

The Book of Ruth: “Kindness and the Kind (of) God We Serve”
Ruth 2

Into the Harvest

- Recap:
 - The book of Ruth begins in tragedy with the loss of Naomi’s husband and sons. (1:1-5)
 - Naomi says that she went out of Bethlehem “full” and came back “empty”. (1:21)
 - The first chapter ends on a note of hope, though: *it’s the beginning of the barley harvest.*
- In 2:1, we are introduced to Boaz, “a worthy man.”
 - The phrase can mean a man of influence, strength, wealth, or virtue.
 - The same description of virtue applies to Ruth. (Ruth 3:11; see also Prov. 31:10)
- Ruth took initiative in the care of Naomi. (v. 2)
 - The Law of Moses provided opportunity for the poor to work and feed their families.

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. ²⁰ When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this. (Deuteronomy 24:19-22)

And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 23:22)
 - The Law of Moses elevated compassion over ruthless efficiency and productivity.
 - Israel was called to remember their need and to mirror their God.
- Boaz was the kind of man who showed kindness and regard for God’s law.
 - Ruth “just happened” (yeah, right!) to end up in Boaz’s field (v. 3), and Boaz immediately notices her. (v. 5)
 - From there, Boaz multiplies kindnesses to Ruth.
 - She is permitted and even encouraged to glean in his fields. (v. 8)
 - She is protected from assaults and insults. (vv. 9a, 15)
 - She is provided water and refreshment. (v. 9b)

- She is seated at and fed from Boaz's table. (v. 14)
- She is allowed the opportunity to glean among the sheaves. (v. 15)
- The exchange between Boaz and Ruth in vv. 10-13 is an exchange of worthy characters.
 - Boaz has shown remarkable generosity toward Ruth.
 - Ruth has shown remarkable loyalty toward Naomi.

Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life." (Lu 18:29-30)

- The closing scene anticipates more hope and greater provision. (vv. 17-23)

"The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers." (Ruth 2:20)

Into Our Lives

- We should remember that we are the objects of extravagant kindness from God.
 - God is not a minimalist or a miser when it comes to mercy.
 - God is eternally generous toward us.

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (John 1:16)

God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom 5:8)

- We should be like our kind God, showing extraordinary kindness to those in need.
 - An "unkind Christian" should be an oxymoron.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:27)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. (Colossians 3:12)

- As a church, we should have hearts for all who hurt.

We care about all suffering now and especially eternal suffering later. (John Piper)

- As a follower of Christ...
 - Do you see the needy?
 - Do you help the needy?

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)