

Ruth 2:13-16

We are continuing to look at the dialogue between Boaz and Ruth. Boaz, in verse twelve had encouraged Ruth by recognizing her trust in God. Now, in verse thirteen, we read Ruth's response to his kindness.

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."

Several translations of this verse read, "Let me find favor in your sight". In her response, Ruth still exemplifies a heart of humility in accepting the kindness Boaz has offered. She does not demand rights neither does she expect them. She places herself last among the servants working for Boaz. Ruth is still acutely aware that she is a foreigner and no act of favor is taken for granted. Fast forward to the end of this book and recall how God takes the lowly and lifts them to a place of honor. Ruth's lesson of continued humility is important for each of us to grasp. **What might having a heart of humility look like in your present circumstances? How is your response affected when your attitude is humble?**

Proverbs 15:33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor [comes] humility.

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;

Boaz sets an example of showing comfort and kindness even though it is not necessarily required. This means in a favorable sense to show pity – compassion for the misfortunes of others. Boaz regards Ruth's position with understanding. I wonder how often we neglect to reach out to others – especially those 'different' from ourselves – with a heart of understanding. **When difficult circumstances encroach upon someone's life, do we take the time to show compassion?**

Ruth 2:14 And 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 was introduced to us in the first verse of this chapter. He was a man of valor and strength, a man of wealth and part of the family of

Elimelech. He was kind to his servants, desiring that the Lord blessed them. He was cognoscente of those working for him and he paid particular attention to Ruth. He asked questions of those around him in order to get understanding and he honored the faithfulness of Ruth as he heard of her care for her mother-in-law Naomi. In verse fourteen of this chapter, we continue to hear of his special kindness towards this young foreigner.

Ruth was told to sit with the hired workers and take part in the meal prepared for them. Here is an example of Boaz reaching out to the needy. And he did so with great generosity. Notice that Ruth did as she was directed but still remained a bit distanced from the group – the word beside is translated ‘off to the side’ – continuing to show her humility. Boaz either ate with them or at least was present as his reapers had their meal. Ruth was handed the parched corn or grain and apparently the quantity was so large that she had some left. Consider the generosity of Boaz and read these additional sections of scripture that describe showing care to others.

Job 31:16-22 “If I have kept the poor from [their] desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the orphan has not shared it (But from my youth he grew up with me as with a father, and from infancy I guided her), If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing, or that the needy had no covering, if his loins have not thanked me, and if he has not been warmed with the fleece of my sheep, If I have lifted up my hand against the orphan, because I saw I had support in the gate, let my shoulder fall from the socket, and my arm be broken off at the elbow”.

Luke 14:12-14 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and repayment come to you. "But when you give a reception, invite [the] poor, [the] crippled, [the] lame, [the] blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have [the means] to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and [their] great men exercise authority over them. "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The example to emulate is generosity stemming from a heart that loves God. No expectation of repayment but instead an opportunity to reach out

to those in need. Do we treat all that God has blessed us with as an opportunity to bless others? Do we hold tightly to what we consider 'ours'? Do we use power or position to oppress those who are weak? When we recognize all things come from God then we are more likely to use our resources for His glory. In what ways are you able to share with others? Do you quickly respond to need with an open heart and hand? How might this be a struggle?

Before we move on to the next verse, consider this question. How would you define someone's character? How is someone's character proven? Think of what defines a person, the attributes that would determine this description and how those qualities are demonstrated. If someone were to ask you for a character reference, think what you might write.

Ruth 2:15 When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. Boaz thinks ahead and, true to his character, continues to watch out for Ruth. He commands his employees to let Ruth gather along with them rather than follow behind and pick up what has been left. This would allow Ruth to collect the best of the harvest. Boaz's workers are advised to treat Ruth with kindness so that she will not feel ashamed for her need or position. At this point Ruth must feel as if angels are watching over her, certainly she recognizes the preference given her. God always blesses a heart of humility which desires to follow Him.

Isaiah 66:2 "For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

Remember that gleaning was set up by Jewish Law to provide for the poor and needy which in that time and culture included widows. Notice that Boaz instructed his reapers to allow Ruth to glean among the sheaves. Adam Clarke's Commentary says, "This was a privilege; for no person should glean till the sheaves were all bound, and the shocks set up". In other words Ruth was being allowed to gather the best of the harvest. If the workers had

not been forewarned by Boaz it is possible they would have reprimanded her for jumping in to help herself before they were done harvesting.

Read the commentary from Family Bible Notes regarding Boaz, “A generous mind will avoid reproaches and every thing calculated to wound the feelings of the poor, and will delight to aid them in their efforts, by industry and economy, to provide for themselves and those dependent upon them”. This is an incredible view of the compassion of Boaz towards Ruth. He made it possible for her to provide for herself and Naomi in a way which was honorable and successful. He did not just hand the grain to Ruth but he allowed her to work for it which fulfills the necessity we all have to care for ourselves and those we are responsible for.

If we are in need, do we expect a handout or are we willing to do whatever is necessary to help ourselves? If we have resources to share, are we generous but also mindful of how we supply help? What might this look like in current situations today? The Bible says we ought to work to provide for ourselves.

2Thessalonians 3:10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.

How do we show compassion yet not enable idleness?

Ruth 2:16 continues with instruction for Boaz’s workers. “And also you shall purposely pull out for her [some grain] from the bundles and leave [it] that she may glean, and do not rebuke her”. This couldn’t be clearer. They were to purposefully drop some of the stalks of grain for Ruth to pick up. There was no possible way Ruth could have failed at gathering enough grain! And again there is a warning to the workers to keep their snide remarks to themselves. As you read this, what are you thinking in terms of application for yourself? Boaz’s warning to his workers to be mindful of their reactions towards Ruth causes me to think of how quickly I might judge someone’s behavior without having true knowledge. Also, take note of the generosity extended towards Ruth.

Are we careful to help others succeed? Do we think ahead of how we might encourage and help them in their endeavors? When someone gets ‘lucky’ do we resent their blessing and think contemptuous thoughts? When we do help others, do we attach expectations to our gift of time and resources? Consider the following scriptures.

Matthew 25:40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, [even] the least [of them,] you did it to Me.'

1John 3:17-18 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.

1Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

1John 4:20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

Review some applications of Ruth 2:13-16.

- ♥ A heart of humility accepts kindness, learning to say thank you.
- ♥ A heart of humility does not expect or demand help.
- ♥ True generosity comes from a heart that recognizes all is a blessing from God. Sincere giving has no expectation of return.
- ♥ Think of how your character might be described. Is God honored?
- ♥ Consider what it means to have compassion on those in need and how you might help them succeed.

What additional application are you able to make toward your own circumstances?