



Title: Refuge Under the Wings of the Lord (Ruth series)

Text: Ruth 2

Speaker: Brad Evangelista

Date: 9.18.11

Intro: For many professing Christians, a gap exists between what we see of God in the Bible and what we experience of God in our everyday lives. If we are not careful to challenge this perceived gap, then it can create a hollowness to our faith and make it a mere public confession. In Ruth 2, we see a beautiful picture of how God's often hidden providence touches down in the real lives of ordinary people.

2:1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 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." 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. 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." 5 Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" 6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

- Stipulation for the poor to glean—Leviticus 19:9-10
- Notice the numerous racial references in regards to Ruth.
- "she happened"—literally means her chance chanced. This is a word play full of hyperbole to show that there is no way this could be just a mere coincidence.
- Notice Boaz' character: not only a "worthy man" but God-saturated.
- Notice Ruth's character: humble, hard-working, hopeful.

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." 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?" 11 But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. 12 The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" 13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. 15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

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. 18 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. 19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The

man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." 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." 21 And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" 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." 23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

I. GOD'S PEOPLE CAN TRUST IN HIS PROVISION AND ACT.

1. Ruth takes responsibility and gets to work even as she has hope.

- She becomes an early picture of Philippians 2:12-13.
- Her hope for God's provision didn't cause her to be idle, but diligent.

2. How are we to understand God's Reward? (v.11-12)

- How this is different from earning something from God.
- Ruth's motivation wasn't reward oriented. She left everything familiar and safe and went with Naomi even though the prospect of reward with Naomi was dim. Conventional wisdom would have said it was more likely to be rewarded if she stayed in Moab. So what was her motivation? Ultimately, it seems her motivation was that she loved God, regardless of the prospect of a reward (1:16-17—"Your God will be my God").
- Ruth's hope was in God's work for her, not her work for Him.
- Boaz' kindness was God's *particular* display of his goodness to Ruth meant to give us a sort of object lesson or picture of trusting in God for salvation.
 - We should be cautious in seeing this a pattern for the way God always works.
 - Example: John the Baptist and the martyred heroes of Hebrews 11.
 - Not a promise, but a picture of God's kindness that points us to His provision and protection in Christ.
- God's ultimate provision is eternal and in Christ.

II. GOD USES HIS PEOPLE TO GIVE REFUGE TO THE NEEDY.

1. God's kindness and character is seen in Boaz' nobility towards Ruth (picture of biblical manhood).

- This chivalry is rooted in the character of God, not just morality.
- Picture of the Lord's provision and protection for us.
- Boaz' attraction to Ruth was not initially sexual but because of her character which flowed from her conversion as she clung to the God of Israel.

2. God's protection and provision comes in the form of Boaz' generosity.

- He goes above and beyond and gives her extra.
- Boaz' obedience and over and above generosity and protection are the means by which God gives refuge to Ruth, and ultimately Naomi.
- Covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12—"I will bless you so that you may be a blessing"
- Jesus: Luke 12:48—"...to whom much is given, much will be required."
- God's people are called to live for something bigger than personal consumption.

III. GOD IS GRACIOUS AND GIVES REFUGE TO ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE.

1. Boaz' acceptance of Ruth presents us with what seems to be a dilemma.

- Ruth was a Moabite. Remember what that meant (Numbers 22-25).

2. God commanded Israel to extinguish their enemies as they entered the Promised Land.

- Completely destroy them (Deuteronomy 20:17-18).

- Not quite such a restriction on Moabites, but still they were not welcome (Deuteronomy 23:3-6).

3. Why? Was this God-endorsed racism in the OT? No.

- Before God could use Israel to be his light to the Gentiles, they had to be made holy first.
- God wanted his people to remain distinct from the nations so that ultimately they could minister the grace of God to them.
- But all along the way, if a foreigner or Gentile turned to God, he brought them in. Rahab is a primary example of this in Joshua 2 as she protects the spies and her faith in the God of Israel is counted to her as righteousness.

4. Thus, Boaz' holiness became the means God used to extend grace and refuge to Ruth.

- Ruth's inclusion is a picture of God's inclusion of Gentiles.

5. Naomi goes from being a bitter religious person to someone leaning forward into God's grace.

- God works to bring the weak in faith and even faithless back to faith in Him.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO TAKE REFUGE IN GOD?

Ruth: Turn away from false gods and other fields and trust in the true God.

Boaz: Turn away from self-absorption and take refuge in God's blessing so that he might be a blessing to others.

Naomi: Bring your bitterness and pain to God trusting that he providentially works all things, even our tragedies and despair, into blessing.

Us: God has provided protection from his wrath and the provision of forgiveness for our sins and redemption in Christ. Therefore, we should repent and believe the Gospel.