

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Ruth & Boaz *A Biblical Love Story*



Daily
DEVOTION

Day 1

***“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”
(Ruth 1:16-17)***

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me (Ruth 1:16-17). These two verses are frequently quoted at the wedding of two believers. The bride to be, facing the man she is wedding, speaks these words as a solemn vow to him of her love, loyalty and devotion. (Would that this would still happen today). But, the words we read above are not spoken at a wedding. Ruth, the Moabitess, is speaking to her mother-in-law, Naomi the Jewess. Naomi is leaving Moab to return to Israel, broken under the chastising Hand of God and wanting to be back amongst her people. But Ruth, a virtuous young lady who would one day marry Boaz and become the great-grandmother of King David, is intent on going to Israel with Naomi. Ruth has no idea of the wondrous blessings God has in store for her when she comes into the promised land. So also it is with the believer in Christ upon the day of their salvation - they do not know of the blessings in store, the provision, the protection, the providence that only He can give. And all of this because she met Naomi.

Some years before our verses, Naomi and her husband and two sons came into the land of Moab, where they met Ruth. Yes, they were out of God's will, but God used them to draw Ruth unto Himself, and then all the way into Israel, then into the lineage of the very Messiah of God Himself! Naomi was backslidden, but Ruth sure owed God a great debt of gratitude for allowing Naomi to be the human instrument that would greatly affect her life. Now, child of God, when did you last remember the person that God used to lead you to Himself? Do you pray for them? Do you let them know of your thankfulness to Godward for how God used them? I understand that your loyalty to Christ is to be above all loyalty to men, but have you shown them any loyalty, any support, any faithfulness, any desire to walk alongside them in their quest for other souls? Or, perhaps, would you prefer that you never met them and continued on your way toward a Christless, eternal damnation? Many a Christian soldier has been broken hearted at the treatment and lack of fellowship that they have received from those that they have led to Christ. But Ruth was determined to be loyal to Naomi, even if Naomi was not the best example of a believer. Let it never be said that you are one of the ungrateful crowd that never has a kind word for those who cared for your soul. As Paul wrote to the church at Philippi: I thank my God upon every remembrance of you (Phi 1:13). QED.

NOTES:

Day 2

***“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.”
(Ruth 1:22)***

Ruth has given away all that she has to follow Naomi back to Bethlehem. She gave up family, friends, the land she grew up in and her home to do this. And what do we find her doing in our verse? Going to Bethlehem with a bitter, backslidden mother-in-law, entering in among a people that were to keep themselves separate from the Moabites (Ruth was a Moabitess), carrying very little possessions and a heart full of sad memories of her dead husband. This does not sound like a good move for Ruth, from a human perspective. But I will have you note that it is the beginning of barley harvest. Ruth may have very little, but she is about to be abundantly blessed by Someone Who is expert at controlling the timing of events. God brought Ruth to Bethlehem when barley was abundant, which would mean food and a field to glean in would be readily available. And God can move the heavens and the earth to have you in the right place, at the right time, for His Honour and for your benefit. It is all too easy to look at circumstances in life and rue the decisions we have made, or feel entrapped by things that happen around us and to us without our consent or control. Yes, Ruth was in a tough time of life, but she was in exactly the right TIME of life! All because she had made that earlier decision to let Jehovah be her God (see the previous devotion).

Child of God, let us at once stop looking at the things that can be seen, for they make us fret and worry. Rather, let us trust the unseen Hand of our God as He works out the TIMING of all things together for good. Faith, patience, trust, waiting on the LORD - these are to be developed in our lives by the Holy Ghost for sure, but we must play our part too. I think Ruth has much to teach us here. If you struggle in your heart today with these things, then meditate on that which God said to Israel, noting the little phrase, time of love: Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine (Ezekiel 16:8). As neither you nor I can control either time or our destiny, perhaps it is best we let God take control. Yes? Verily, yes! QED.



NOTES:

Day 3

“... her hap ... ” (Ruth 2:3)

Do you ever feel that life has run away from you? Become uncontrollable? Gathering pace as it hurtles towards a calamitous event? Ruth was starting life over again after arriving in Bethlehem with Naomi, and we find her walking out into the fields to glean amongst the reapers. Now, did she pray about that day? I am sure she did. But did she know how to make all things come to pass so that she would end up in the field of Boaz? I think if you had asked Ruth how she knew that the field she was gleaning in belonged to Boaz, her response would have been: what are you talking about? She had no idea of who owned which field - but she knew Jehovah God - Who knows how to bring all things to pass in order and at the right time. So, 'her hap' does not mean coincidence, or chance, or accident, it means that God was involved! Why, oh why, do we New Testament believers constantly require some flaming sign in the heavens to point the way in life? Can we not just be like Ruth and trust God? Why can't we just be happy with 'our hap'? No, I am not talking about being prayerless, nor am I talking about not using your wisdom as you navigate life, but I am talking about letting God be God! About letting God do that which seemeth Him good with us. After all, does He not have a right to do what He will with His own?



I can imagine, if we were able to sit down with Sister Ruth and ask her about that day, and show her Hebrews 13:20-21 (Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.), with tears in her eyes she would say: 'That is just what I did, I trusted my Father in Heaven to do what He wanted to do with me'. And, perhaps she might add: 'It must be so easy for you New Testament believers to live a faithful life with such a wonderful Book as the Bible!'. Child of God, it makes you stop and wonder about the true calibre of our spirituality. Doesn't it? QED.



NOTES:

Day 4

“Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.”

(Ruth 2:15-16)

Anyone was allowed to glean in the fields in Israel - that was commanded in the Law of Moses. Boaz was duty bound, as a man who believed in God, to obey that law and let Ruth glean in his fields after the reapers had gone through. Ruth had no special privilege here, as everyone was entitled to benefit from this law. But Boaz, being told of Ruth's integrity and virtue, now designs to do something special just for her. He instructs his reapers to keep an eye on Ruth, and when she was following behind them to pick up the sheaves that had fallen to the ground, they were to drop some sheaves on the ground for. But they were to do it in such a way as to make no fuss, let none see it happen, bring no attention to it and indeed let Ruth herself know nothing of this special favour. These handfuls of purpose, as our verse says, were just that - handfuls. Not huge amounts, but sheaves strategically left for her. And is not our God & Saviour Jesus Christ so loving and caring for us that He does this for us too? He lays blessings in our path as we follow Him as our Shepherd, He causes it to rain to fall upon us with showers of blessing, He meets our needs when we feel we have so little - all on purpose. You might say, handfuls of purpose. Do you see Boaz' love for Ruth, and thereby perceive the love that your Heavenly Father has toward you? Hereby perceive we the love of God (1John 3:16). Boaz had something extra for Ruth, something out of love and not duty.

Something out of grace and not law. Yes, he obeyed the law to the letter and let Ruth glean, but out of his love he provided so much more! We read in John 1:17: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Do you see, child of God? Do you see the riches you have in Christ? You are free from the Law and found favoured highly by Grace! But, if that were not enough to wet your eyes, notice the phrase: handfuls of purpose. It is not handfuls 'on' purpose, but handfuls 'of' purpose. These handfuls that were dropped for Ruth were not just done out of duty - ON purpose - but they were done with a goal in mind - OF purpose. There was a purpose in dropping these handfuls, and it can be summed up in a simple word - love. Boaz was falling in love with Ruth. And might I also say, without muddying any of His perfection - that Jesus Christ has fallen in love with you. As you move through this life you may find it hard at times, perhaps you will need to go without. But when you come across a handful of blessing, look over your shoulder, you may just catch a glimpse of Him Who purposefully left it there just for you: 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 (Acts 17:27). And why these thoughts in our devotion? Why the handfuls of purpose? Simply this, that Jesus Christ wants you to 'perceive we the love of God (1John 3:16)'. So, today, you are Ruth, scratching out a living in this fierce world, but Boaz loves you more than the others in the field! Blessed? Beyond measure! SDG

NOTES:

Day 5

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: ...”

(Ruth 3:3)

God is gracious, loving and kindhearted. His blessings are abundant, His providence is tangible and His protection is observable. But there is something in the life of Boaz & Ruth that teaches us that we have a part to play in receiving God's blessings. And it is this: how we present ourselves towards our Father makes a real difference in how His Hand blesses us. These meditations in Ruth are addressing the wondrous blessings of the LORD. But do not be mistaken, Ruth was receiving her blessings because she was virtuous, faithful and honest. Ruth is instructed by Naomi to clean herself up and make herself presentable, because it will make her more attractive to Boaz and more worthy of receiving his favour. When Israel met God at Sinai, Moses instructed them to take three days and clean their lives up. When Joseph was brought before Pharaoh, he shaved his face and changed his clothes. Ruth was needing blessings at this time of life, and in a manner was asking for them by presenting herself to Boaz, a picture of the prayer life we should have. I would therefore ask this: why does the modern believer think God will accept him just as he is if he is doing wrong at the time? Do not get me wrong, we cannot do anything ourselves to warrant salvation, nor can we do anything in the flesh to please God. And we can present ourselves before the LORD and He will hear our petitions. But it is deeply disrespectful to think God will pour out blessings upon you if you are not making yourself a clean vessel to receive those blessings!

I have seen and heard many variations on this theme: staying in sin and expecting to remain spiritual, keeping a grudge and still expecting God's fellowship, reading your Bible with a poor attitude but expecting to receive wisdom, coming to church looking like it was any other daily chore and still expecting to be considered as a respected member, being covetous with your finances and pretending to be content with what you have ... and then saying things such as: God knows, God understands, and God is gracious to me. Beloved, this is presumption and pure carnality. The Scriptures themselves question your heart if you are like this, and may even call into question your very salvation. Boaz would not have wanted to bless Ruth with such an attitude, and neither does our Heavenly Father bless us to the extent He would like to, when we are simply not living like we should. As also saith the Word of God: 1John 1:6-7 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. So, if Ruth is an example that inspires you, perhaps look just not on the outward, but consider her heart. Makes one think, yes? QED.

NOTES:

Day 6

“... if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee ...”
(Ruth 3:13)

Boaz is directing Ruth to go and seek the help she needs from her other kinsman. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, was selling some family land, and this kinsman had his eye on it. But, the land came with an attachment: Ruth. If he redeemed the land, he would also have to take Ruth in marriage. But this kinsman, like the king of Sodom with Abraham, and like Judas with Jesus Christ, only wanted the stuff, the possession, the worldly goods. He had no care for Ruth herself. Ruth was an inconvenience to him, a black mark against his own (dubious) name and a drain on his resources. No, he would have none to do with such a Moabite. Dear reader, you will find that this world and its inhabitants seek after your stuff - not your soul, your wealth - not your health, yours - not you. There are many things that you can try and see if they will save you and bring you eternal peace and joy. Go on, try them - a career, possessions, drugs & alcohol, the Law (ie: 10 Commandments), religious orders, sports, hobbies, a sea change or travelling the world. But I am sure you will find that they have no interest in YOUR needs, only THEIR desires. Your troubles will still follow you, and your burdens will still be on your shoulders. Ruth will find out that this kinsman does not want her, neither seeks anything for her personal good. Yet, look at our verse: but if he will not ... then will I. Rejoice, Ruth!

There is one who will have you, who will cherish you, who will provide for you and who will seek for your good. His name is Boaz, and he is a picture of the LORD Jesus Christ Himself. And what will Jesus Himself do for you? Why, if He loved you and gave Himself for you, and He did, is there anything less that He could not or would not do? If you are lost and reading this meditation, then turn from all of your hopes, repent of your failed efforts and futile plans, and turn to Jesus Christ Who stands by as a Kinsman ready to redeem you. If you are already saved, well, just as Boaz loved and cared for his wife, Ruth, then the LORD Jesus Christ will also do this and so much more for you: Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).
SDG.



NOTES:

Day 7

“Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife...”

(Ruth 4:10)

Do you ever wonder what transpires in spiritual places regarding you? The answer to Daniel's prayer request was upheld by three weeks as demons and angels fought above his head (Daniel 10), but Daniel knew nothing about it for those twenty one days. Satan set his sights on Job and had a conversation with Jehovah God about demonically attacking him (Job 1), but Job had no knowledge of this all the days of his trial. Revelation 12 speaks of Lucifer standing before God and accusing you with vicious animosity, yet neither you nor I are allowed to hear the charges against us in order to offence a defence. What machinations are in motion to harm you, what plans are being prepared to dog your path, what fiery darts are being lit up to fire at your shield of faith at this very moment? It is a fearful thought that private wars between angels and demons raging above our heads so greatly impact our lives (Ephesians 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places). You, like Ruth, are indeed in a perilous and needy situation. So, who stands for you, who defends you, who fights for you in these heavenly places that you do not have access to? Ruth was not present in the gates on the day that Boaz dealt with the other kinsman regarding her very life.



These matters were dealt with - important matters, life changing matters - without her input. Yet, at the end of the day, Boaz would say: I have purchased Ruth. She is safe, as Boaz promised. And did not our Great Saviour purchase you and I, redeeming us from the eternal wages of sin, the Great White Throne judgment and the Lake of Fire? Jesus Christ fought and spoiled spiritual wickedness when He took your sins in His own Body upon His Cross, He died, He was buried three days, He rose again and He paid for your sin debt with His Precious Blood - all whilst you were unaware He was doing it for you (Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us). I suppose that I am trying to say this: great powers, forces and people were busy determining the fate and future of Ruth in the gates that day, whilst she was probably out gleaning amongst the sheaves. Yet, she was able to trust her God to look after her, even in unseen realms. Boaz spoke wisely when he told Ruth that he noticed she believed God: under whose wings thou art come to trust (Ruth 2:12). Was Ruth endowed with some extra special amount of grace and spirituality? No. But she did exhibit an unfeigned, honest and childlike trust in her Heavenly Father. That, you see, is all she needed. And that will suffice you too, as your Boaz, the LORD Jesus Christ, stands in the gates and takes up your cause. QED

NOTES:

Day 8

“Ye are witnesses ... we are witnesses.”

(Ruth 4:10 & 11)

Boaz, a picture of our Great Saviour, has purchased the right to take Ruth's hand in marriage. In the gate, where business was wont to place in the presence of witnesses, Boaz completes his transaction and declares his intention to marry Ruth. At the end of his business, he looks at the other men in the gate and declares: Ye are witnesses this day. They had heard of Boaz's intention and seen him make the necessary transaction with the other kinsman. They indeed were witnesses, seeing things that could not be denied, having taken place in public. They were witnesses to Boaz taking Ruth as his own. And you, dear reader? Yes, this world has seen all that the Saviour has done for you too, the Lord making sure that everyone around you has seen what He has done in your life. After all, you cannot undo your salvation. Just as Boaz declares 'Ye are witnesses', so too the LORD Jesus Christ can stare this world down and state that they are witnesses of what He has done for you. Riddled with sin, you may be. Racked with guilt, you may be. Doubtful of your standing in Christ, you may be. But if you are purchased by Christ to the Honour of God, He will make sure that the world far and wide hears of it and sees it. He will not be robbed of His honour! You are a trophy of Grace. Notice the response of the people in the gate to Boaz: We are witnesses. They could not deny it, and neither can those around you. They may not like your testimony, they may reject you, but they are witnesses to it! Even at the Great White Throne, just prior to sliding into Hellfire for all eternity, those that knew you but rejected your Saviour will surely admit that they were witnesses to all that the LORD had done for you, just as they were for Ruth.

A sobering thought. So, we leave Ruth to live her life with Boaz: loved and in love, secure and provided for. And if you would take time to read Isaiah 43:1-21, I should say that you will shed a tear as you realise just how much YOU are loved, secure and provided for. You see, there is more than one Ruth in history, isn't there? Why, you and I are Ruths also. SDG.



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