

“Boaz: A Man of Grace”  
Ruth 2  
(Preached at Trinity, February 28, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we've seen, Naomi and Ruth have returned to Bethlehem. Naomi is filled with bitterness and sorrow over the course of events in her life. But as we entered **Chapter 2** Ruth captivates our attention. As we saw last week Ruth's reputation as being a woman of excellence had spread across the city. She was loyal, hardworking, and humble.
2. But we are introduced to another character in **Chapter 2**. He will have a prominent position for the remainder of the Book. I'm talking about Boaz.
  - A. We are told that he was of the family of Elimelech. The tension of the story escalates because Ruth is of the family of Elimelech through marriage. Those who understand the principle of the Levirate or kinsman redeemer are immediately intrigued.
  - B. We read that Boaz is a man of means, a landowner with servants under him.
  - C. We are also immediately aware of God's invisible hand of Providence moving in the background. Ruth goes to glean in the fields without any particular direction but we read **Verse 3** - "she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz"
    - a. The Hebrew word for "happened" implies fate or an accident.  
**1 Samuel 20:26 NAU** - "Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, surely he is not clean."  
We might use the expression, "as luck would have it."
    - b. Of course, we know there are no accidents and luck does not rule this world. God was working carefully at every turn bringing about His purpose
3. Last week our attention was fixed upon the excellent character of Ruth. As we are introduced to Boaz in this chapter we find that he also possesses an excellent character. I want to look particularly at the graciousness of Boaz
  - I. We see his graciousness first of all towards his subordinates  
**Ruth 2:4 NAU** - "May the LORD be with you." And they said to him, "May the LORD bless you."
    - A. He treated them with respect and kindness
      1. Most likely there were many workers – it was harvest time. Boaz spoke to them graciously

2. On one hand this might have been a common greeting for their culture – similar to **שְׁלוֹמֶךָ**. Especially since the servants replied in like manner. The Book of Ruth opens with, "Now it came about in the days when the judges governed" - We can probably date it sometime around 1000 b.c., although there isn't total agreement.
    - a. We can see this expression used around this time period
      - Saul to David:  
**1 Samuel 17:37 NAU** - "And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you."
      - David to Solomon:  
**1 Chronicles 22:11 NAU** - "Now, my son, the LORD be with you that you may be successful, and build the house of the LORD your God just as He has spoken concerning you."
    - b. Similar salutations were used as late as the 1<sup>st</sup> century. Paul used such salutations:  
**Titus 1:4**- "Grace and peace from God the Father"  
As well as Peter:  
**2 Peter 1:2** - "Grace and peace be multiplied to you"
  3. But we shouldn't see this as merely a formal greeting. These were not just careless, empty words.
    - a. First, Boaz came personally to them. He had a foreman. He could have spoken only with him. Instead we find Boaz personally going out to the reapers.
    - b. His choice of words was significant and the narrator wants us to understand. This is not a particularly God centered period of Israel's history.  
**Ruth 1:1 NAU** - " Now it came about in the days when the judges governed"  
**Judges 21:25 NAU** - "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."  
It is in this setting we find Boaz with God at the center of his life:  
**Ruth 2:4 NAU** - "May the LORD be with you."
    - c. We find the same diligence to his labors with Boaz as we found with Ruth. Diligence in work is important with both the rich and the poor.
    - d. The servants returned blessings to Boaz. He was respected by his employees – a sign of his graciousness to them. You can tell much about the character of the employer by the respect he has from his employees. Boaz was a gracious man
- B. This was a sign that Boaz knew grace –
1. Those who know grace must show grace. God's people must be gracious people.
  2. We live in a world filled with graceless, mean spirited people  
The Bible is full of examples:  
We're told of David's wife Abigail's first husband

**1 Samuel 25:2-3 NAU** - "Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel; and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel <sup>3</sup> (now the man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings, and he was a Calebite),"

Hophni and Phineas, Eli's sons were graceless:

**1 Samuel 2:12 NAU** - "Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD"

Ahab and Jezebel schemed to steal Naboth's vineyard:

**1 Kings 21:9-10 NAU** - "Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; <sup>10</sup> and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, 'You cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death."

Paul described the gracelessness of our world.

**2 Timothy 3:2-4** – "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, <sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;"

3. The people of this world tend to be graceless. They are quick to criticize and condemn. Paul describes love as being gracious

**1 Corinthians 13:1 NAU** - "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

**1 Corinthians 13:1 NAS** - "Love is patient, love is kind"

This doesn't mean love is blind. It simply means love is gracious

- C. The Fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5** is the best example of this graciousness  
**Galatians 5:22-23 NAU** - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Kindness - χρηστότης, an event or activity which is useful or benevolent - that which helps people' or 'that which proves good for people.'

Gentleness - πραΰτης – speaks of meekness and humility

1. As an employer he will be kind to his employees. We see this with Boaz. His demeanor before his laborers is filled with graciousness.
2. As an employee he will be kind to his coworkers – and his boss
3. He will be gracious while he drives demonstrating kindness
4. He should exercise kindness with everyone he meets  
Can you imagine what kind of world this would be if everyone practiced kindness and graciousness?
5. This is a Christian grace that creates a meek and quiet spirit  
It demonstrates the grace of humility
6. All of this takes much grace. It should be our continued prayer—  
Oh God, help me to be kind and gentle and gracious as I interact with others

- II. Boaz also demonstrated this graciousness as he dealt with the poor
- A. The principle of gleaning was required in the law of God  
**Leviticus 19:9-10 NAU** - "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. <sup>10</sup> 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God."  
**Leviticus 23:22 NAU** - "When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleaning of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God."
1. But not everyone was kind to the poor
  2. Gleaning could be dangerous as it presented the possibility of being treated harshly by the property owner, the reapers, or other gleaners.
  3. This is why Ruth was hoping to find favor with one of the landowners  
**Ruth 2:2 NAU** - "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor."
  4. Ruth entered the field not claiming her rights but she came humbly seeking favor. Again, this points to the humble character if Ruth.  
**Ruth 2:7 NAU** - "Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves."
- B. Boaz was gracious to the poor
1. Boaz was wealthy. It's easy for the rich to turn their eyes away from the plight of the poor.
  2. He immediately noticed there was a gleaner in the field  
**Ruth 2:5 NAU** - "Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"
  3. Boaz knew well the harsh treatment the poor often experienced as they tried to glean in a field. He took pity upon Ruth and was gracious to her.  
**Ruth 2:8-9 NAU** - "Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids. <sup>9</sup> "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."
    - a. There is no indication at this point that Boaz is physically attracted to Ruth. He is much older than she is. Notice he refers to her as "my daughter," not "my sister." It is the same expression Naomi uses towards her.
    - b. Notice also the words of Boaz in **Chapter 3**  
**Ruth 3:10 NAU** - "Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich."
    - c. Boaz isn't reacting because of some personal desire or gain. He doesn't have some ulterior motive. He is simply being gracious.

4. His kindness was abundant. Ruth ate to her full and had some left over. In addition, Boaz commanded his reapers to be intentionally careless so that Ruth would gather abundantly.  
**Ruth 2:17 NAU** - "So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley."  
 This would have been somewhere between 30-50 lbs. that she hauled home!
  5. Kindness to the poor is a great mark of graciousness and one smiled upon by God.  
**Proverbs 14:21 NAU** – “He who despises his neighbor sins, But happy is he who is gracious to the poor.”  
**Proverbs 19:17 NAU** – “He who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.”  
**Proverbs 21:13 NAU** – “He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered.”
  6. The “poor” may be those who are lacking in material substance but it also includes those who are weak and helpless in other ways. There are many needy people we need to reach out to. Even in our church we need to reach out to all, not just those who are most like us.
- C. This should speak to us as we seek to be gracious
1. Graciousness to the poor does not mean indiscriminate giving as in our welfare system. Gleaning is God’s pattern. It demanded effort on the part of the poor. It was hard and sometimes dangerous work.
  2. But we must be gracious – People of grace must be gracious in giving
  3. Paul described the churches of Macedonia as possessing this graciousness  
**2 Corinthians 8:1-3 NAU** - "Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, <sup>2</sup> that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. <sup>3</sup> For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord,"

#### Conclusion:

1. Graciousness does not come naturally. Graciousness demands grace. At the heart of being gracious is showing kindness without regard for the worthiness of the person.
  - a. Boaz was gracious to his laborers. Many employers believe the only thing they owe their workers is their wage. Boaz understood that he owed them kindness as well.
  - b. And he was gracious to Ruth, even though she was a foreigner, on outsider, poor and without influence or power. Yet he showed her kindness.
2. This should speak to us regarding our own graciousness to others. We have received much grace from God. We must be people of grace. May God grant us to be merciful to one another and to all men.  
 Loving, patient, forbearing, gentle