

## Ruth 2:20-21

Nearing the end of Chapter 2 in Ruth, conversation between Naomi and Ruth continues. Naomi reveals to Ruth that the man named Boaz, whose field she was allowed to glean, is a relative. In fact, Boaz is of their closest relatives. Ruth offers even more specific information of the interaction between herself and Boaz and Naomi encourages Ruth with direction for the coming days ahead. The relationship between these two women is evidence of their deep affection for one another. ***The treasure we have in relationships, the ability to confide and seek counsel, and the encouragement we gather from one another is a blessing as we move forward in our knowledge and understanding of God.***

Ruth 2:20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead." Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives."

**Naomi's blessing to Boaz.** Just as Naomi's words in verse 19 blessed Boaz for his kindness, her words in verse 20 proclaim an abundance of blessing upon him from Jehovah God. The KJV of Ruth 2:20 reads, "Blessed be *he of the Lord*". There is recognition from Naomi of God's hand through Boaz in their care and she rightly turns the praise towards God.

- ♥ What is your reaction when God allows you to clearly see His hand directing your life?

Often, God uses others as an encouragement to us when we are truly seeking to live for Him. Naomi honors God by giving Him the glory for this amazing turn of circumstances. Boaz's kindness towards Ruth means the women will not be in fear of their supply of food and that Ruth will be safe as she works in the fields as a foreigner, without being harassed. To Naomi, who understands Jewish Law, it also means a possibility of redemption for her family name.

Naomi may have been fearful that with the death of her husband Elimelech, and their two sons, she could be forgotten in the family and left to fend on her own. We can surmise this because she had warned Ruth, even before their journey began, how difficult it might be when returning to Bethlehem. Yet, here is evidence of God's mercy on His children.

Naomi prays for blessing upon Boaz because he had 'not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead'. Kindness is the same word used for mercy.

- ♥ What does it mean to show mercy to someone?

According to *WordWeb*, mercy means to show great kindness toward the distressed. It is the feeling that motivates compassion.

- ♥ Do we take the opportunities we have to show kindness and mercy towards one another? What might this look like?
- ♥ Do we take the time to consider how we can be an encouragement?

God's mercy toward us is much more than the kindness we might display towards others. We have been declared guilty and in need of salvation from sin's destruction. In contrast, God is perfect and man's ugly display of sin is a grievance towards His holiness. Even though we are guilty, God chose to extend his love to man through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ. God's mercy towards man declares the guilty to be guiltless. We have been saved from the wrath and punishment we truly deserve.

When we fully understand God's love towards us, we will be motivated to love others. We will be drenched in humility, and look for opportunities to extend the love we have received. Boaz was merciful toward Ruth and her reaction is one of humility. A humble mind has no thought of deserving something more or something better. Any advantage given, no matter how small it may seem, will be valued as an undeserved blessing.

♥ How do these truths affect your attitude?

**Naomi's disclosure to Ruth.** "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives." This is incredible information. Boaz is not only a distant relative but one who is able to act as kinsman redeemer for the family. This means restoring the family name and property. Imagine how difficult the past ten years or so has been for Naomi – leaving her home town during a time of famine, going to an area of idol worshippers, watching her sons get pulled into a heathen culture, the death of her husband, the death of both her sons, and returning destitute to Bethlehem. Now, in God's perfect timing, when the famine in Bethlehem has ended, and at the beginning of harvest, with a loyal daughter-in-law whose heart has turned toward God, Naomi is given hope. God's lovingkindness is shown towards Naomi and Ruth in a very practical way and unsuspecting set of circumstances. There is no doubt that God's hand is directing the lives of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz. We have the advantage of reading this account from beginning to end so it is not difficult for us to see the blessings that are accumulating through the hands of God in these three lives.

♥ As you retrace God's direction in your life, are you able to see His blessings?

When we are in the midst of difficult circumstances, we may neglect to look to the hope we have that God is in control of all things. We can allow ourselves to become weighed down by discouragement (see Naomi's response in Ruth 1:20), and forget the truth that God works all things for His glory. It is all about Him! We do not live for our pleasure – we live for His purpose.

Searching in *Torrey's Topical Textbook* under the subject of glorifying God, one of the headings is listed as "**All the blessings of God are designed to lead to**" *His glory*. This is true in the account we are reading now and it is true in your own life. *Isaiah 60:21* reads, "Then all your people [will be] righteous; they will possess the land forever, the brand of My planting, the work of My hands, **that I may be glorified**".

- Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and **glorify your Father who is in heaven**.
- John 15:7-8 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you, "**By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit**, and [so] prove to be My disciples.

The apostle Paul in [Philippians 2:12](#) gives this charge to the church, “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for ***it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for [His] good pleasure.***”

Again the apostle Paul in his book to the Hebrews encourages them to honor God in all things. “Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, [even] Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, ***working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom [be] the glory forever and ever. Amen.***” Hebrews 13:20-21.

- ♥ How are you led to apply these truths?
- ♥ How is God using you to glorify Himself?

Ruth continues to relay the words of Boaz to Naomi in the next verse. [Ruth 2:21](#) Then Ruth the Moabitess said, "Furthermore, he said to me, 'You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.'" The blessings continue to multiply! This is like listening to a story that just keeps getting better and better – and we have not neared the end!

It is interesting that verse 21 begins with the words ‘Ruth he Moabitess’. This particular description of Ruth is a reminder of her background and renders these events even more amazing. Remember, the land of Moab was known for its worship of idols. The fact that Ruth is now part of the family name of Elimelech through marriage, and living among the Jewish peoples, having adopted their customs and their God, is only a scene that could have been written by God’s own hand.

NASB uses the word ‘furthermore’, other translations say ‘yea, he said unto me’, ‘besides, he said unto me, and ‘he also said to me’ (ASV, RSV and NKJV). Imagine the conversation between Ruth and Naomi. Ruth can hardly believe what has transpired that day. She expected little, just the possibility of gathering a small amount of grain for food, yet she was granted kindness, security, refreshment, and hope. Through the course of her interaction with Boaz, Ruth remembered her position; her humility continues to shine in her actions and words.

Think of your position in Christ. You were called to Him, and although you had nothing to offer, He stretched out his arms for you to offer riches untold. Unworthy, unlikely and once His enemy, you have been embraced by God’s mercy and blessed abundantly. We have an example of Ruth, excited to tell the whole incredible story to Naomi of her unexpected blessings.

- ♥ Are you excited to talk about the gift you have received in Christ and the blessings that are yours as His child?

Ruth reveals that Boaz told her to stay close to His servants until they finished the harvest. Several commentaries report that there were two harvest periods. The first being barley which was currently being harvested, and the latter being wheat which would follow. Ruth had been invited to join Boaz’s servants until all the harvest was complete.

It is noteworthy to look at what Ruth *did not* share with Naomi. Boaz was full of praise towards Ruth in verses 11-12. One commentary makes this observation of Ruth's conversation with Naomi, "She tells what kindness Boaz had shewed her; but not, how he had commended her. ***Humility teaches not only not to praise ourselves, but not to be forward in repeating the praise which others have given us***". *John Wesley's Notes on the Old and New Testaments*

Ruth 2:11-12 And Boaz answered and said to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know. "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

Consider God's answered prayer and direction in your own life. There are things you had probably hoped for or thought would be a good direction that God, in His mercy, kept from you. Instead, you see His answers, in His timing, and as you look back, realize His perfect blessings.

The hardships that Naomi and Ruth have experienced were allowed by God to prepare them to receive His blessings. God's plan for His children makes no compromise, has no holes, and is not left to chance. Blessings are not acquired by our merit but by His abounding love. God chose to bless Naomi and Ruth, placing them in His perfect timing for His perfect blessings. God desires to bless each of His children according to His plan. Adversity prepares us for what lies ahead, teaches us to trust in God and proves our sincere faith.

Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes.

Psalm 66:10 For Thou hast tried us, O God; Thou hast refined us as silver is refined.

Psalm 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

Jeremiah 17:7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD.

1Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, [being] more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;