

## EVERYDAY FAITH: "Finding Favor – Part 1"

### INTRODUCTION

- **Key Idea:** You can be in troubling times and come to enjoy **God's unrelenting goodness** all the days of your life.

"These eyes have, for more than sixty years, seen nothing but goodness and mercy follow me and the churches of Christ even to this day." (John Condor)

- In **Ruth chapter 2**, we move from the theme of enduring sorrow to enjoying favor.

The Theme of "Finding Favor" in the Ruth chapter 2:

- Verse 2 – "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I **shall find favor.**"
- Verse 10 – "Why have I **found favor** in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"
- Verse 13 – "**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."
- Verse 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!"

### RUTH'S REQUEST (RUTH 2:1-7)

- **Verse 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."
- **Verse 7** – She said, '**Please let me glean** and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.'

In Ruth's request, we see tact, charm and an attitude of humility. There is no sense of entitlement.

**Ruth acts in faith.** According to the law of God (Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 24), the poor and the foreigner could come behind the reapers and glean from the fields.

- **Application: Ruth did the next obvious thing.** She embraces the providence of God and takes the next logical step.

"I really didn't have time to sit down and have a pity party and sink into a puddle of self-pity. I did the next thing. And there was always a next thing after that. And I have found many times in my life, such as again after the death of my second husband, just the very fact that although I was living in a very civilized house, I had dishes to wash. I had floors to clean. I had laundry to do. It was my salvation." (Elisabeth Elliott, Suffering is Never for Nothing)

- It is as Ruth **does the next thing** that God's providence works out a wonderful story (compare Ruth 2:3 with Ruth 4:13-22).

"As you go step by step, the way will open to you." (Paraphrase of Proverbs 4:12 by L.B. Cowman, Streams in the Desert)

### RUTH'S RELIANCE (RUTH 2:1-7)

- Ruth acts in reliance upon God's Word. She complies with Scripture and hopes that whoever she meets is also compliant with Scripture.
- The key to finding favor is to **act in light of God's Word** (Psalm 1:1-3).

# Sermon Application Questions

June 14, 2020

## PERSONAL RESPONSES

Ruth chapter 2 teaches us that **God's favor can be found in the midst of difficult and troubling circumstances.**

Remember that this narrative is set during the period of the Judges. Everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25).

Yet this passage identifies Seven Ways that Ruth Finds Favor in Her Story:

1. The Blessing of Guidance (v.8)
2. The Blessing of Protection (v.9)
3. The Blessing of Provision (v.15-16)
4. The Blessing of Encouragement (v.13)
5. The Blessing of Fellowship (v.14)
6. The Blessing of Acceptance (v.15-16)
7. The Blessing of Satisfaction (v.14)

**Think though the application to the times that we live in today.**

What are some of the troubling issues that face our nation and our world today?

What are some specific ways that believers can find God's favor during this time?

**Ruth displays great initiative in this story.** Even though she is a foreigner to the land of Israel, she acts in faith in accordance with the law of God (Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 24).

Review the two requests of Ruth in **Ruth 2:2** and **Ruth 2:7**.

What were the dangers Ruth would have faced in making this initiative?

What does this type of initiative tell us about Ruth's character and attitude?

## DIGGING DEEPER

Take some time and reflect on some of the key passages related to this week's sermon. Ask the Lord for help in making application of these truths to your life.

### **Psalm 27:13-14**

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

### **Proverbs 6:6-9**

Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.

Read **Ruth 1:20-2:7** as one unit of thought.

Note the thematic transition that is being made between Ruth chapter 1 and Ruth chapter 2.

2 In your own words, how would you summarize this thematic transition?

How does this story give hope to the believer who is crying “*Mara*” in the midst of bitter circumstances?

How would you use this passage to encourage a struggling believer?

### PERSONAL APPLICATION

Pastor Philip noted that **Ruth did the next obvious thing**. She embraced the providence of God and devoted herself to the task that was at hand (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Reflect on the testimony of Elisabeth Elliott in her book Suffering is Never for Nothing. She writes after the death of her husband Jim Elliot:

1 “. . . it wasn’t as though I was without things to keep me occupied. I had a school of about forty boys to sort of oversee. I wasn’t the teacher but I was in charge of things in a sense. I had a brand new church of about fifty baptized believers with no Scriptures in their hands and I was supposed to be the one doing the translating. I had a literacy class of about twelve girls that I was teaching to read in their own language so that eventually they could learn to read the Bible translation that I was working on at the same time. I had a ten-month-old-baby for whom to care. I had a thousand details of running things on a jungle station like learning how to run a diesel generator, giving out medicines right and left, and delivering babies in between times. **I really didn’t have time to sit down and have a pity party and sink into a puddle of self-pity. I did the next thing. And there was always a next thing after that.**”

What are the “next thing” responsibilities that God has placed in your life?

The requests of Ruth in 2:2 and 2:7 reflect an understanding of the Law of God. According to Leviticus 19 and Deuteronomy 24, the foreigner could come behind the reapers and glean from the fields.

2 **Does it surprise you to find that in the period of the Judges, it is a Moabite (not an Israelite) who demonstrates a working knowledge of the Scriptures?**

How should this example spur us on to study and learn the Scriptures?