

Favor in the Field #5

Ruth 2: 4-7

As I pondered these verses I was reminded what a difference a day can make. It is amazing how God can take what appears to be an ordinary or even uncertain circumstance and work it out for our benefit.

Ruth had made the long journey from Moab to Bethlehem with Naomi, unsure of what she would find as a stranger in a foreign place. She had decided to seek out a means of survival and by the providence of God she wound up in the field of Boaz. Clearly this was no accident; God was working behind the scenes even though Ruth was unaware.

In this text we find a wonderful illustration of the New Testament church. The field is a picture of the world. Boaz represents our Lord. The servants of the field are the redeemed and Ruth stands as a picture of those who come to Christ in salvation. I want to consider the **eternal truths** concerning the **field of grace** as I preach on: **Favor in the Field**. As we look at this passage, the main character that stands out is Boaz. Notice first of all:

I. The Sovereign of the Field (4-5) – And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. [5] Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? As we move through these wonderful verses we must keep in mind that Boaz is the sovereign of the field. He is the master and keeper of it. He is in charge of its activity. Here we find the care and dedication that Boaz has for the field.

A. His Attendance (4) – He came from Bethlehem to the field. He had a particular interest in the field. It appears that it was not uncommon to find Boaz in and around the field. He kept watch over it and attended to it.

- That is such a simple truth but it brings great joy to my heart. Our Lord is near unto us. We have not been left to ourselves, to manage the best we can and get by on our own. We have not been left to make our way through this life without the direction and attendance of our Lord! He is always near to us, an ever present help to the children of God. Acts 17:27-28 – That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: [28] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

B. His Affection (4) – The LORD be with you. It is evident that Boaz had a genuine concern for his servants. He cared about their well being. I am convinced that he genuinely loved them. He desired the riches blessings of the Lord be extended to his servants. He was not a hard task master, but a man of compassion for those who served him.

- Could I remind you of the love and compassion that Jesus has for humanity? He loved us so much that He was willing to endure the suffering of the cross, bear our sin and its judgment, and die in our place so that we might be reconciled to God. What love and compassion He had and continues to have for us. Jesus desires that all would come to Him in repentance so that we might enjoy the abundance of God. He isn't just interested in us having life, but that we might have it more abundantly!

C. His Awareness (5) – Whose damsel is this? As Boaz came to the field that day he immediately recognized a stranger in the midst. He was one who paid careful attention to the field and all who were in it. He wanted to ensure the harvest, but he was also concerned with those who were there.

- We have already discovered that God had made provision in His law for those who were less fortunate to glean among the corners of the field. This was likely not an unusual sight. It would have been easy for a man like Boaz to have never given Ruth a second thought, but he took interest in her.
- I sure am glad that the Lord was aware of me even when I was unaware of Him. He noticed me when I was gleaning in the leftovers, separated and desperate in my sin. Aren't you glad He was aware of you?

II. The Servants of the Field (4) – Remember that the servants of the field picture the children of God. What can we discover about the servants?

A. Their Assembly – When Boaz came to the field the servants were already there. They had not waited until Boaz came and called for them; they were there, likely anticipating his coming. They were at a particular place with a particular purpose serving a prominent person.

- That is how we as believers ought to live. We ought to be faithful to assemble at the house of God and desire to be of service to the King. We know that the Lord desires us to follow Him and be diligent in the work. May we be in the field laboring for the Lord when He comes. May we gather together fully anticipating the coming of the Master!
- There is something special about God's house and fellowship with His people. We need that if we are to be successful in serving the Lord. I have never met anyone who accomplished much or drew closer to the Lord that didn't attend the house of God and fellowship with the saints! Heb.10:25 – Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Ps.27:4 – One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

B. Their Appreciation – The LORD bless thee. It is apparent that the servants were fond of Boaz; they loved him. They earnestly desired the Lord to bless him in his endeavors.

- Have you considered lately what the Lord has done for you? Have you thought of the blessing that we enjoy because of His provision for us. He is God and does not stand in need of blessing, but we ought to love and appreciate Him for who He is and what He has done for us throughout life.

C. Their Activity (4-7) – Four times in the verses that we have read the servants are referred to as reapers. This reveals the work that they were engaged in. They were responsible for the harvest. It was their task to reap the grain that had grown and matured in the field.

- There are many who have been saved are in essence the servants of the Lord but we have few reapers in our day. Very few are willing to enter the field seeking to harvest that which is ready and mature. We must not forget that that is what the Lord has called us to do. We are to be laborers in the harvest, reaping the seed that has been planted and has produced fruit. Mat.9:37-38 – Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; [38] Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

III. The Stranger in the Field (6-7) – In these verses Boaz catches a glimpse of Ruth. Keep in mind that she represents those who need the Lord.

A. Her Past (6) – And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: The servant tells Boaz that Ruth was a woman of Moab who came to Bethlehem with Naomi. This simple statement told Boaz much about Ruth. She was a woman of a pagan nation. She was from among a people who did not recognize or serve the Lord. She had returned with Naomi, a woman who went out full and came home empty. I am confident that Boaz had heard of the misfortune and despair of Naomi.

- That might have caused a bit of sympathy in the heart of a compassionate man, but there was clearly nothing about Ruth to be desired. She was a Gentile and he was a devout Jew. She was a widow and the daughter-in-law of a widow. They possessed nothing of value and had little ability to contribute much to society. Most would have let her glean and forgotten her.
- Can we not all relate to Ruth in that regard? Consider where you were when the Lord found you. You were a stranger and foreigner to the house-hold of faith. You were sinful and defiled. You had nothing to offer the Lord but your sin and desperation. I'm glad the story doesn't end here!

B. Her Priority (7) – And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. Ruth knew that she was in a desperate situation. They had come to Bethlehem broken and alone. There appeared to be little hope without the compassion of strangers. She was not one who would give up easily though. She was determined to seek out a means of survival for Naomi and herself. Sustaining their lives was her priority.

- I am well aware of the sovereignty of God and the faith that is necessary to come to Him in salvation. I know that we must be drawn of the Spirit. However I rejoice for the time when I realized my need for the Lord. I thank God that He allowed me to sense the urgency of coming to Him.

C. Her Persistence (7) – And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. Ruth did not spend a few feeble moments in the field. She arrived early and stayed all day. She even spent a little time in the house. She knew she was in a good place and was in no hurry to leave.

- Even as believers we need the persistence that Ruth possessed. We need the commitment to tarry in the field as long as it takes. We need to determine in our hearts that we will not be satisfied with anything less than the fullness of God.
- This world needs to learn the lesson that Ruth already knew. She was aware that the field of Boaz offered just what she needed. She wasn't disappointed or seeking to find a better field. She was getting what she needed right there. Many are looking in all the wrong places. They may have attended the house of God, but have decided to look elsewhere. We need to urge them to glean in the field of grace until their lives are fulfilled in Christ! He alone can provide what they need.

D. Her Provision – Ruth was completely unaware of the providence of God in all of this. She did not know Boaz or any of the servants. In her mind this was just a field where she found what she needed. She may not have known, but God was working in her life.

- She was allowed to glean in the field. God in His mercy had made provision for her to receive just what she needed. (In the time that God was working in our hearts, we were completely unaware of His hand of mercy.)
- She was guarded and watched over by the servants. They had not treated her harshly or been critical of her situation. It appears that they sought to accommodate and help her in her need. (I'm glad for the saints of God who didn't judge me or treat me harshly. I rejoice that they loved me, prayed for me, and sought to encourage me.)
- She was noticed by Boaz. She had not met him as of yet. In fact, she didn't even know who he was, but he had his eye on her. Isn't that just like the Lord we serve. Long before we ever knew Him or were even aware of Him, He had His eye upon us!

I am truly thankful for the field of grace and the favor that can be found there. As a child of God I have been challenged by the labor of the reapers. I have been reminded of my responsibilities and obligations.

I also rejoice for the Master of the field. I am glad that He is One of compassion and provision. I am glad that He took the time to notice me!

If you are gleaning in the field among the leftovers, Christ desires you to become a reaper, one of His own. If you have never trusted Him in salvation you can. He will turn none away that come to Him in faith believing!