



CROSS OF GRACE CHURCH

SPRING 2022 BIBLE READING PLAN - RUTH, PART 3

SCRIPTURE: RUTH 3

Main Point: The Kindness of God - Encourage your group to seek the kindness of God as it is weaved throughout the book of Ruth.

I. Recap

In chapter 2, Ruth meets Boaz and the tides start to turn for Naomi and her view of God's kindness. Up to this point, we noticed the work ethic displayed by Ruth. Her physical strength was not the only thing that was noticed by others. She was referred to as the *"young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab"* (Ruth 2:6). She had character and a great work ethic. Her reputation was that she was a caring daughter-in-law who sought to care for her now widowed mother-in-law, which was a command repeated by God to His people, Israel. We also see that Boaz is a tremendous boss to work for! He greets his people by proclaiming blessings (Ruth 2:4) and he extends kindness and mercy towards Ruth (Ruth 2:11-12). Ruth shares with her mother-in-law about the man she worked for in the field. Naomi is taken back by the kindness of the Lord and goes on to say Boaz is a *"close relative, one of the redeemers"* (Ruth 2:20), setting the stage for what happens next.

II. Discussion

Before you begin, ask the group who has been the most influential mentor in their life and why.

III. Read Ruth 3:1-7

*Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? **2** Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. **3** Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." **5** And she replied, "All that you say I will do."*

***6** So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. **7** And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.*

IV. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. When we see the kindness of God, how are we to respond? How does Naomi respond? How does Ruth respond?

- a. Naomi leans fully into the kindness of Boaz. She goes all in with this plan trusting in Boaz's character.
- b. As Christians, the kindness of God can often at times humble us. His kindness should spur us to be kind towards others and share about His kindness.

2. What would your reaction to Naomi's plan be? What do you think her thought process was behind the plan?

- a. Her plan shows implicit trust in Boaz's character, believing him to be chaste and full of self-control. If Naomi had any doubts about Boaz's honor, it is unlikely she would have suggested such an encounter. The

fact that she knew he was a man of honor gave her confidence that she was not putting Ruth at risk.

- b. Her plan seeks to avoid potential rumors and gossip. Rumors and gossip can be very destructive to relationships. By approaching Boaz in private, Naomi cuts off any potential problems created by prying eyes and nosy neighbors.
- c. Her plan was bold and straightforward. Naomi didn't mess around trying to drop hints which may or may not be picked up on. She had Ruth go straight to the point.
- d. Her plan seeks to put as little pressure on Boaz as possible. It is not manipulative. Naomi could have had Ruth approach Boaz at the city gate while he was on an errand and force him to do the "honorable" thing and redeem her through marriage. But a relationship where one feels coerced or backed into a corner is built on a faulty and fragile foundation. Boaz has an opportunity to quietly say "no" without losing face publicly.

V. Application

We see Naomi mentoring and advising Ruth in these verses. As Christ-followers, we are not meant to live our lives independent of other people, but in community and fellowship with others. We can see the kindness of God through other people, especially those who play a mentorship role in our lives. Find a godly mentor (maybe one who does not advocate a plan like this one), someone who loves you and loves the Lord. Don't stop there, be on the lookout for those you may be a mentor to as well.

VI. Continue Reading Ruth 3:8-13

At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! **9** He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings^[a] over your servant, for you are a redeemer." **10** And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. **11** And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. **12** And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. **13** Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

VII. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What do you think the significance of "spreading wings over a servant" means? (See Ruth 2:12)
 - a. Ruth is asking Boaz to marry her. She is asking to take *refuge* in Boaz. This is bold, risky, and beautiful. She leans *fully* on the kindness of God. She uses his own words (See Ruth 2:12).
2. Do we as Christians fully lean on the kindness of God? What might a partially leaning Christian look like?
 - a. *Leaning on God's kindness should feel risky.* That is the Christian life. Are you all in? Are there areas of your life you do not trust God in?
 - b. Examples: A Christian who refuses to give up a porn addiction, a spouse who is kind to others, but is not so to their own family, a Christian who lets God have some control of their life, but not in every area, etc...
3. What parallels exist between Boaz and Jesus as redeemers? In what ways do they differ?

VIII. Application

The default posture of the Christian life is one that leans fully on the kindness of God. *God invites and loves when His people plead His promises back to Him.* God is a promise keeper and loves to redeem his people.

IX. Continue Reading Ruth 3:14-18

So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" 18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

X. Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Six measures of barley is an estimated 60-80 pounds of grain. What is Boaz doing here by giving Ruth this much food?
 - a. He is giving her a down payment for what he will do for Ruth. This was about a year's worth of food. Boaz will not rest until his promise is fulfilled to fully redeem Ruth.
 - b. We see a "downpayment" of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Until Jesus comes again, we have the Holy Spirit working in our lives to become more like Jesus our Redeemer.

2. How would you summarize Naomi's advice to Ruth in verse 18?
 - a. Naomi advises Ruth to be patient – From this statement, we can infer that Ruth was likely antsy and nervous about the outcome of Boaz's meeting.
 - b. Encourage the group that while we may be waiting on God during the trials of life, we need to be patient and rely on the Lord's timing because He is trustworthy, kind, and faithful to His promises toward us.

XI. Application

1. Find a mentor that can pour into your life and bring you closer to the Lord.
2. The posture of God towards us is not arms folded, head shaking in disappointment. The posture of God towards those who have trusted in Christ as their Savior is an open *embrace* answering you, "All that you ask I will do!"
3. The Lord will resolve all complications at the return of Christ. Until He returns, we have the kindness of God in us through the Holy Spirit which brings peace, hope, and fulfillment.
4. While Boaz is a glimpse of a redeemer in the book of Ruth, the Old Testament points to a Redeemer who will fully restore us one day. A Redeemer who will never leave us nor forsake us. A Redeemer who will fully satisfy our heart's desires. A Redeemer who will pay our debt in full for us. Let us rejoice in the kindness of Christ!
5. When life seems uncertain and bleak, let us be comforted by Corrie Ten Boom's quote: "*Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*"