

DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

GOD PROVIDES

RUTH 2:8-23

10/24/2021

Be sure to take advantage of the commentary at the end as a helpful reference for discussion.

MAIN POINT

God provides for us, even when it seems all hope is lost.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When did you experience a time of great need? How did God provide for you?

How has God provided a “Kinsman-Redeemer” for you? How is Jesus your “Kinsman-Redeemer?”

Again and again in the scriptures we see examples of the way that God provides for His people, exactly what they need, exactly when they need it. Look for the ways that the Lord shows up in the lives of these characters so that they recognize it is He who is working out His plan through their lives.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

READ RUTH 2:8-23.

What qualities did Boaz see in Ruth that attracted him to her in verses 11-12?

What did Ruth do with the grain she had gleaned in Boaz's field (v. 18)? What can we learn from her example?

Ruth's unwavering commitment to supporting and caring for Naomi, her mother-in-law, attracted Boaz to her. He recognized that her selfless acts of service demonstrated her commitment to the Lord. Humility and service may not be attributes that most people look for in a partner, but they are attributes Jesus demonstrated (see Mark 10:45) and are fundamental to enduring, God-honoring relationships.

What do you think Ruth's expectations were when she started to glean wheat from Boaz's fields?

How did God use Boaz to encourage Ruth?

How do you think Ruth must've felt to receive this special care from Boaz?

How was God providing for Naomi and Ruth through Boaz's kindness?

Do you think Ruth could've imagined the events that lay ahead?

How is Boaz like Jesus in this sense?

Ruth began this work simply looking to provide for herself and her Mother-in-law. She was in a desperate state, with no father, husband, or son to provide for her. According to her culture's norms, she was without a provider and probably didn't have much hope. She begins this journey simply hoping to 'catch a few crumbs off the table' and ends up the 'honored guest at the banquet.'

How does God love to give good gifts to His children?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How is God showing up in Ruth's life as you read the narrative here in the remainder of Chapter 2? Imagine yourself in Ruth's shoes, finding yourself enjoying favor in the eyes of someone you greatly admire. Knowing how much God favors you, how does that make you feel?

What could we do as a group to pour favor onto someone? How might God be able to use that to bless someone else and demonstrate the love of God to them?

PRAYER

Let's ask God to show us how we might be able to pay forward the love and great favor we've been shown by Christ Himself. Let's thank God that He uses "outsiders" like Ruth and like us to accomplish His plan of redemption in this world.

COMMENTARY

2:8-10. Boaz's noble character is again on display in his kind words to Ruth. Gleaning could be dangerous, especially for a young foreign woman, and Boaz issued instructions to ensure her safety. He also allowed her to drink the water his young men had brought, saving her the lengthy trip to the well. Ruth's response was to prostrate herself as a mark of respect for a social superior. As a Moabitess, she could easily have been ignored by Boaz, but he had noticed her and shown kindness to her.

2:11-13. The death of a husband exhausted a daughter-in-law's obligations, as Naomi herself had made clear (1:11). Yet Ruth had remained with Naomi, leaving her own land and people, which meant entrusting her future to the favor of the deity of the new land. Boaz asked the Lord, the God of Israel, to reward Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi and to shelter her under His protecting wings, as a mother bird shelters her young. Ruth responded with an expression of thanks for Boaz's kind and encouraging words to her, even though she had no claim on him, not even that of a maidservant in his employment.

2:14-16. As an impoverished gleaner, Ruth would normally have had little or nothing to eat while out in the fields. Boaz, however, invited her to eat with him and his harvesters. In

contrast to Naomi's declaration in 1:21 that she went out full and came back empty, Ruth went out empty and came back full. There is no hint of romantic interest in Boaz's actions. He was simply demonstrating his compassion and generosity to Ruth who, even though a foreigner, was linked to him through Naomi. He went so far as to instruct his harvesters deliberately to leave some grain for her to pick up, an action that went far beyond the demands of the law of Moses.

2:17-20. The measure of Boaz's generosity and Ruth's hard work is demonstrated in the remarkable quantity of grain that she gathered—an ephah (about 26 quarts) of barley. This was enough grain to feed a working man for several weeks. Boaz's generosity was evidence for Naomi that the Lord has not forsaken His kindness to the living or the dead. This represents a change in Naomi's attitude toward the Lord from 1:21. The judgment that the family had experienced was not His final word for them.

Family redeemers (v. 20) were relatives who were obliged to buy back family members from debt-slavery or to redeem their field if they had to sell it (Lev. 25:25-30). The family redeemer would also receive restitution on behalf of a deceased family member or pursue his killer to ensure that justice was served (Num. 5:8; 35:12). He might also raise up a child for the dead relative in order to maintain the connection between the clan and its hereditary property (Deut. 25:5-10), though Boaz had no legal obligation to act in this way.

2:21-23. Naomi's approval of Boaz's invitation for Ruth to remain until the end of the harvest demonstrates a concern for Ruth's safety not evident in verse 2. However, the concern may also reflect Naomi's growing awareness of her own culpability in the fate of her own family. Her earlier journey to the fields of Moab was an attempt to glean food "in the field of another" instead of seeking refuge under the wings of the Lord as she should have done. Boaz's generosity may have provided food, but Ruth's need of a home with a husband of her own is still real.