

**Under His Wings:  
The Hope of Redemption  
Ruth 2:1-23**

Masada—pronounced Metzada means “the stronghold.” It overlooks the Dead Sea in Israel. This mountain stands 1,432 ft. above the Dead Sea shore.

The mountain was originally built into a fortress for protection, and then Herod the Great came in and rebuilt the stronghold 36 years before Christ’s birth. It was one of three of his favorite forts. About 33 years after Christ’s death and resurrection, the first Jewish revolt began. A man named Menachem ben Yehudah led 967 Jewish zealots—men, women, and children—up to the top of Masada. They fled here to seek refuge from the Roman army. The Tenth Legion of the Roman Army surrounded Masada by building a wall all the way around it and 8 separate army camps, which still stand today. The Jewish Zealots were trapped from escaping Masada, but they had a non-stop source of water flowing to them that enabled them to live life normally. Seven years later, Masada finally fell as the Romans spent 3 years building a siege ramp up to the backside of Masada. They tore down the wall and found 960 of the Jewish Zealots dead. Each of them had committed suicide to avoid being captured by the Romans.

Now, what the Jews did here was not noble, nor was it successful. They sought refuge in probably the safest place in all Israel—built by Herod the Great—yet it was not great enough to spare their lives. It was a vain and hopeless attempt to seek refuge in Masada.

My hope this morning, as we look to **Ruth 2**, is that we would seek refuge under the mighty wings of God. And under His wings alone may we find a fortress for the community of the redeemed and that we would be a people who God has His wings over.

In chapter 1 we come upon the tragedy, the trial. We not only come upon a literal widespread “**famine in the land**” of Bethlehem (**Ruth 1:1**), but we also come upon a scene of severe spiritual famine, days when the judges governed and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

Looking closer, we come upon Naomi whose two sons and husband have died (**Ruth 1:5**). The Lord provides food back in Bethlehem (replenishes the “**house of bread**”) and Naomi returns. But along the way back from Moab to Bethlehem, one daughter-in-law is determined to return with Naomi. Her name is Ruth. In **verses 16-17** we find one of the strongest and longest professions of faith in the Lord recorded in Scripture.

Though Ruth stands as a beacon of hope and light in a dark, despairing tragedy of a story, Naomi wallows in the darkness blaming God instead of blessing Him for her lot in life. She struggles to trust in the sovereignty of God, as we do often, and hurls accusation after accusation at the Lord. She charges the Lord for bringing her back empty though she had gone out full (**Ruth 1:21**).

However, as we move from the tragedy to the hope of the story of Ruth, the scales shift from empty to full. And surely God has had His hand in it for good for Naomi and Ruth from the beginning.

### **1. God Reigns according to His Providence (2:1–7)**

First of all, let's begin by defining "providence." The word literally means, "to see beforehand." Video means, "to see" in Latin, and pro means, "before."

When Casey, Cody and I were younger my parents would watch a video beforehand if they were concerned it would be somewhat inappropriate for us to see. If they gave it the pass then we'd be able to watch it. Now with God this is more than for the purpose of entertainment. His purpose is to govern all creation according to His will. So He sees your life before you do and He gives it the pass. Isn't that comforting and reassuring to know?

Jerry Bridges defines God's providence as such: "God's providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His glory and the good of His people."

Now, let's look into our text and see 6 practical evidences of God's providence in the lives of Naomi and Ruth.

#### **a. The Right Man-“a man of great wealth” (Ruth 2:1)**

Until now the only male characters in the story of Ruth have passed away, Elimelech and his sons. But now we have a new character that has stepped onto the scene.

There is a slight interpretive issue here. Some of your versions might take the certain phrase about who Boaz is one way and some might take it slightly another way. Either Boaz is “a man of great wealth” or “a worthy man.” The first, “man of great wealth,” shows him to be a prominent, mighty man of valor in the community. The other translation, “a worthy man,” places the emphasis more on Boaz's moral character and uprightness. Most translations and commentators take it to mean the former, a “man of great wealth, or might, or prominence,” and this is the way I lean as well.

That does not mean, however, that he was not known for his moral character and moral uprightness. We will find plenty of other evidence in the verses to come to show this about Boaz. So hold on to both of those concepts for this man, Boaz.

Verse one merely introduces Boaz at this point, so we will move on to...

#### **b. The Right Woman-“Please let me go to the field and glean” (Ruth 2:2)**

We already know from Ruth's unparalleled loyalty to Naomi through thick and thin that she was committed to serving her mother-in-law (**Ruth 1:6–22**). Ruth's loving-kindness

towards Naomi was a rare but refreshing sight during those dark days, and she remained faithful to her even when they hit home in Bethlehem.

Ruth asked to go out to the fields to work and provide for Naomi. She was a selfless servant. She had given up all in Moab and continued to give of herself in Bethlehem. She was faithful/devoted to Naomi.

And she makes it clear that if she doesn't find favor with anyone, then she will just be neglected and kicked to the curb. Her desire is not go out and be noticed, but it is the humble realization that she, and thus Naomi, is nothing without someone showing to her grace—introduction to a coming theme.

**c. The Right Place-“And she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz” (Ruth 2:3)**

Ruth could have gone out to any portion of the field to gather and glean. She could have been tired and just sat back in the city with all the other ladies and yucked it up with them, but she went out to work. And she just so happened to **“come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz.”**

Keep in mind that she doesn't even know this man that the author introduced to us already. But she does know this—that Naomi's God, the God of Israel, will be her God; Naomi's people will be her people. And her commitment to Naomi took her right into the cross hairs of God's loving-kindness.

Do you see God taking control yet? Do you see His care?

**b. The Right Time-“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem” (Ruth 2:4)**

“Now behold,” “look,” “see this man”—Boaz. He came out to the fields as well, to his own fields, as he would have. Since he was a wealthy man he didn't have to be out working among and associating with the servants that worked for him, but he was out among his workers.

He comes with warm welcome to his reapers and he comes bearing the name of the God of Israel on his lips. **“May the Lord be with you.”**

So now we have a few things lining up, don't we? The right man, woman, and place and time.

**c. The Right Look-“Whose young woman is this?” (Ruth 2:5)**

This isn't referring to how Ruth dressed, but more to the fact that Boaz took notice of her. He looked at the right time, in the right place, and there she was. And he was not content to just pass by and say, “Oh, it's probably some poor widow gathering behind my

workers like usual.” He inquired of her asking the foreman of his crew. So somehow she caught his eye.

**d. The Right Reputation-“She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi” (Ruth 2:6–7)**

The final evidence of providence we find in these verses is her right reputation. If he had found out that she was some wandering widow who had a bad reputation in the fields as a mooching, self-centered, greedy scavenger, then his response to her might have been a little different. But her reputation is quite unique in nature, and her reputation is actually circulating about town too.

So, what does this section of Scripture reveal to us about God being in absolute rule over and complete care for all His creation? He is able! He is sovereign! He reigns according to His providence! He is faithful to provide! He has not forgotten His loved ones in their distress.

You guys, it boils down to this: care and control. Do you believe that God cares for you? Do you believe He is in control? Oh, I hope you do this morning. The care and control God has for His children are the two pillars under which we stand in our faith.

We’ve looking at the “control” pillar of our faith, now we will look at the “care” pillar.

**2. God Rewards according to His Grace (Ruth 2:8–16)**

Now I don’t want you to be theologically startled; this is a qualified statement. God Rewards according to His Grace. God doesn’t reward us according to our own merit, righteousness, goodness, or kindness. What would be our reward for that? How much would we be worth? We’d turn in all our righteous acts ever done and only receive back filthy rags (**Isaiah 64:6**). We are bankrupt from personal righteousness, goodness, kindness, or any sort of merit to our name. How humbling is it to admit that we have nothing of significance in life other than the refuge we have in God?

If we were left stranded alone in a desert wilderness in the midst of a fierce sand storm with no refuge, we’d be as good as dead, returned to the dust. But by God’s grace He draws us to His refuge, to His side. And if we come upon His refuge and think we can carry on without Him we will surely die. But there is life at His gracious side.

Listen to **Lamentations 3:25**. “**The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him.**”

And **Hebrews 11:6** which says, “**And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**”

God rewards His own according to His grace. As we look into our text we'll notice 3 different exchanges between Boaz and Ruth. In each exchange we'll see Ruth's undeserved, abundant reward.

**a. In Protection and Provision (Ruth 2:8–10)**

Boaz shows protection and provision for Ruth here. He knows why she is here—she is needy and she is a stranger/foreigner in this land. The Law in **Leviticus 19:9-10** says that the extra gleanings on the corners of the field shouldn't be picked up, but they should be **“left for the needy and for the stranger.”** Her testimony has also been told to him by his sources and his first words to her carry such love and care in them, **“Listen carefully, my daughter. Don't go to glean in another field...stay here.”**

The Divine channel of God's grace has been tapped into through the kindness of one man, Boaz.

He knows that she needs protection. She is a young, single, foreign woman who could be treated very horribly on her own out in the fields. He warns even his own servants not to touch her. And on top of all that, he provides for her water from the jars his servants drink from. This would be a high honor.

Ruth's response is characterized by utmost humility shown towards the great grace or favor she has just been shown. Humility is recognition of unworthiness. Humility is honesty. It sees oneself accurately in light of his/her worthiness. Ruth didn't display false humility here to gain favor from Boaz; she was completely honest with him about her condition.

**b. In Commendation and Comfort (Ruth 2:11–13)**

Boaz also commends and comforts her. He commends (shows to her his approval) her by letting her know that he is aware of her most difficult situation and also her most devoted loving-kindness to Naomi. He is aware of what she has done; he knows her story and seeks to personally relay that to her. He was sure to let her know that he understands the amount of sacrifice she went through to get here.

And in **verse 12** he commends her by offering an unusual blessing to her that revealed what a Godly man he was. In a sense he is saying here, “May the Lord reward you for seeking refuge in Him. I know how hard it must be. And may I do everything to be used of our God to show you His reward.” WOW! How kind! How gracious! How immense and free!

Does anyone feel the immense blessing and burden to be used of our great God to be a channel of His grace one to another? I pray that those who are here this morning, who do not know the grace of God, will come immediately under His wings. And may we be a church that beckons the lost to taste of His sweetest grace! Today is the day of salvation!

Ruth responds again and we find the great comfort that she received from Boaz in this time. She says in effect, “You don’t even know how gracious and kind you have been to me. I knew I would be reduced to nothing out in the fields today, just neglected without someone showing kindness to me. And by gaining your favor now, though I am not even one of your maidservants and I have done absolutely nothing, I am deeply comforted by your kindness to me. Thank you.”

Can we be sources of comfort one to another? Can we be channels of God’s grace to one another? Can we be carriers of His kindness to one another?

### **c. In Provision and Protection (Ruth 2:14–16)**

Though this is a different scene than the previous two exchanges between Ruth and Boaz, we see yet again his commitment to provide for and protect Ruth in his fields. This time however he goes even further to serve her by inviting her to mealtime with the other reapers. “**And he served her...and she ate...and had some left.**”

Several aspects about this exchange show the extent of his provision and protection for her. Not only does he give her a break to eat lunch with him and his workers, but he personally serves her when it should be completely the other way around. He also goes beyond the Law to allow her to go into the section of the field that was more the first fruits instead of the leftovers, which the Law entitles her to. Not only that, but he tells the other workers to purposely pull out some grain for her from the bundles. And of course he protects her by commanding the servants not to rebuke her. He is giving her a blank check in the middle of his field and he is telling his servants to let her have her way. O what favor is shown here!

All I could think of when reading this portion of Ruth was the great grace we have received from our Savior, Jesus the Christ. In **John 1:16** it says, “**For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.**”

### **3. God Redeems according to His Plan (Ruth 2:17–23)**

Let’s read about this Redemptive Plan in **verses 17–18** first. This final portion of our text demonstrates different aspects of Boaz’s redemptive work in the lives of Ruth and Naomi.

#### **a. The Care of the Redeemer (Ruth 2:17–18)**

In **verses 17 and 18**, we see Boaz taking care of Ruth and Naomi. He provides for them in abundance and it is more than enough. Ruth finishes her first day of work in the fields. Sound like a good first day? An ephah of barley is 5 days worth of food for two people. This was four times as much as a normal gleaner in the field would gather in one day!

In **verse 18** Ruth goes into the city and brings the ephah of barley to Naomi and she takes notice of all that she gleaned.

### **b. The Kindness of the Redeemer (Ruth 2:19–20)**

Naomi receives the abundance of food and demands to know where Ruth worked. She was surprised to see so much food given their situation, but she was starting to get the drift that their situation is changing. When Naomi hears the name Boaz she nearly tips over in her seat and brims over with blessing towards him for his great kindness shown towards them. She mentions to Ruth, **“He is one of our closest relatives.”** A kinsmen redeemer is another way to say it.

John MacArthur, in his book *Twelve Extraordinary Women*, points out some biblical insights. “A kinsmen redeemer meant a relative that came to the rescue. The term carries the idea of redemption or deliverance. It would usually be referring to a prominent male in one’s extended family. He would avenge blood of a murdered relative (Joshua 20:2–9). He could buy back family lands sold in times of hardship (Leviticus 25:23–28). He could pay the redemption-price for family members sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47–49), or (if he were a single man or widower and able to marry) he could revive the family lineage when someone died without an heir by marrying the widow and fathering offspring who would inherit the name and the property of the one who had died. This is known as the law of a levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5–10) in which a surviving brother would see it as his duty to marry his brother’s widow.”

Here in the short story of Ruth Boaz stands mightily as a type of Christ who is our Redeemer. The Law in the Old Testament was put together with such wisdom and purpose that every kinsman-redeemer was a living illustration, or foreshadowing, in every-day-life that pointed to redemption of sins in their Messiah. So let me make this clear. Boaz was not redeeming Ruth and Naomi from their sins, but rather from their desperate situation in life, and in doing so he provides us with a picture of our precious Redeemer who rescued us from our desperate spiritual condition in life.

Listen to **Colossians 1:13-14**. **“For He recued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, (14) in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”**

Do you know the kindness of your Redeemer? Have you tasted of His grace?

### **c. The Closeness of the Redeemer (Ruth 2:21–23)**

In **verse 21** Ruth let’s Naomi know about Boaz’s invitation to stay close to him until the end of the harvest. Naomi jumps out of her skin in **verse 22** saying that **“It is good.”** Or else you might be abused or suffer harm anywhere else, and in no other field will you receive such provision. So Ruth gladly took Naomi’s advice to stay close to Boaz through

to the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. From April to June Ruth lived with Naomi and each day she would commute out to the fields with Boaz's maids.

Why it was so significant to remain close to Boaz, their kinsmen redeemer, was because without him they would be poor the rest of their lives and could very likely just die off. They would have no rest and no security as desperate, begging widows. But with Boaz in the picture, showing them great grace, they had hope for redemption. For Naomi that meant she'd receive back all that belonged to Elimelech and his sons, and for Ruth that meant she'd receive a husband providing her rest and security and children to carry on their family line (**Ruth 4:9-10**).

Their closeness to him was for their good, just as we read in **Psalm 73:28**, **“But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, that I may tell of all Your works.”**

God Reigns according to His Providence, He Rewards according to His Grace, and He Redeems according to His Plan. Stand between the pillars of our faith: His Control is full of wisdom, His Care is full of grace, and it points us to one person, our Redeemer.

Back in May I sat on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem just as Christ did and I thought of this verse. **Matthew 23:37** says, **“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”**

May Valley be a people who gather together under the wings of Christ, our Redeemer. May we trust in His perfect providence, taste of His sweetest grace, and behold our precious Redeemer.