

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

THE STORY OF RUTH

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Ruth 2.10-23 | September 29, 2019
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our study in the Book of Ruth, a journey which has taken us from Bethlehem (the “House of Bread” that was without bread) to Moab (which had plenty of bread) and back to Bethlehem (where there is now bread, but not for the two primary characters at this point of the narrative). We pick up the story with Naomi waiting at home while Ruth gleans in the field of a man named Boaz.

But who is this Boaz? And why is he being so helpful?

II. Connecting with One Another

When have you received something you didn’t deserve?

III. Study the Text

- a. The practice of gleaning was required by God: “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 23.22)

What could a 21st century parallel to gleaning be for us today?

- b. In Ruth 2.8-9, Boaz fulfills the letter of the law, but goes even further, fulfilling the spirit of the law.

Why do you think he did so? What is Boaz’s motivation to give so generously?

- c. Read Ruth 2.10.

What do you think is going through Ruth’s mind here?

- d. In Deuteronomy 23.3, we read, “No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation.”

Do you think Ruth knew this verse? How about Boaz?

How could this commandment have affected Ruth and Boaz’s interaction in the field that day?

- e. Read Ruth 2.11-12.

Boaz prays that God would “repay” and “richly reward” Ruth because of what she had done for Naomi.

We hear those words in a particular way in a 21st century American context. What do you think Boaz meant?



- f. The root word behind “repay” and “reward” in verse 12 is the Hebrew term “shalom,” which is often defined as peace, but has a much broader, richer meaning that includes wholeness, completeness, and safety.
How does that change your understanding of Boaz’ blessing?
- g. The reference to finding refuge under God’s wings is a common one in the Hebrew Scriptures, one which Jesus recalls in Matthew 23.37.
What characteristic of God does this image evoke? What emotion within you?
How did you find refuge under God’s wings?
- h. Read Ruth 2.13-16.
Ruth rightly recognizes she isn’t one of Boaz’s servants, but how does he treat her?
Have you ever received kind, gracious treatment that you felt you didn’t deserve?
- i. Read Ruth 2.17-19.
An ephah (in verse 17) is 29 pounds. No, that’s not a typo. Boaz sent her home with 29 pounds of grain, plus her leftovers from lunch (average daily pay would usually be a pound or two of grain).
In light of that data, how do you think Naomi asked her questions in verse 19?
(For a bonus point, try saying your answer out loud.)
- j. Read Ruth 2.20-23.
Naomi (which means something like “sweetness” or “pleasant”) asked to be called Mara (which means “bitter”) in Ruth 1.20. Why did she do so?
Do you think she changed her perspective in 2.20? If so, why?
- k. The word “kindness” in verse 20 is the Hebrew “hesed,” which includes goodness, faithfulness, mercy, and favor. It is most commonly used of God’s action toward humans, but here seems to refer to Boaz, though the original Hebrew is ambiguous.
What do you think? Is Naomi referring to God or to Boaz? Why?

IV. Pray

- a. Thank God that He has gathered you under his wings of safety and protection through Jesus Christ,
- b. Lift up those you know who have not yet received God’s promise of salvation and ask Him to equip you to reach out to them like Boaz did for Ruth,
- c. Ask God to give you eyes to see others in need and provide for their physical needs.

