

Title: Finding God's Favor

Passage: Ruth 1:22-2:23

Context - Elimelech's family problems

- Time of Judges (Between Joshua's death who took Israel into the Promised Land and the first king of Israel, approx. 1100 BC)

- Beginning of Ruth: famine (a sign of God's disapproval/discipline of Israel's disobedience)

Ruth 1:1

In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

- brokenness of Elimelech reflected in his choices of leaving the Promised Land and his sons marrying Moabites

Context - Naomi/Ruth's return to Promised Land

Ruth 1:6 (God's favor returned to the Promised Land)

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food.

Ruth 1:20-21 (Naomi's bitter state)

She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

Passage: Ruth 1:22-2:23

Key Verse

Ruth 2:2 (Ruth's initiative in foreign land)

And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

Key Phrase: "in whose sight I shall find favor"

- language often used in royal courts where a servant going into the presence of a superior (like a king) whose favor was not guaranteed

- reflect Ruth's knowledge of God's law and her faith in it (knowing God's law's provision for the poor)

God's Law: Provision for the Poor

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

"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. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. 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. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

- the provision for the poor is in response to God's prior favor

- it reflects one's faith in God and His Word

Exodus 22:21-24

You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.

- God's warning: if one doesn't watch for fatherless, then God may make you childless

Psalms 94:6-7 (people acting contrary to God's Law)

They kill the widow and the sojourner,
and murder the fatherless; and they say, "The LORD does not see; the God of Jacob does not perceive."

Boaz's Introduction

Ruth 2:4

And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."

- Boaz's faith and integrity is reflected in his first words to his workers. Shows his faith is put into practice.

Ruth's surprise of Boaz's favor

Ruth 2:10

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

- responds in humility, graciousness, and thankfulness (vs. an attitude of self-righteousness and entitlement)

- thankfulness goes hand in hand with humility

- caution: be aware of pride

1 John 2:16

For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Ruth 2:17

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

- ephah: 30-50 pounds

Naomi recognizing God's "hesed" love

Ruth 2:20

And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."

- *hesed* = love, covenant kindness, loyalty, faithfulness = a compilation of God's attributes

Exodus 34:6 (God's own use of the term)

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,

Possible resources:

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?t=kjv&strongs=h2617>

http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/430

"Kingsman redeemer"

- a male relative is responsible for the economic well-being of another male relative where something has to be paid or given.

- note: these are for Israelites

<https://www.gotquestions.org/kinsman-redeemer.html>

"For the living" = plural (implying God's favor to both Naomi and Ruth; previously Naomi overlooked Ruth by stating she returned to her homeland "empty" but now her heart changes and is inclusive of Ruth)

Ruth 2:22

And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted."

- hint of repentance as recognized that Ruth being alone had a risk of physical harm.

Important Points

God's perfect timing

- Naomi and Ruth returned to the Promised Land at "the beginning of the barley harvest" (coincides with time of Passover)
- Naomi and Ruth stayed until the end of the harvest (7 weeks later, which would be another key celebration, Pentecost)
- Pentecost = God's welcoming of both Jews and Gentiles into His family
- Ruth = reflects she is one of the first fruits (one of the Gentiles welcomed into God's family)

God's care and loving kindness in His Provision

Philippians 4:19

And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

- Naomi's lack of perspective: failed to see God's care for the poor/foreigner, God's provision for His people
- contrast: God's goodness always welcomes us home to partake in His feast

(Like the father in the Parable of Prodigal Son)

Romans 5:6-8

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Other Passages

Psalms 136:1

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.