent her away with a present to her mother-in-law. Boaz made his promise conditional, for there was a kinsman nearer than he, to whom the right of redemption belonged. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Ruth 3.1-5**

Keep me in the path of Your Law and all Your Word, O Lord, and I will...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 142.1-4

Take refuge only in the Lord, today and always. Seek His Presence, guidance, and strength for everything before you today.

Sing Psalm 142.1-5

(Dix: [*For the Beauty of the Earth*](#))

With my voice, O Lord, I cry – Hear my plea for mercy, Lord!
My complaint mounts up on high, bringing You my troubled word:
Refrain vs. 5, 6
Lord, You are my Refuge strong!
O receive my plaintive song!

When my spirit faints away, You my falt'ring pathway know.
Where I take my journey they traps have hidden to my woe.
Refrain

Lord, look to my right and see: None takes notice of my plight.
Is there refuge left for me? Is my soul out of Your sight?
Refrain

4 Content for Justice

Opening Prayer: Psalm 1.1, 2

Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.

Sing Psalm 1.1, 2

(St. Thomas: [*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*](#))

How blessed are they that shun sin's vain and wicked ways.
For them has Christ salvation won; He loves them all their days.

God's Word is their delight; they prosper in its truth.
In it they dwell both day and night to flourish and bear fruit.

Read Ruth 3.11-13

Preparation

1. What seems to have mattered most to Boaz?
2. What did he instruct Ruth to do?

Meditation

Boaz showed his true character here by being more concerned for justice than for self-interest. What mattered to him was not that he get the girl, but that the girl get what God had in store for her, according to His Law. Boaz was a redeemer to Naomi and Ruth; but he was not the next in line for that privilege (v. 13). There was a closer redeemer, and he would have to be consulted concerning his wishes in the matter.

Boaz understood the primacy of justice over self-interest. Boaz also understood that the blessings of God are tied to obedience to His Law; this is the way redemption and restoration must proceed.

Boaz' instructing Ruth to remain the night must have been entirely with her safety in mind.

It is interesting to note that Boaz used the same adjective to describe Ruth (חַיִּיל *chayil* – “virtuous”) as was used to introduce him in Ruth 2.1 (where the NKJV translates it “great wealth”). The writer uses this device as a kind of foreshadowing of the direction of events. It is altogether right and good that two virtuous persons should be brought together in the justice and goodness of God's Law, as worthy members of God's covenant community.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Justice is pervasive in Boaz and all his decisions.
He is also keenly aware of Ruth's vulnerability.
His first words were, “do not fear” (Ruth 3.11).
He might have sensed how odd this tradition felt, and wanted to assure her that he,

nor anyone else, thought poorly of her.

They knew her reputation, and it was virtuous.

Justice from Boaz resulted in steadfastness toward Ruth and toward the Law. He promised to see this through to completion.

“What is desired in a man is kindness, and a poor man is better than a liar” (Prov. 19.22). Boaz would make sure that the truth of Ruth’s act would be clearly understood and that she had nothing to fear from him or the town. She could trust him completely; as could the other kinsman. Boaz’ intention to follow the Law was thorough and absolute.

We, like Ruth, can trust our Redeemer to care for us in the same way. “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31.6).

Reflection

1. What is justice? How does Boaz exemplify a Biblical approach of justice?
2. What makes someone a “virtuous” person? Is becoming more virtuous something we should desire? Explain.
3. How would you counsel a fellow believer to grow in justice and virtue?

What in one age or nation would be improper, is not always so in another age or another nation. Being a judge of Israel, Boaz would tell Ruth what she should do; also whether he had the right of redemption, and what methods must be taken, and what rites used, in order to accomplishing [sic] her marriage with him or another person. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 3.6-13

Keep me in the path of Your Law and all Your Word, O Lord, and I will...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 1.3-6

Pray that you will grow closer to the Lord and more fruitful in all your ways. Pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field. Ask the Lord for an opportunity to share the Good News with someone today.

Sing Psalm 1.3-6

(St. Thomas: [*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*](#))

Firm planted on the banks of God’s great stream of grace,
they raise unending praise and thanks to His great glorious face.

The wicked are not so, but, driven by the winds,
they fall and perish, weighed with woe, when once God’s wrath begins.

In Jesus’ righteousness, though sinners fail and fall,
His flock He will preserve and bless, who on His favor call.

5 Down Payment

Opening Prayer: Psalm 28.1, 2

To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock:
Do not be silent to me,
Lest, if You *are* silent to me,
I become like those who go down to the pit.
Hear the voice of my supplications
When I cry to You,
When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.

Sing Psalm 28.1, 2

(Angel's Story: [*O Jesus, I Have Promised*](#))

I cry to You, our Savior, O, be not deaf to me!
Lord, speak to me with favor, lest I should dying be.
Hear now my supplications when for Your help I cry.
Receive these, my oblations, before Your throne on high.

Read Ruth 3.14, 15

Preparation

1. What did Boaz do to provide for Ruth?
2. How much barley did he give her?

Meditation

It's not clear whom Boaz was instructing in verse 14 about Ruth's presence on the threshing floor. Perhaps it was an attendant (the verb is singular and masculine). Nor is it clear why the instruction was necessary. Perhaps it was merely a precaution for Ruth's sake.

The grain Boaz gave to Ruth can be seen as a token of Boaz' commitment (v. 15). Certainly nothing like this was required. It was a down payment of greater blessings to come. There may be some significance to his measuring six measures (besides the fact that her shawl may not have held any more). Like the six days of God's working, rest from labors followed on the seventh. Perhaps Boaz meant to signal to Ruth that, while the labor of his hands would provide for her for now, the true rest she sought would only come with the justice provided by God's Law.

Note again the simplicity of Ruth's faith. She did as she was instructed by those whose faith was more mature and who had authority over her. She did not have to know the full outworking of events to obey. Ruth's faith worked for the next step and the next step; this is the way we grow in our relationship with the Lord – one step of obedience at a time.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“The integrity of the upright will guide them...” (Prov. 11.3).

“Righteousness guards *him whose way is blameless...*” (Prov. 13.6).

“Then he said, ‘Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor’” (v. 14). Boaz continued to care for Ruth and for her reputation and her livelihood. And Ruth continued to trust

Boaz and Naomi for guidance in her new life and new homeland. What was true for Ruth is true for us now. We live in God's Kingdom and can trust Him completely. And His Kingdom functions in much the same way now as it did then. The truths then are just as true now. The expectations then, are the same now – trust and obedience

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘*God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*’ Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5.5-7).

Indeed, “this is the way we grow in our relationship with the Lord – one step of obedience at a time.”

Reflection

1. What must you do to make sure you can follow Jesus one step at a time?
2. What can you learn from Boaz about being a channel of God's grace to your world?
3. We are called to the Kingdom and glory of God. What does that mean for you as you launch out into your Personal Mission Field each day?

Ruth had done all that was fit for her to do, she must patiently wait the event. Boaz, having undertaken this matter, would be sure to manage it well. Much more reason have true believers to cast their care on God, because he has promised to care for them. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 3.6-13

Lead me each step of the way today, O Lord, and I will...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 28.6-9

Call on the Lord to strengthen, shield, and shepherd you in the activities of the day. Commit your day to the Lord, to glorify Him in every next step.

Sing Psalm 28.6-9

(Angel's Story: [*O Jesus, I Have Promised*](#))

Blessed be the Name of Jesus, for He will hear our prayer.
His strength protects and shields us with mercy and with care.
In You our heart rejoices; You help us by Your Word.
To You we raise our voices to praise and thank You, Lord.

Our strength are You, O Savior, our strong defense and sure.
Anointed with Your favor, we rest in You secure.
Save us, and bless us, Jesus, upon us turn Your face.
With shepherd's care, Lord, keep us forever in Your grace.

6 Waiting

The Promise of Redemption (6)

Opening Prayer: Psalm 27.1-3

The LORD *is* my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked came against me
To eat up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.

Sing Psalm 27.1-3

(Joanna: [*Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise*](#))

Lord, You are our Light and our Savior most dear!
You guard us with might; therefore, whom shall we fear?
Though evil surround us, our enemies fall;
no harm shall confound us when on You we call.

Read Ruth 3.16-18

Preparation

1. What was Naomi's counsel to Ruth?
2. Why did she counsel her thus?

Meditation

Naomi knew that Boaz was a man of his word (v. 18). She did not hold out empty promises to Ruth, but only what she could: Boaz would settle this matter, one way or another, right away. We see in Ruth's explanation just how great was the magnanimity of Boaz. In giving her the six measures of grain, he had Naomi's welfare in mind as well as Ruth's (v. 17).

We cannot rush the justice of God; we must learn to wait on Him until all His plans and promises comes to pass. Ruth would have to wait and see how matters would work out. All she knew was that whatever God intended for her, it would be for her blessing.

Let's not miss the faith of Naomi in this passage. She has been the one urging the action forward in the previous two chapters, and for much of this one. Now, however, she knew she must wait for the grace and justice of God to work according to His protocols and plans. Like Boaz, Naomi would not take the will of the Lord into her own hands; she'd learned the hard way not to travel that path. She and Ruth would have to wait and see the way that God would work through the elders of the city to accomplish the blessing of God for her.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Boaz continued following the Law of God: He would go to the nearest kinsman redeemer about Ruth. And he did not send Ruth away empty-handed; he abundantly provided for her and Naomi (Deut. 24.19).

God was leading Boaz to help Naomi redeem the years that she had lost. When she first returned to Bethlehem, the summary of her life was this: “I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty” (Ruth 1.21). God, through Boaz, was giving her hope for the future. Much like Jesus did with Peter after his denial of Him (Jn. 21.15-22). With God, there is always hope for a new beginning. “*Through* the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. *They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness*” (Lam. 3.22, 23).

And Naomi insisted that Ruth wait to see what would happen about the next step in her future. “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out...” (vs. 18). She was teaching her a very important lesson that, indeed, she had learned the hard way: The best way to live your life is to live it God’s way. Do what God recommends: “Be still, and know that I *am* God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Ps. 46.10)

Active obedience. Obedient waiting and stillness.

“The LORD *is* good to those who wait for Him,
to the soul *who* seeks Him.

*It is good that one should hope and wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD*” (Lam. 3.25, 26).

Reflection

1. What does it mean to “wait” on the Lord? Why is it important that we learn this discipline?
2. How does waiting on the Lord prepare us to exalt Him in every aspect of our lives?
3. Boaz kept the Law, thus obeying God and blessing the people around him (cf. Matt. 22.34-40). What does his example teach us about why we should keep God’s Law?

This narrative may encourage us to lay ourselves by faith at the feet of Christ: He is our near Kinsman; having taken our nature upon him. He has the right to redeem. Let us seek to receive from him his directions: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Ruth 3.14-18

Lord, I wait on You! Lead me step by step today as I...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 27.7-14

Seek the Lord and the glory of His face (2 Cor. 4.6). Seek His way for you this day, and wait on Him to lead you in His smooth path.

Sing Psalm 27.7-14

(Joanna: [*Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise*](#))

Hear, Lord, when we cry and be gracious, we pray!
Lord, do not deny us Your favor this day!
Our help, our salvation, though others may fall,
preserve our good station when on You we call.

Lord, teach us; Lord, lead us because of our foes!
Hear, Lord, when we plead for release from their woes.
Had we not believed all Your goodness to see,
our heart sorely grieved and in turmoil would be.

Wait, wait on the Lord; persevere in His grace.
Hold fast to His Word; seek His radiant face.
Be strong, set your heart to abide in His Word;
His grace He imparts; therefore, wait on the Lord.

7 Waiting for Rest

Opening Prayer: Psalm 116.1-6

I love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.
The pains of death surrounded me,
And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me;
I found trouble and sorrow.
Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
“O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”
Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God *is* merciful.
The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.

Sing Psalm 116.1-6

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*](#))

I love the Lord because He hears my cries and pleas for mercy.
Because He bends to me His ears, my prayers shall ever thus be.
The snares of death encompassed me; hell’s grip could not unloosened be;
distress and anguish pressed me.

I called to God, “O Lord, I pray, my soul redeem with favor!”
The Lord is gracious in His way, and righteous is our Savior.
His mercy to the simple flies; He lifted me up to the skies –
I rest in Him forever!

Read Ruth 3; meditate on verses 1-3

Preparation

1. What kind of “rest” (“security”, v. 1) was Naomi seeking for Ruth?
2. What did Ruth have to do to prepare to receive that rest?

Meditation

Ruth 3 begins and ends with the idea of “rest.” Two different Hebrew words are used, and together they help us understand the meaning of this important idea.

The first word is in verse 1: מְנוּחָה *manoach* describes a *state* of rest or the *condition* of being at rest. Naomi was seeking such a condition for Ruth, who had brought such rest to her by the love she showed and the work she endured to provide for them both. The rest (“security”, NKJV) Naomi sought for Ruth would be characterized in all aspects by the goodness of the Lord (v. 1, “be well with you”).

The second word, שָׁכַת *shachat*, means to “be quiet” or “undisturbed.” The use of this in verse 18 illuminates the idea of rest from a different angle, as Naomi explained that Boaz would *not* be quiet

or undisturbed until he had carried out all that he promised. Only *after* he had done what he said would Boaz find the rest of quietness and an undisturbed life.

Now here's what most fascinates me about this idea, so prominent in chapter 3: It was necessary for Ruth to *work* if she would realize the *rest* Naomi wished for her. She had to do certain things to put herself in position to receive her rest. In the same way, Boaz must *work* to reach that state of quiet and peace he intends for himself and Ruth together.

Like God, Who worked to create the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh, we must enter the rest of the Lord through the work God has appointed for us. The people of Israel, who refused to go to war against the peoples of Canaan, failed to enter God's rest by being unwilling to take up the work that condition required (Heb. 3:7-11). The rest of God remains for those who, partaking of Jesus Christ and holding fast their confidence in Him, faithfully carry out all that the Gospel requires of them in obedience to the Lord (Heb. 4:1-7; 6:9-12).

The marriage of Boaz and Ruth – the state of “rest” each was seeking – offers a picture of the rest promised to all who believe in Jesus and follow Him.

A rest remains for all who believe and are faithful like Ruth and Boaz. But we must *wait* for that rest through faithful *works of obedience* according to the holy and righteous and good Law of God (Rom. 7:12). Our waiting for the Lord's rest will thus be characterized by doing the good works for which the Lord has redeemed us and saved us (Eph. 2:10).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13:52; Psalm 119:162

In preparation for Ruth's meeting with Boaz, we hear Naomi giving her some helpful hints, yes, about hygiene, but mostly about showing respect. Wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best garment (v. 3).

Amazingly, we didn't have to “clean up our act” when we first met Jesus. He loved us anyway. But now that we know Him, it shows Him respect when we wash and anoint ourselves and put on our best garments.

In other words, that we keep ourselves clean from sin: “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Ps. 51:2). “...wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16)

That we anoint ourselves with the fragrance of Christ: “For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one *we are* the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life” (2 Cor. 2:15, 16).

And that we are clothed in righteousness: “He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels” (Rev. 3:5).

These behaviors don't get us saved; but they are purposeful and respectful actions that show Jesus how very much we want to please Him. And He says to us in return, “Come unto Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

Clean. Anointed. And dressed. Ready for the rest.

Reflection

1. Why is “rest” such a good way of thinking about our relationship with God through Jesus?
2. What can we learn from Naomi’s instructions to Ruth about how we should relate to our Lord Jesus?
3. How would you explain the relationship between work and rest to a new believer?

The married state should be a rest, as much as any thing upon earth can be so, as it ought to fix the affection and form a connection for life. Therefore it should be engaged in with great seriousness, with earnest prayers for direction, for the blessing of God, and with regard to his precepts. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Ruth 3.1-5*

Lord, I do not obey you so that I might be saved, but because I am saved, and I truly desire to enter Your rest. Help me today, in grateful anticipation of Your rest, to...

Closing Prayer: Psalm 116.7-19

Renew your commitment to the Lord, praying over every area of your life that you will be a living sacrifice to Him and know the joy of His rest and all His goodness.

Sing Psalm 116.7-19

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*](#))

Full well the Lord has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
and dwell with them forever.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the Lord for all His blessings to me?
Salvation’s cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart – save me, Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand’ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. How would you explain the relationship between “work” and “rest” as we see it in Ruth 3?
2. How does Boaz serve as a type of Jesus Christ? How do His actions help us to “see” Jesus better?
3. What can we as the Church learn from Ruth about being the “bride” of our Lord Jesus?
4. How can you see from Ruth 3 that both rest and work are inseparable from the grace of God?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from Ruth 3? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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