

The Choice: *Receive* or *Reject* (2:14-23)

Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem with empty hands and empty stomachs. The sight of unending golden fields ripe with barley for harvest, the scents of freshly cut hay and parched grain only intensified the pangs they felt. Although the very thing that could satisfy their need was in view, the embittered widow and the Moabitess must stay on the outside, on the edge. Unless they were shown mercy, they would not partake of the abundance before them.

But God, in advance, had prepared a man to satisfy their hunger and quench their thirst. He would show them unmerited kindness and give them what they did not deserve. His sacrifice would give them hope, end their emptiness, and fill them with anticipation and thankfulness.

Matthew 5:2-6 says, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”*

“Therefore, do not throw away your confidence which has great reward” (Hebrews 10:35) for *“my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

Review Ruth 2:1-13, then continue through verse 16.

1. How did Ruth find herself sitting at Boaz’s table?
2. What was unusual about his actions?
3. What could it cost Boaz to associate with her in this way? Think on Romans 12:16.

4. According to Luke 10:25-37, why might some refrain from serving those in need?

5. Return to Ruth. What was Ruth's greatest need? How did Boaz satisfy this? (v.14)

6. Of whom was Ruth continually mindful? Why is it difficult to be concerned with other's needs amid your own?

7. How did Boaz view Ruth? What efforts did he make to assure her of this? (vv.15-16)

8. How did Boaz provide for Ruth and Naomi beyond what the law required? Where was she allowed to glean?ⁱ (Review Deuteronomy 24:19-21.)

9. The KJV renders Ruth 2:16, "*And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her.*" While God's larger purposes for our circumstances remain hidden, He mercifully provides "handfuls" to sustain and encourage us that we are in the center of His will.

What has the Lord deliberately left in your path to assure you of His sovereignty over your situation?

Continue reading: Ruth 2:17-23.

10. By evening, Ruth had gleaned about an ephah of barley. Today, this equates to half a bushel— about 4 dry gallons, 32 pounds, <32 1-lb. loaves: sustenance for 5-7 days for 2 people.

Additionally, what was given to Naomi? (v.18) What did the unknown benefactor's generosity produce in her?

11. Do you believe that Naomi's reaction might have been different if Ruth brought only enough to satisfy the day's hunger?

What are we to seek God for in Matthew 6:11? What is God's promise in Matthew 6:31-34?

12. Describe a time when God gave you something that you did not deserve to draw you to Himself.ⁱⁱ

13. Turn to Luke 5 and read verses 1-11. Describe Peter's emotional state prior to the miraculous draught of fish. What did God's superabundant provision invoke in him?

14. Return to Ruth. What was significant about Ruth's benefactor's identity? Why did Naomi consider this an act of kindness to her deceased husband and sons?

The Message renders Naomi's statement this way: "*God hasn't quite walked out on us after all. He still loves us in bad times as well as good*" (2:20).

15. What additional invitation did Boaz extend to Ruth? (v.21)

16. Why is it imperative that Ruth remain in Boaz's field? How was Ruth to conduct herself until the harvest was complete?

17. In the land of Judah, barley was typically harvested in late April or May; wheat was gleaned in late June or July. If Ruth worked 5-6 days a week and collected approximately the same amount each day, how much grain was made available to them by the end of the harvest?

18. Although Ruth and Naomi did not know what their futures held after the fields were reaped, what could they be assured of? (Consider Deuteronomy 31:8 and Psalm 55:22.)

19. Throughout the book of Ruth, Boaz is often viewed as a type of Christ. In this chapter, what likenesses to Christ have you observed in Boaz's character and actions?

20. How do the following verses represent Christ in Boaz?

John 6:37

Philippians 2:3-4

Romans 10:11-12, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:14, 19

Philippians 2:5-7

Luke 15:1-2, Psalm 23:5

John 13:34

John 4:14, 6:35, 7:37

Hebrews 2:11-12

John 10:29

2 Corinthians 8:9, Ephesians 1:3, 3:8

In closing, Boaz, a man of great wealth, invited Ruth the Moabitess to sit at his table and to share his bread. He made no distinction between himself and the foreigner, but associated with her in her lowly state, treating her as one of his own. In so doing, Boaz made himself of no reputation. He took the form of a servant and fed her from his hand. Boaz satiated her hunger and quenched her thirst. Then, he made his unmerited favor known in the presence of others.

Boaz's sacrifice not only satisfied the requirement of the law but exceeded Ruth's expectations. She and Naomi would be partakers of his riches. In turn, Boaz's generosity became in Ruth a living well (John 7:38), ending Naomi's emptiness and filling her with anticipation, thankfulness, and hope. Under Boaz's watchful eye, they would be repaid, rewarded, and protected (Ruth 2:12).

¹ In verse 16 of Ruth 2, the phrase "*fall purposely*" means to pull or drain out; to extract, or to draw from one's bounty or spoils.

ⁱⁱ See Romans 2:4.