

Trusting God with our Blessings

Ruth 2:14-23


Trusting God (Ruth)

Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

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“When we bless God for mercies, we usually prolong them. When we bless God for miseries, we usually end them. Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.” – CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

1. WELCOME VISITORS
2. THANKS TO ALL WHO HELPED MAKE THE COUNSELING SEMINAR A SUCCESS
3. WE WILL BE POSTING LADIES' RETREAT AUDIO THIS WEEK.
4. ANNOUNCE OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD – BOXES AVAILABLE

 Open your Bible to **Ruth 2:14-23**. We are continuing in a series through the Sermon on the Mount entitled: “Trusting God.” This morning we are looking a message entitled: “Trusting God with Our Blessings.”

When God blesses us, we have to remember that all of God's blessings are just an illustration of who God is. God is gracious and generous. But don't ever be deceived into being satisfied with blessings. Nothing, and I mean nothing will ever fully satisfy outside of Jesus Christ.

So in Ruth 2 we have a picture of this. Boaz comes into the life of Ruth and begins to reflect the kindness and generosity of God! Isn't God good and gracious and kind? Here you have this starving Gentile woman, a very young widow, she's a foreigner in Israel, and someone welcomes her into the family of Israel. That someone's name is Boaz.

Jesus is our Mighty Boaz

Charles Spurgeon said, “Jesus is our mighty Boaz.” That's so true. He brings us into the family of God. He welcomes us into the throne room of His Father. And in Him we have all spiritual blessings in heavenly places! We can say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:3).

Don't get taken away with living for earthly blessings. Getting a degree in school is fine. Having a family is fine. Getting a job and making a living is fine. But we were not made for these things. We were made to live for the giver of those blessings.

Blessings Can Be Dangerous

Sometimes being blessed on this earth is the worst thing that can happen to us. The Puritan John Trapp said, “A ship may be overladen with silver, even unto sinking, and yet space enough

be left to hold ten times more. So a covetous man, though he has enough to sink him, yet he never has enough to satisfy him.”¹

St. Patrick the great evangelical missionary to Ireland had this motto: “Christ beside me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ within me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me.”

May Christ be our blessings and all other blessings be a reflection that He alone is lovely and He alone satisfies.

The Most Dangerous Place

The most dangerous place for a Christian is not in the valley when stripped of every blessing but Christ. Though they are the worst of times as human beings, they are often the best of times for Christian growth. The most dangerous place for a Christian is on the mountaintop when we are surrounded by blessings. It is then we tend to forget Christ and covet for more.

Context

This morning we come to Ruth 2, beginning with verse 14, and we find that Ruth and Naomi are about to receive some fantastic and amazing blessings from the Lord and they get to see that all our blessings are a result of God’s kindness. We were God’s enemies. Ruth is a Moabite. There are covenant curses against the Moabites. As believers we were all under the curse, but through the covenant kindness of Jesus, that curse has been lifted.

Ruth, now a believer, now in the covenant community of Israel gets to experience that kindness and blessing. But what do we do with God’s blessings? We can’t make them idols. Well, this passage teaches us three things we can do with blessings:

Outline

- Share your blessing (2:14-18)
- Praise God for your blessings (2:19-22)
- Wait for God’s blessing in God’s time (2:23)

We come to Ruth 2:14, and Boaz is prominent in this verse. Remember Boaz is half Canaanite. His mother is Rahab, the former harlot from Jericho who became a believer and had her life transformed. Boaz is a man of wealth, wisdom, and war. He’s a provider and protector. He’s generous. He’s reflecting the kindness of YHWH. He’s being conformed to His image.

I. Share your blessings (2:14-16).

Ruth 2:14, “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.”

Boaz is Good to His Employees

Boaz is a single man. He owns this field. He’s a good employer. He provides food for his employees. You can imagine perhaps other workers could smell the good grain being roasted

¹ A Puritan Golden Treasury, compiled by I.D.E. Thomas, Banner of Truth, Carlisle, PA. 2000, p. 67.

in that field, wishing they could work for Boaz. He was a good man. He trusted God. He was good to his employees.

Boaz Serves Ruth

What does Boaz say to Ruth? “Come here and dip your morsel in the wine.” She sat beside the reapers, a seat of respect and prominence and holiness, and he’s really honoring her. And he passed her the roasted grain. Who served Ruth? Boaz. What is he? The boss. What is he doing serving her? You see the family resemblance here, with Jesus?

The Hebrew Serves the Moabite

Though he’s in charge, he’s humble; he takes the posture of a servant. In that culture, the Moabite woman served the Hebrew men. He says, “No, no, no. She’s met the Lord. She’s my sister in faith. She’s a wonderful gal. Have a seat. I’m a gentleman, you’re a lady. Let me serve you.” Write that down, men. Be a gentleman.

Be a godly, generous, kind, humble, servant to all women. And, when God should bring along your wife, you will have treated her the way you should have because you treat all ladies the same way.

The Owner Serving the Homeless

The equivalent would be the owner of a restaurant finding out that a homeless woman was a believer, and he brings her into the restaurant, sits her at the best table, and serves her. Isn’t that what Jesus did? 2 Corinthians 8:9, “you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

So Boaz says essentially, “Order whatever you want.” “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” (vs. 14a).

Leftovers: Boaz Goes Further in Blessing Ruth

Verse 14b, “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.”

She was full. Best meal she’s had in a long time. She’s really blessed at this point. But she has food left over! Now, who, who is supposed to get that food? Naomi. Write this down, gentlemen. You must not only court the woman. You also must court her mother. Boaz knew Ruth’s faithful reputation. She had a dear, kind of adopted, mother at home. So Ruth has this big meal, and Boaz sends dessert home for Naomi, in a matter of speaking.

Boaz Gives Her a Job

Boaz gives Ruth a job. **Ruth 2:15-16**, “When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, ‘Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Not just a job, but he gives her a bonus, a pay raise. He tells the men to purposely leave already harvested sheaves – wheat stalks – for Ruth. She’s going to bring a lot home to Naomi.

Boaz Instructs the Young Men

Ruth 2:15, “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.”

Boaz told his young men what to do. I love that about Boaz! He tells young men what to do. Why? Young men do not know what to do. Right? Forty percent of young men don't even have a dad. Many of you who do have a dad, he doesn't tell you anything, or most of what he tells you is totally wrong.

Boaz's Generosity

Look at Boaz. He loves to SHARE his blessing. He's generous. She was dirt poor, and he feeds her probably the best meal of her life.

Many people view Christians as stingy, self-centered, and uncompassionate. David Kinnaman of the Barna Group presents statistical research and extensive interviews from a three-year study that document how an overwhelming percentage of sixteen to twenty-nine year olds view Christians with hostility, resentment and disdain. It would be hard to overestimate, says Kinnaman, “how firmly people reject — and feel rejected by — Christians.”²

Pass it On!

2 Timothy 2:2, “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Well Done Good and Faithful Servant!

In Matthew 25:14-30 – Jesus tells the story of a man who is given money, and he buries his money to guard it for himself. Others take the money and invest it. One guy doubles his investment for Jesus. Another quintuples his investment for the Kingdom. And the Lord says, “Well done, Good and faithful servant! Enter into your rest!” Work hard now in giving your blessing away! Reach people for Christ! Serve people for Christ! Be generous with your gifts, your home, your time, your love. Be generous. Be like Boaz.

Ruth Shares with Naomi – An EPHAH of Barley

So, verse 17, what does she do? She works hard. You will see that Ruth is a woman who takes the opportunities that God gives her. She works hard. She acts holy. God continues to provide opportunities.

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.

Now there's a debate as to what an ephah is. It is somewhere between maybe 30 and 50 pounds that she has obtained through her one day's labor. It was the equivalent, perhaps, of two weeks wages for the average worker. Here's what has happened. She just made a few thousand bucks, in one day, without breaking the law!

² David Kinnaman. *UnChristian; What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 19.

How many of you tell your folks, “Well, I’m gonna go out and see if I can find a job today,” and come home with a few thousand bucks?

II. Praise God for your blessings (2:19-22).

God Provides

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.”

From Bitterness to Sweetness

The woman who was Bitter and Broken becomes Sweet again. This is **Mara**, the bitter woman who is now Naomi, the worshipper of God, who is blessing again. Romans says that it’s the kindness of God that leads to repentance. God is lovingly, graciously, kindly, mercifully, provided for Ruth and Naomi, and now Naomi’s heart opens up.

Naomi Praise God for His HESED

The one who said, “Don’t call me sweetheart, call me bitter or wounded” is now praising God! Why? Because of God’s KINDNESS. That’s an important word! It means “loyal” or “steadfast love” or “unconditional, never dying love.”³ It really is the big theme in this book. It means God’s “covenant mercy,” which designates God’s loyalty in fulfilling his promises and his covenant.”⁴

SPURGEON QUOTE:

“When we bless God for mercies, we usually prolong them. When we bless God for miseries, we usually end them. Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Boaz and Ruth WAITED on God’s HESED

Remember we are in the time of the book of Judges. Most men are selfish abusers. In verse 22, Boaz says, “In another field you might be assaulted.” Many of the women were seductresses. They used their beauty to get their way. Here are two people who are waiting on God. They are a bit older. They are not without their struggles and temptations. Boaz didn’t use his wealth to “hurry” God’s plan. Ruth didn’t use her beauty to “hurry” God’s plan.

It’s hard to wait! But wait they did. What sustained Ruth and Boaz? Ruth trusted God’s hesed. They knew God would be faithful to His Word. “If you trust in Me, if you take refuge in Me, you will not be disappointed.” They waited on God because He keeps His Word.

³ Hesed is often translated “lovingkindness” or “tender mercies” in the KJV, but it is better rendered “steadfast love” as in the RSV and ESV.

⁴ Ladd, G. E. (1993). *A Theology of the New Testament*. (D. A. Hagner, Ed.) (Rev. ed., p. 301). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Singles, Don't Trust Your Heart!

Single men and women, don't trust your heart! Trust an Almighty God of loyal love who keeps His Word!

Gleaning Could Be Dangerous

Not everyone was like Boaz. Look ahead to verse 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.’”

God Protects

Ruth says to Naomi, “‘The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.’” (verse. 19). Boaz means “strong man,” “mighty man,” “godly man,” “masculine, defender, protector, provider.” Boaz. The cry of her heart, in Ruth, Chapter 2, verse 2, was that God would give her favor in the eyes of someone, and God has given her favor, grace, mercy in the eyes of Boaz.

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.’”

I don't care where you are on earth, there are dangerous men out there. God protects Ruth, but how does He protect? He uses Boaz and Boaz's men. What we have is a theological lesson on biblical manhood. God has given men by nature, great strength and positions of authority. We have a choice as to what to do with this authority. We let sin control us, or we can let the Spirit and our God-given conscience control us.

Men as Redeemers

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!’” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.”

Let me explain to you what a redeemer does. In Leviticus 25, a redeemer has two primary functions: to redeem people and property. In that culture, if you got yourself into debt, you couldn't just wrack up credit card debt or declare bankruptcy. You would either sell yourself or your land to pay off your debt. You would sell yourself into slavery for a period of time to work at no income to another person to pay off your debt, but that would devastate your family 'cause you would have no income. Or you would sell your land. Now, in selling your land, this is an agrarian society. People live on the farm. They work on the farm. They eat off the farm. The farm stays in the family for multiple generations.

So if the main bread winner died, in order not to lose the family and the land, God said a close relative must take the responsibility to raise up a seed and pay the debts and protect and provide.

Single Men

Single men, if you are waiting for the perfect woman who has the perfect background and fits with you perfectly you'll be waiting a long time. And if you find her, let me tell you, she won't be interested in you!

You ought to be looking for a Ruth. She's been through some trials – and she's trusted the Lord. She's the Proverbs 31 woman. She's industrious. She is godly, has integrity. Boaz sees this, and begins to provide for her and protect her. I don't know his motives. **I believe he had no intentions underlying his motive except to be a godly man.**

Biblical Masculinity

Men are supposed to provide and protect. Boaz is doing both. This is what makes a man to function as a man. Men, can I ask you, are you acting like a man? Who do men do? What makes a man masculine? Some of what you think of masculine is simply a very sad state of immature childishness. Some of it is pure evil and selfishness. What is it that makes a man function as a man? This is the definition of biblical masculinity by Wayne Grudem. Some of you have his volume on systematic theology. Here's what he says:

“At the heart of biblical masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships.”⁵

Masculinity is a God-given trust for the good of all his creatures, not a right for men to exercise for their own self-exaltation or ego-satisfaction.

Eve Sinned, God Looked for Adam

A man is uniquely called to account for his leadership, provision and protection in relation to women. This is illustrated in Genesis 3:9 when God says to Adam first, “Where are you?” Eve had sinned first, but God does not seek her out first.⁶ We will give an account one day men for how we used our position as a man. Did we use it to serve ourselves? I would dare say this is the every man's struggle. We are called to be like our Lord who used his omnipotent authority to give himself in selfless sacrifice to the world!

Therefore, “mature masculinity expresses itself not in the demand to be served, but in the strength to serve and to sacrifice for the good of woman. Jesus said, “Let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as one who serves” (Luke 22:26). Leadership is not a demanding demeanor. It is moving things forward to a goal. If the goal is holiness and Heaven, the leading will have the holy aroma of Heaven about it — the demeanor of Christ.”

Now there is a way we cannot be like Christ. We are not sinless. Christ never has to apologize to His church, but as mature godly men, we have to own up to our failings often.

Honoring the Woman

“Suppose wife or sister or friend or a total stranger) are walking along the street when an assailant threatens the two of them with a lead pipe. Mature masculinity senses a natural, God-given responsibility to step forward and put himself between the assailant and the woman. In doing this he becomes her servant. He is willing to suffer for her safety. He bestows honor on her. His inner sense is one of responsibility to protect her because he is a man and she is a woman.

...Women and children are put into the lifeboats first, not because the men are necessarily better swimmers, but because of a deep sense of honorable fitness. It belongs to masculinity to accept danger to protect women.”⁷

⁵ Grudem, Wayne (2006-08-31). *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Kindle Locations 730-732). Good News Publishers. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Ibid., Kindle Locations 775-776.

⁷ Ibid., Kindle Locations 945-947.

Jesus Looked Weak at Calvary, but He was Strong!

...Jesus led his bride to holiness and heaven on the Calvary road. He looked weak, but he was infinitely strong in saying NO to the way of the world. So it will be again and again for mature men as they take up the responsibility to lead.⁸ Consider Colossians 2:13–15, “you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” When God nailed your sin to the Cross, who was holding and bearing your sin? His Son was! Christ looked weak, but He put Himself in the way of your enemies. He did what all men are to do – He led the way to protection and salvation.

No man can lead autonomously. We as men must follow too. Who are we following? We are following a crucified Lord!

III. Wait for God’s blessing in God’s time (2:23).

Sometimes when God blesses us we get greedy or we get lazy. We start taking it easy. We start thinking we are important and pride infects our hearts. We get lifted up and dangerously self-reliant. God knows this so is careful not to give too much blessing all at once.

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.”

Ruth Kept Close to the Women

Ruth hung out with the women. You know what that means? She wasn’t married. Where did she live? With her mother-in-law, Naomi.

She kept close to the women. Many of their prayers have been answered. They have a house now. They have food. They’re not starving. God’s been faithful. But there’s no husband. No baby.

Ruth’s Name: Companion

Do you know what Ruth’s name means? It’s almost cruel to think about it at this point in the book. Her name means “**companion**” and she’s all alone. She was meant to be married, and it’s clear she wants to be married, but she’s content to be the companion of God, to have the LORD as her husband.

Listen, Ruth could have become a Moabite seductress, but she’s not. She’s faithful. She follows YHWH even it means she’ll starve, because she believes He’s faithful. As far as Ruth is concerned, God doesn’t owe her a husband. It is clear that she determines God is faithful, and she’s going to trust Him.

So here is the woman called “Companion” with no companion. We know the end of the story, but Ruth didn’t.

⁸ Ibid., Kindle Locations 789-793.

The End is Not the End

What happens at the end of barley harvest? Everyone goes home. This is just a temp job. Ruth doesn't know the end of the story. As far as she's concerned, this looks like the end of the line. It feels like the end!

Boaz shows up on the scene, and he feeds her. He prays for her. He pays her well for her labor. But then the story goes silent. He's like many of you who are kind to a woman but you may not know what that means. Single men, you must not lead the woman on.

Men Are Like Fire Engines

One author has said that men chasing women are like dogs chasing fire engines. Should they get one, they're not sure what to do with it. You kind of see that here.

Ruth Did Not Rush the Blessing!

Had she rushed the blessing, she would have gotten a curse. We'll find out later that there was another kinsman that was more closely related to her.

She's got six weeks left to harvest. But she doesn't rush God.

This is what I love. She doesn't leave the place that God blesses. I would just encourage all of you to understand this. Some people say, "God bless me! Please, bless me, God!" Stay in the place that God blesses. She doesn't say, "Well, it's been six weeks. I'm going back to Moab. It's been six weeks. No, she stays faithful.

Live in the Place Where God Can Bless

The equivalent today would be this: She lives a holy life. She goes to work. She pays her bills. She reads her Bible. She gets baptized. She joins the church. She has Christian friends. She lives in the place that God could bless.

God doesn't bless disobedience. Live in the place of blessing. That's the place of faithfulness and obedience. Don't rush God. Wait on the Lord.

Psalm 27:14

Wait on the Lord;

Be of good courage,

And He shall strengthen your heart;

Wait, I say, on the Lord!

This past week, we got news that Kathy Clyburn's dear mother passed into eternity, and it brought me back to the time when I was 15 years old, and my mother at 49 passed away. I had just been saved, but immediately I had no one and nothing but God. And that's a good place to be. When you are stripped of everything, that's when God does His best work. Those times remind us that God is all we need so when the blessings come, we will not make them idols, but simply praise God for the blessings that flow from Him!