



ruth

DEVOTIONAL

DROUGHTS & HARVESTS // NOVEMBER 14, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: How would you encourage a new Christian to trust God's plan for their life?

Key Passage: Read the second chapter of the Book of Ruth (2:1-23)

We see three characteristics of the Christian life in Ruth's example in Chapter 2.

1. The Christian life involves acting confidently upon God's promises. (v.1-3)

Although Naomi was bitter against God (1:20), Ruth, a new believer, had faith that God would work in their lives, so she set out to glean in the fields so she and Naomi could have food to eat. According to an Old Testament law, after a harvest was reaped, the Israelites were to leave leftover grain in the fields for widows, strangers, and the poor (Leviticus 19:9; Deuteronomy 24:19-22).

Apparently, the rights to the property of Naomi's deceased husband Elimelech had been passed to Ruth's husband (Mahlon, Elimelech's son), who later died. This is why Ruth was permitted to be involved in the transaction. However, she was too poor as a widow and foreigner to redeem the family land. Ruth trusted God's promise to meet her needs: "*He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing*" (Deuteronomy 10:18). God's timing was perfect as Naomi and Ruth turned up in Bethlehem just as the barley harvest had begun (1:22). Ruth began gleaning (picking up leftover grain after the harvesters had moved through) in a section of the family field belonging to Boaz, a relative of Elimelech and wealthy resident of Bethlehem (2:1, 3). The name Boaz means "in him is strength."

Discuss: What do we learn about God from Deuteronomy 10:18 (above)?

Discuss: What do we learn about faith from Ruth's actions thus far?

Discuss: How does God's perfect timing in arranging for Naomi and Ruth's return to Bethlehem to occur during harvest time, and also in arranging for Ruth to glean from Boaz's field give you confidence in God's plan and timing in your own life?

Discuss: How would you encourage a new Christian to wait on God's perfect timing?

2. The Christian life involves responding gratefully to God's provision. (v.4-16)

Boaz had already heard about Ruth's tender care of Naomi, and now he sees her—and for Boaz, it is love at first sight (2:4-7)! From that moment on, Boaz focuses on Ruth, not the harvest! Boaz speaks to Ruth and assures her that she will be provided for in the field. Boaz then secretly instructs the men harvesting his field to leave behind stalks of grain so Ruth will have more to gather (2:16).

When Naomi learns that Ruth has been gleaning from Boaz's field, she identifies Boaz as a close relative who is in a position to guard and help Ruth (2:17-23). This is called being a "kinsman-redeemer"—a relative who had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative in need. A kinsman-redeemer was someone an Israelite could rely on in times of trouble (the laws governing the kinsman-redeemer are found in Leviticus 25:25-55). The kinsman-redeemer would do for the helpless relative what the relative could never do for herself.

Discuss: We'll see as Ruth's story unfolds that Boaz, as loving kinsman-redeemer, showed compassion, gentleness, and generosity to the poor, forsaken, helpless outsider, Ruth. In what ways do you see in Boaz's grace extended to Ruth a picture of the grace our loving Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ, extends toward us?

Discuss: Ruth responded to Boaz's grace-offer with humility and gratitude, believing his promise. How should our response to God's grace extended to us through Christ parallel Ruth's response to Boaz?

Discuss: Boaz was God's channel of grace to Ruth. In what ways can you be God's channel of grace to others—particularly those who, like Ruth, are going through tough times?

Discuss: When has someone been a Boaz—a channel of God's grace—to you?

3. The Christian life involves resting peacefully in God's plan. (v.17-23)

Ruth was hopeful since she now realized she did not need to worry about her needs being met. Naomi had previously been bitter, but now she was filled with hope! Upon hearing that Ruth was being cared for, Naomi spoke a blessing rather than a curse from bitterness (2:19). Even Boaz was hopeful as he had great plans for Ruth and himself! Each person recognized God was in control, and they could rest in Him.

Discuss: Read 1 Peter 3:15. Notice that Peter instructs us to be prepared to give a reason to others for our "hope." Why do you think Peter tells us to emphasize "hope" when we share about Jesus?

Discuss: What are you most hopeful for as you walk with Christ?

Discuss: How should our hope in Christ be expressed through our attitudes? Our words? Our actions? Our reactions?

For Further Study:

"Ruth and Boaz Bible Study" article at www.crosswalk.com

Ruth: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament by Daniel Block

"Ruth: Sex, Race, and God's Sovereignty at Work" article at www.christianity.com

"What is a Kinsman-Redeemer?" article at www.gotquestions.org