

**Ruth 2: 1-23; “God’s Loving Providence Seen in Boaz”, A sermon prepared
for Mother’s Day, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 11th, 2014
in the Morning Worship Service.**

This morning I would like to introduce you to this mighty man of wealth, Boaz. He was no ordinary man of his day, and the way that his character is portrayed for us shows us that he was an eminent type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even as Boaz was a man of wisdom and compassion, and wealth of earthy riches, even so, our Lord Jesus Christ is a Man of wisdom and compassion and wealth in earthly riches to give to everyone who takes refuge in the shadow of His wings. Even as God providentially ordered all things for good to Naomi and Ruth through Boaz’ loving actions, even so does He order all things for good through our Lord Jesus Christ’s loving actions towards us. The proposition of this sermon this morning is this: All godly mothers ought to trust in the providence of God to order all things for their good and for the good of their godly children; through faith in the provision of Christ. I say this for the following 3 reasons. 1st of all – Because God takes notice of the love of believers for one another. (verses 1-9) 2nd – Because God knows how to repay the work of one loving believer to another. (verses 10-18) And 3rd – Because God knows how to restore the souls of those whom He has afflicted. (verses 19-23)

1st of all – Because God takes notice of the love of believers for one another.

(verses 1-4)

It is very evident from these verses that Naomi had a great love for her daughter-in-law Ruth, and Ruth had a great love for her mother-in-law Naomi. How did that godly love come about? If the truth be known, in their case, it was the love of the God who first loved them, which enabled them to show this love to each other. In our time, the New Testament times, the reason is even more evident. We have learned to love from God Himself. 1st John 4: 7 – “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.” “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” Let me ask, do you have a love for your mother this morning? Why do you love her? You love her because she gave you birth, and because of the many good things which have been shown to you, and given to you, through her. But let me ask you whether you love her because she loves God? Do you love her because she would have you look to God and to Christ for every good thing, even in the midst of great trials? How great is the love of God, that when He calls us to Himself; when He calls us out of the darkness of sin to be able to behold the light of His eternal love which He has for each of His elect people, in our Lord Jesus Christ; our heavenly Boaz. How great is the love of God in giving us a godly mother, if we have had one. And even greater is the love of God in giving us Christ, and the great salvation which is found in Him!

I want to bring to your attention the fact that Naomi was implicitly trusting in God, even during the time of her greatest affliction. She recognized the providence of God had gone against her in His afflicting her with the loss of her husband and her two sons. She believed in God’s sovereignty even so. She did not say that these things just happened by chance. She confesses in Chapter 1, verse 20, that the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, and that people ought to call her Mara, which means “bitter”, instead of Naomi which means “pleasant”. She confesses that she went out full before when she had her husband and her two sons, and has now come back empty. But she has not stopped believing in the love and kindness of the Lord to her. She still worshiped God and would honor Him, even so. This, Ruth saw in Naomi, and she loved her

for it; and she wanted to do whatever she could to help her dear mother-in-law because God's grace was working in her own heart. Do you see, dear Christian, that the love of God is poured out in the heart of a believer by the Holy Spirit? This is how you are able to keep believing in God all the way through dark providences. This is how you are able to love others, even in the midst of trials.

Naomi also recognized the providence of God in relation to the mercy which He showed to her, in her daughter-in-law Ruth's deciding to take the Lord God to be her God after her husband died. Why did Ruth take the Lord God to be her God when her sister Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and said goodbye and went back to her old life in Moab? Well, one of the reasons was that Ruth saw the grace of God in Naomi's life, and because of this good witness, she came to want Naomi's God to be her God. Another reason that Ruth was willing to go back to Israel with Naomi was that she was beginning to see that God was a God purpose as well as grace. If she only knew how great these purposes were; but each believer must learn to live their life by faith in the God who orders all things after the counsel of His will. It was because God had a great and gracious purpose, not only to save Ruth from her sins, but also to make her one of the blessed women who would be in the line of descendants from whom Christ would descend; that He would work this way in His providence and in Ruth's heart. And she, Ruth, in her calling, would then become a type of God's calling of all of the elect Gentiles into the Church of Jesus Christ.

But at the time in which they lost their husbands, and had to return to the land of Israel, neither Naomi nor Ruth knew anything about these great purposes of God. All that they knew, was that they needed God's help to them. They were desolate and afflicted. These were days of famine in Moab, but Israel had bread. Who was it, who so ordered things, that there was a famine in Moab, but bread in Israel? It was God who called for these things. Look back at verse 6 of Chapter 1. "Then Naomi arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country Moab that Lord had visited His people by giving them bread." What beautiful wording this is here. It was not simply, "She had heard in the country of Moab that Mother Nature had been compliant and had given them bread in Israel." No, it is written here: "The Lord visited His people by giving them bread." All the blessings of food depend upon the Lord giving to us, our daily bread. It is not, "We owe it all to ourselves and our hard work". No, actually we could work hard all the day long, and if God did not bless us with bread, we would not be blessed with it. This is why we love the Lord our God, and why we can love one another; it is because when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," God faithfully gives it, out of His great love for us His creatures, and because we have trusted in Him as our God. This is why the Psalmist could confidently say in Psalm 37, verse 25 – "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread." It is because the Lord loves His people and is good to them, even in their greatest trials.

But, I am saying that Naomi and Ruth returned to Israel because God providentially ordered that it be so. And He providentially arranged it so that they would return at the beginning of the barley harvest. Now look at the love which Ruth shows to her mother-in-law. She is not going to sit around and wait for people to help them. She is going to ask Naomi's permission to go the field and glean heads of grain after him in who sight she might find favor, or "grace" as it says in the King James. Love to your closest relatives is not an inactive grace. It is diligent, and it is zealous to provide and to do good for them. Notice how Ruth does this. She doesn't simply do it at her own initiative. She does it only after asking permission of Naomi. Even though she is an adult, she is a foreigner, and so not formally a citizen of Israel yet. She asks, and Naomi tells her to go, and notice now, the text says in verse 3b, "And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech." She "happened" to come to this

particular part of the field; which was no accident either. All of these things were a part of God's love and His providential ordering of events. God is in the littlest of things, and He is in the greatest of them as well. If we are trusting in God, He will lead us to the means which He has appointed to provide for all the needs of those whom we love and do what is pleasing to God, He will know how to providentially answer all of our prayers. And this, we see, is exactly what God did. He appointed that Ruth would meet Boaz at this very time. In this way He would show her His mercy, His kindness, and His goodness. Verse 4 – “Now Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, ‘The Lord be with you!’” “And they answered him, ‘The Lord bless you!’” How great a thing it is to be in a workplace where the Lord is honored in the speech of the employer and his employees; when the Lord is spoken of as the author of all blessing, the One who is with His people, even in their work; it is done to His glory. All of these things, of Ruth's beholding the true spiritual fellowship which existed between Boaz and his workers, all of these things were intended by God to be an encouragement to the faith of the young believer Ruth. God was taking notice of the love of these believers for one another. He was taking notice of it to bless it, because His own grace was working in their hearts. Even today, think dear believer of how you might show kindness and goodness to your mother and to your family. God will be leading you; Christ will be showing you, how you might aid the faith and meet the needs of someone close to you.

2nd – All godly mothers ought to trust in the providence of God to order all things for their good because God knows how to repay the work of one loving believer to another. (verses 5-18)

This Boaz, it says in our text, was “a relative of Naomi's husband, and a man of great wealth”. Our loving God had providentially ordained this as well, that Boaz would be a mighty man of wealth. Why? One of the reasons was because He was intending to give help to these believing widows through him. Why are certain godly people rich? It is because He intends many acts of kindness and goodness to be shown through them, to help the people of God in their time of need. Could it be, that they become rich because they are smarter and work harder than everyone else? Yes, these both may be factors which God considers, but they are not the ultimate reason in this case. In this case it was because Boaz was a godly man. He was a man who feared the Lord, he was a faithful man, faithful to God; and so God rewarded him with riches. He knew that He could trust Boaz with them. You can see what a godly man is like in Psalm 112 if you will turn over there with me. “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments.” “His descendants will be mighty on earth; the generation of the upright will be blessed, wealth and riches will be in his house, and his righteousness endures forever.” Surely this is a description of godly Boaz. And look at how he concerns himself with every person under his employ, even immediately recognizing that there is someone new among the workers; even Ruth, and so he comes over to inquire who she is. Not that he does not know already, but he is looking to introduce himself to her, and immediately start showing her kindness. “Whose young woman is this?”, he says to his servant in charge of the reapers. “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab,” comes back the answer. “And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’” “So she has continued from morning until now, though she rested little in the house.”

Boaz is a godly man because he will take in all the reports that he can get from his workers, and then he will make loving, thoughtful provision for this young Moabite woman who is walking in the ways of righteousness. He says to her in verse 8 – “You will listen, my daughter, will you not?” “Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.” “Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them.” “Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?” “And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and

drink from what the young men have drawn.” He is staying, “If you will listen to my voice and follow my instructions, I will make every provision for you in food, water, and protection from the young men taking advantage of you.” He wants her to stay close to him and listen to him just as a daughter would listen to her father. He is as much as saying that he is adopting her into his own family, in regard to doing all that he would do for her. This was the very grace and favor that Ruth had been hoping to find. And dear believer this is the very grace and favor that comes to you through Jesus Christ. It says in verse 10, “So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” “And Boaz answered and said to her, ‘It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.’” “The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

Yes, Ruth had done all of these good things, and had helped her mother-in-law. Yes, she had left her father and mother and the land of her birth and had come to a people whom she had not known before. But the primary reason that this mercy was being shown to Ruth by Boaz was because she had taken refuge under the wings of the Almighty. In other words, she had entrusted her soul and her life entirely into the safekeeping of God Himself. This is what a person does in salvation; they come to God through Jesus Christ our Lord and they find grace; even as Ruth found grace in the eyes of Boaz, who is in this case, a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even if you are a Gentile, and even though you were once foreigners and strangers, yet if you entrust your soul for safe-keeping to God through Jesus Christ, you will never lack for grace and help in time of need. “God is our refuge, and God is our strength, a very present help in trouble.” “Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” This is what Ruth had found now, by delightful experience, that God would help her as she took refuge in the shadow of His wings. The Lord Jesus Christ, our heavenly Bridegroom, says in prophetic language in Proverbs 8: 32-35 – “Now therefore, listen to me my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways.” “Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it.” “Blessed is the man,” or woman for that matter, “ who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors, for whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord.” This is what Christ, our heavenly Boaz, says to each one of his daughters and sons.

And then 3rd - All godly mothers and their children ought to trust in the providence of God to order all things for their good because God knows how to restore the souls of those whom He has afflicted. (verses 13-23)

Notice how Ruth is so tenderly cared for by Boaz, as a worker in his field. She makes her request of him in verse 13. “Let me find favor in your sight, my Lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.” (In other words, she was a Moabite woman, not an Israelite woman) And yet Boaz treats her just like his own daughter. This is the way that it is for all Gentile believers. We are adopted into the spiritual family of God because the Lord Jesus Christ has broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile. By His death He has made us into one New Man. What this means spiritually and practically is that we can come and be satisfied with His feeding us from His word, and His satisfying all of our hunger and thirsting for righteousness in terms of our work for him, and His giving us the provision of sustaining truth which will strengthen us in every good work. Look at how well this is spiritually pictured for us in verse 14. “Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, ‘Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.’” “So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.” In receiving grace and truth from Christ we have enough to fill and satisfy

our own soul, and also enough to keep back some, in our mind and heart, to bless and feed others with.

Let me ask you, in closing, dear believer, whether you are gleaning among the sheaves of Christ's field? Are you sitting beside His spiritual reapers in church and eating of the bread of the word of God? Are you being spiritually satisfied and are you keeping some of it back to give to those in need? Well it says in verse 17, "So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley." "Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned." "So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied." "And her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where have you gleaned today?' "And where did you work?" "Blessed be the one 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.'" "Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed be he of the Lord, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!' "And Naomi said to her, 'This man is a relation of our, one of our close relatives.'" One of our "goalenu", one of our redeemers; one who could be a kinsman-redeemer to them; one who would buy them out of poverty and raise them up out of their desperate condition. Provision was made for this in the book of the law in Leviticus 25: 47-50. This was good news in every way to Naomi and to Ruth; that they had found an Old Testament kinsman-redeemer. And it ought to be the joy and rejoicing of your heart if you have found a strong Redeemer in our Lord Jesus Christ. For God has given you a greater than Boaz, as it says in 2nd Corinthians 8: 9 – "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." Not rich in material riches, but rich in spiritual riches; the forgiveness of all of your sins, a righteousness better than your own, and the grace to love and to help others around you.