

“Under the Wings of God”
Ruth 2:12
(Preached at Trinity, March 6, 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. Last week we were introduced to Boaz. We saw that he was a kinsman to Elimelech, Ruth’s father-in-law. He was a wealthy landowner. More important, he was a man of excellent character. I pointed out that he was a gracious man. Graciousness points to kindness and courtesy. It points to mercy and compassion. It points to kindness shown to others even when there is little expectation that they will be able to return our kindness.
2. We saw the graciousness of Boaz in how he treated his workers, and in the respect they showed to him. We also saw this graciousness in the way he treated this poor young foreigner who had resorted to gleaning in his fields.
3. As the chapter unfolds we are reminded again of the excellent character of Ruth. When she humbled herself before Boaz, asking the reason why she was being treated with such kindness Boaz told her that her reputation had reached his ears.
Ruth 2:11-12 NAU - "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know. ¹² "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."
4. Boaz was not looking upon Ruth as simply a Moabite foreigner. He was looking upon her as a covenant sister. He uses a wonderful expression to describe this relationship. Ruth had come under the wings of God. She had willfully with great determination left her own people to join with God’s covenant people.
Ruth 1:16-17 NAU - "Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me."
5. Tonight I want us to consider this blessing. What does it mean to be one of God’s covenant people? What does it mean to seek refuge under the wings of God?
 - I. First of all, it is an amazing place of covenant love
 - A. Ruth had become one of God’s covenant people
 1. It was a place of unique relationship. It was a place of unique promises. The promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had become her promises.
 2. Under the wings of God is a place reserved for a particular people. The picture is of a mother hen who nestles her chicks under her wing. It is a place of warmth and protection. It is a place of care and comfort.
 3. God’s covenant people have the blessings of His covenant love. There is a general love He has for all mankind. He loves us particularly.

- B. Such love is unfailing and everlasting.
1. This is the refrain in the **Psalms 118, 136**
Psalms 136:1 KJV - "O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever." (תודה)
Psalms 136:1 NAU - "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting."
 2. God's promises are unfailing. He is a covenant keeping God
 God's Covenant promises are absolute and irrevocable.
Deuteronomy 7:9 NAU - "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;"
 3. God's covenant rests upon the infallible eternal transaction of the Covenant of Redemption.
 It is not founded upon the weakness of man but the almighty power of God. The Covenant of Redemption was promised and sealed in the eternal decrees of God – absolute, unchanging, infallible
 And all of God's earthly promises flow from this eternal counsel of God. The Old Covenant points forward to the culmination of God's covenant promises in Christ.
 4. God has eternally fixed His love upon His elect people.
 God looked upon His elect people while we were defiled by sin and fixed His powerful love upon us. He said within Himself, I love this one. This was true of Ruth. God loved her. She was chosen to be one of His covenant people. She was safely protected under His wings.
 5. The consideration of this covenant love for God's people draws out from us great expressions of praise. In fact, it is at the heart of our worship tonight.
Psalms 106:1 KJV - "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."
 6. Ruth had found this covenant love. She had trusted fully in the God of Israel
- C. What was the source of this love?
1. We cannot doubt that she chose to leave her people and follow Naomi. She was determined to make Naomi's God her God and Naomi's people her people. She was mightily active in the decision.
 2. Ruth certainly saw no connection between her actions and God's kind favor towards her. And she saw no connection between her actions and Boaz' kind favor towards her.
Ruth 2:10 NAU - "Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"
 3. Boaz answered her clearly, it's because of her faithfulness to Naomi and because she had sought refuge under the wings of God.
 4. What a picture of our own redemption. We are not worthy. We were vile and unholy. We consider ourselves the least among the people of God.
Ruth 2:13 NAU - "I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

- D. Under the wings of God is a place of glorious covenant love. It is a love that is undeserved and unmerited.
1. What was the difference between Ruth and Orpah? Both were raised in Moab. Both married the sons of Elimelech. Both experienced the loss of their husbands and both found themselves alone with Naomi. And yet Orpah returned to her people and her gods while Ruth committed herself to God
 2. The only difference between the two was God's covenant love
 3. God's salvation has always been completely by grace. We can do nothing to earn it?
 Stephen Tyng (*Lectures on the Law and Gospel*, p 210) – "Your last breath will be as much dependent upon him as your first; and eternity will be spent, not in personal congratulations upon your own strength, or wisdom, or perseverance, but in raptured hallelujahs of thanksgiving, to him who has loved you, and given himself for you, and washed you from your sins in his own blood, and redeemed you from every kindred and tongue, and people and nation, to make you kings and priests forever."
- II. Second of all, under the wings of God is a place of amazing covenant blessings
- A. It is a place of communion with God's people
1. Ruth was determined that she would unite with God's people
Ruth 1:16 NAU - "where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God."
 2. Ruth would be received as one of God's covenant people
 These people are not ultimately of one tribe or nation. Yes, Ruth was a foreigner, but this would not keep her from being one of God's covenant people. Boaz understood this clearly since his own mother was a harlot from Jericho.
 3. Ultimately, Ruth and Boaz would produce a child who would become the grandfather of King David in the ultimate lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 4. By faith she became to be a part of Israel. But God's true covenant people have always been spiritual. The true children of Abraham have been the children of faith.
Galatians 3:7-9 NAS - "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, "All the nations shall be blessed in you." ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."
 5. As God's covenant people we still enjoy the blessing of being united together as one common people—the body of Christ.
 It is a unique unity we share. We often take it for granted.
1 Corinthians 12:26-27 NAU - "And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷ Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it."
 6. There is no sweeter unity than the unity we share. We are flawed, broken, sinful, often hard to love. And yet we are united together in love.

- B. It is a place of powerful protection
1. There is no greater place of safety than under the wings of God
 2. The psalmist spoke of it continually
Psalm 17:7-9 NAU - "Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up against them. ⁸ Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Your wings ⁹ From the wicked who despoil me, My deadly enemies who surround me."
Psalm 36:7 NAU - "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings."
Psalm 57:1-2 NAU - "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. ² I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes all things for me."
 3. Ruth was witnessing the invisible hand of God's providence guiding her, protecting her, and providing for her. Like all of God's people she was safely in His care. Under God's wings is a safe place of refuge.
Psalms 18:2 NAS - "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."
 4. Nothing shall ever separate us from the powerful love of Christ
Romans 8:37-39 NAU - " But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- C. It is a place of everlasting rest
1. Ruth was now in the Land of Promise but like all of God's people, our ultimate rest is beyond this world.
Hebrews 11:8-10 NAU - " By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."
Hebrews 11:16 NAU - "But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."
 2. We have the hope of a blessed eternal home. We look forward to the resurrection and the new heavens and new earth. We are safely protected under the wings of God, assuring us safe arrival through the portal of death.

III. Third, it is a place under which we must rest in faith

A. Ruth followed Naomi by faith

1. She didn't know what to expect. Her husband was dead and she was forever leaving her own people. She didn't know how she would meet her daily needs or the needs of her mother-in-law
2. She only knew that she would become a part of a new family and that she would follow their God. Naomi's God would become her God.
3. This was the place of faith. God says, "follow Me" and we follow.

B. Boaz stands as an example of a deliverer, a redeemer

1. He told Ruth:

Ruth 2:8 NAU - "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."

2. Later Ruth shares with her mother-in-law

Ruth 2:21-22 NAU - "Then Ruth the Moabitess said, "Furthermore, he said to me, 'You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest.'" ²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that *others* do not fall upon you in another field."

3. Naomi's words seem like an obvious conclusion.

"It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids"

Why would Ruth consider for a moment leaving the protective fields of Boaz? Why would she consider for a moment leaving the place of his maids?

4. But this is exactly what Naomi and her family had done. Instead of staying in the fields of God and staying with His people in Bethlehem of Judah they fled when the famine came upon the land. They trusted the land of the Moabites rather than staying under the wings of God

C. Remaining under the wings of God is a place of faith

1. There are times when we are tempted to flee. It would seem at times there are other places of refuge.
2. We begin to look to the refuge of our financial resources or the refuge of the medical profession or the countless other places men seek refuge.
3. This doesn't mean God doesn't often use these resources for our benefit. He has countless resources at His disposal. But our trust isn't in the resources it is in God.
4. So when we have a financial need where do we look for help?
When we have a medical need where do we look for our deliverance?

Conclusion:

1. We need to be continually reminded of our place under the wings of God.
2. We are prone to forget. This has a negative effect upon our worship and a negative effect upon how we live.
3. James Montgomery Boice: "We would be far more thankful people and more godly than we are if we would merely take time to remember God's many mercies to us, and not forget them. May we continually find our refuge under the wings of God."