

**“ ‘Happening’ Upon Boaz’s Field ”**  
**Ruth 2**  
**September 13, 2020**  
**Faith Presbyterian Church – Morning Service**  
*Pastor Nicoletti*

We return this morning to the Book of Ruth.

Last week we heard from chapter one. We met Elimelech and Naomi, who left the Promised Land with their two sons to travel to Moab during a famine. We discussed the lack of faith that was displayed in each of them, and then read of the death of Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion, leaving behind Naomi and the widows of her sons: Orpah and Ruth. When food was again more plentiful in Bethlehem, Naomi decided to return to home. Orpah stayed behind in Moab, but Ruth left her people to join Naomi in Bethlehem. From seemingly out of nowhere the grace of God had invaded Ruth’s heart and life, working in her a commitment to Yahweh, the God of Israel, along with his people, and his place.

At the end of chapter one, Naomi and Ruth arrived back in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

And so, with that in mind, we come to Ruth chapter two.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this morning.

<sup>2:1</sup>Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. <sup>2</sup> And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” <sup>3</sup> So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. <sup>4</sup> And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, “The LORD [Yahweh] be with you!” And they answered, “Yahweh bless you.” <sup>5</sup> Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” <sup>6</sup> And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, “She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.” <sup>7</sup> She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.’ So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. <sup>9</sup> Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” <sup>10</sup> Then she fell on her face, bowing 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?” <sup>11</sup> But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. <sup>12</sup> Yahweh repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!” <sup>13</sup> Then she said, “I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants.”

<sup>14</sup> And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. <sup>15</sup> When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. <sup>16</sup> And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”

<sup>17</sup> So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>18</sup> And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. <sup>19</sup> And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man 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.” <sup>20</sup> And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by Yahweh, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!” Naomi also said to her, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers.” <sup>21</sup> And Ruth the Moabite said, “Besides, he said to me, ‘You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’” <sup>22</sup> And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, “It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.” <sup>23</sup> So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

This is the word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

“All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” [1 Peter 1:24-25]

Let's pray ...

Lord, you have dealt well with us,  
just as you have promised in your word.  
Teach us now good judgment and knowledge,  
for we believe in your word to us – your commandments and your testimonies.  
You are good and you do good,  
teach us your ways.  
We know that your word to us in the Scriptures is of more value for us  
than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.  
Help us now to treat it and attend to it as such.  
Grant this, we ask, for Jesus's sake. Amen.  
[Based on Psalm 119:65, 66, 68, 72]

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In chapter one we saw problems mount for Ruth and Naomi. In the person of Ruth we saw the invasion of God's grace. And in our chapter this morning the gracious work of God plays out even further, as God responds to the needs of Ruth and Naomi.

And the primary way God works here is through Boaz.

This is highlighted in an interesting way in verse twenty.

First of all, we see a transformation occurring in Naomi in these verses. At the end of chapter one she declared to the people that God had dealt bitterly with her, and brought calamity upon her. But by the end of chapter two Naomi is speaking about Yahweh – the Lord – in the context of blessing and thanksgiving. God is doing a transforming work in Naomi. [Lusk, 48]

But also important is *how* she sees God at work.

When Naomi hears about how Ruth has been blessed through Boaz, Naomi says “May he be blessed by Yahweh, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!”

The Hebrew word that is there translated as “kindness” is *hesed*, and is stronger than we think of that English word being. The term refers not just to nice kind deeds, but to “covenant love” [Ferguson, 55] “covenant loyalty” “covenant devotion.” [Lusk 44] This is the sort of lovingkindness [Bock, 145] that Naomi is struck by. But whose lovingkindness is it?

The sentence, both in English and in Hebrew, has some ambiguity to it. In the first half of the sentence Naomi is calling on the Lord – on Yahweh – to bless Boaz. And then she adds the phrase “whose kindness [whose *hesed*] has not forsaken the living or the dead!” And it’s grammatically unclear whether she is there describing Boaz or Yahweh. Either reading is possible. Some argue it is describing Boaz [Bock, 145], others that it is describing the Lord. [McKeown, 51-52]

But the interpretation that seems most plausible to me is that the ambiguity is intentional. Both readings of the sentence are true. Or, to put it more precisely, Naomi has experienced “the Lord’s kindness through Boaz.” [Lusk, 47-48]

Boaz, as he is presented here, is not just an *instrument* of the Lord’s lovingkindness, but he himself *demonstrates* the Lord’s kindness – he demonstrates “the covenant faithfulness and the *hesed* that [Ruth and Naomi] need.” [Lusk, 48]

Boaz’s lovingkindness and covenant faithfulness is then meant to be a picture, for Ruth and Naomi and also for us, of Yahweh’s – of the Lord’s – lovingkindness and covenant faithfulness to his people.

That is, after all, what God’s people are called to throughout the Scriptures, and so it should not surprise us to find it here. God’s people were called under Moses to be “a kingdom of priests.” [Exodus 19:6] God’s people are called to live in such a way so as to show forth who God is and what he is like. [Cf. Matthew 5:16]

And Boaz is a faithful Israelite.

And so, by looking at Boaz’s kindness to Ruth we can get a picture of Yahweh’s (of the Lord’s – of Christ’s) kindness to his people – to all who trust in him. [Lusk, 33]

And that is what we’ll look at this morning.

I want to consider two ways Boaz *doesn't* relate to Ruth, one way he *does* relate to Ruth, and then ask what the picture for us in this chapter calls us to in our own lives.

So, two patterns we *don't* see in this chapter, one pattern we *do* see, and then what it all calls us to in our lives.

## **THE FIRST ABSENT PATTERN: TRANSACTION**

The first pattern that we *don't* see here between Ruth and Boaz is that of transaction.

The chapter is very clear that Ruth here has nothing to offer to Boaz, and Boaz is not expecting to receive anything from Ruth. He does not require anything in exchange for her to have access to the grain she needs, or for her to receive any of the other blessings that he offers her.

That said ... I think some of us can tend to smuggle a transaction into this account. We can tend to assume that Boaz's interest – even if completely honorable – might fundamentally be driven by an interest in Ruth's physical beauty and a desire to acquire her beauty in some way – particularly in marriage.

But it's important to see that the text never says or even implies that. That might be how the story would go in a typical romantic comedy today, but it's not the way the Bible tells the story at all. In fact, the Biblical account seems to emphasize that that's *not* what's driving Boaz. [Lusk, 44]

First of all, when Ruth expresses her interest in marrying Boaz in chapter three, he seems genuinely surprised. [Ruth 3:9-10]

But second, and even more clearly, in verse ten when Ruth asks why Boaz is showing her such favor, Boaz does *not* say that it's because she is physically attractive. That's not a reason the author gives either. Instead, the reason Boaz gives is Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi and to the Lord – two things that do not benefit him personally at all.

Boaz does not help Ruth because she has helped him. Boaz does not help Ruth because she is pretty and he is hoping to get a sexual or romantic advantage from his help. Ruth may have been pretty – we don't know. What the author does seem to want us to know is that her appearance was irrelevant to Boaz's actions here.

There was nothing of a transaction in Boaz's treatment of Ruth. And in that Boaz *is* giving us a picture of how Yahweh – how the Lord – relates to his people. God's relationship to his people is *not* transactional – we do not do something to bless him in order to then earn his blessing of us.

And yet, that is so often how we treat God.

We often act as if he is not interested in *us*, but in something he wants *from* us – whether good works, or accomplishments in this world, or expressions of praise, or something else. We can act as if we think we need to provide something to God in order to purchase his blessing and affection for ourselves.

Do you do that? Where do you see that pattern in your life? Where do you tend to think of God as if he is more of an employer, exchanging goods and services with you, rather than as someone who, like Boaz, wants to care for you out of love?

That's the first pattern to consider: Boaz's interaction with Ruth is *not* transactional.

## **THE SECOND ABSENT PATTERN: MERE DUTY**

The second pattern that we do *not* see play out here is a pattern of mere abstract duty.

And this is another pattern we can sometimes project onto Boaz: We assume that he was just doing his duty, fulfilling his responsibilities, and Ruth happened to be the beneficiary.

But before we assume that, we need to make sure we understand the actual duty that Boaz had placed on him.

The law of Moses required landowners to make some of their harvest available to the poor and needy, that is true. But what was actually required by the gleaning laws?

We get the requirements first in Leviticus 19:9-10 – there we read:

<sup>9</sup>“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. <sup>10</sup> And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am Yahweh your God.

Leviticus 23:22 repeats the same requirements.

And we read something similar in Deuteronomy 24:19-22:

<sup>19</sup>“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. <sup>21</sup> When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. <sup>22</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.

The gleaning laws allowed a landowner to do a thorough harvest of his land, but it put restrictions on just how thorough and efficient he could be. He couldn't go up to the exact borders of his field, and if something was left on the first pass of harvesting he should not go back for a second pass.

But that was the extent of the obligation placed on landowners – not to harvest the edges of the field, not to go back a second time to get what was missed, and to allow the poor to take from what they missed. That's all.

But Boaz did *a lot* more than that for Ruth. He went far beyond what the gleaning laws required. Boaz goes beyond mere duty. And along with that, Boaz does not keep his interactions with Ruth abstract and distant, but he makes it personal – he speaks to her, he seeks to know her. Boaz’s pattern of relating is not distanced and dutiful. And in this too he shows us again how God relates to his people.

God – the real God – the God depicted in the Scriptures – is not a God of distant and abstract duty.

And yet that is how we often treat him, isn’t it?

If we are thinking in Christian terms we can fall into the false pattern by thinking of our salvation that way: as an abstract duty God fulfills for his people, because he is gracious and so that’s what he’s supposed to do. We can view him as gracious but still think of him as keeping us at arms-length. Many Christians do.

Or if we fall into a more secular mindset we might think of God like a cosmic personal assistant. His job is to provide what we need in life – to give us what we long for, to comfort us when we face hardships, to provide us with a general moral framework. But he’s not to get too close. It’s not his job to ever really contradict us – to speak into our lives in confrontational ways.

And yet in this life there is no such thing as a real and personal relationship without disagreement and confrontation. We know that. The people who are truly close to us will butt heads with us – they will be willing to confront us when they think we need it. When we assume that God would never contradict us or strongly disagree with us, then we treat him as if his job is to stay at a distance and fulfill what we imagine his duties to us should be, and leave it at that. That is a sad and an impersonal vision of God. It is also a picture of God that Boaz and the entire Bible contradicts.

Where do you see this kind of pattern in your thinking about God? How do you need to let Boaz and the Bible question and correct you?

So ... we see these two patterns that are contradicted here in Ruth chapter two. What then is the pattern that we *do* see in Ruth chapter two – what is the pattern that shows us how God actually relates to his people?

### **THE PATTERN WE SEE: PERSONAL & EXTRAORDINARY GRACE**

The pattern that does emerge from Boaz to Ruth is a pattern of personal and extraordinary grace.

Personal and extraordinary grace.

From the moment Boaz arrives on the scene the author is telling us about his character. In verse four he greets his workers with the words: “Yahweh bless you.” The Bible doesn’t often include details like greetings. This isn’t merely a custom for Boaz, but an indication to us that Boaz is one who truly extends God’s blessing to others. [Lusk, 40]

And immediately, upon arriving on the scene, Boaz's concern and care for Ruth is not abstract, but it becomes personal and relational. [Lusk, 38, 41]

He sees her in verse five, he asks about her, and when he has heard who she is, he does not send one of his servants to talk to her, but he goes to talk to her himself.

He addresses her in verse eight as "my daughter," likely an indication right away that he intends to care for her and provide for her. He does not speak to her in a way that makes her feel like she is intruding, but he immediately speaks as if she belongs there.

And then he drives that point home by changing the terms on which she was gleaning in his fields. In verse seven we learn that she had asked permission to glean. In verse eight Boaz changes the terms from permission granted to an overt invitation offered, and even insisted on: "Now, listen, my daughter," he says, "do not go to glean in another field or leave this one."

From there, Boaz begins to add more blessings to her, above and beyond what might have been expected.

Ruth, as a foreigner, a woman, and a widow, was physically vulnerable out in the fields. Boaz knows this and does not deny it, but provides protection: he gives her a place among his female workers, and makes it clear to her that he has commanded the young men against taking any inappropriate actions towards her.

On top of that, in the second half of verse nine, he tells her that he will provide water for her as she needs it – not only is he giving her access to his well, but he's obligating his workers to draw the water for her. [Lusk, 41]

Then, in verse fourteen Boaz invites Ruth to join him and his workers in their shared meal. Boaz is treating Ruth as if she is part of his household. [Lusk, 46] He's giving her a place among the people and providing food even beyond what she's able to eat. [Lusk, 45]

As everyone goes back to work in verses fifteen and sixteen, Boaz goes even further in his gracious provision, telling his men to not only allow Ruth to glean from what was missed in the field, but to invite her to gather from their sheaves themselves. He even tells them to intentionally leave some of those sheaves behind for her.

This is so much more than Boaz was required to do, that as one commentator puts it: "Ruth is not even a gleaner anymore" [Lusk, 46] – Boaz has elevated her to a much higher status in his field and household.

The effect of all these blessings comes in verse seventeen when we hear the results of Ruth's day. She has gathered an ephah of barley. Scholars debate how much this was. Some ancient sources suggest that it was about 22 liters. Others that it was 36 liters. Either way, the barley that Ruth gathered on that day would have weighed between thirty and fifty pounds, and would be enough to meet Ruth and Naomi's needs for several weeks. All that in one day's work. [Block, 143; Lusk, 47]

Boaz has ensured that Ruth is provided for – but, we are reminded in verse eighteen that in blessing Ruth, Boaz was obviously mindful of Naomi as well: of what she had been through and what she now needed. [Lusk, 47]

In this chapter, over and over again, Boaz is shown as one who uses his wealth, his status, and his privilege to help others who are in need. [Lusk, 34]

He is, as one writer puts it, “a picture of the king and husband that Israel needs.” [Lusk, 43]

He is a picture of the kind of God that we need as well: A God who relates to us with personal and extraordinary grace.

God has shown Ruth and Naomi that extraordinary and personal grace both in and through Boaz.

But God’s grace in this chapter goes even farther back than that.

Look back at verse three again.

Several commentators agree that the ESV softens the Hebrew a bit in this verse when it says “she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz.” [Block, 119; Lusk, 39; McKeown, 40]

The Hebrew there literally says “her chance chanced upon” Boaz’s field. [Block, 119]

One commentator translates the verse this way: “By sheer luck she came upon the field allotment belonging to Boaz.” That, he explains, is how shocking the wording would be in the Hebrew. [Block, 119]

But that shock is meant to drive home a theological point. Ruth didn’t seek Boaz. Naomi didn’t send hRuth to Boaz. From a human perspective, it was all chance – which means that from a theological perspective it was all God’s doing, for “there is no *luck* or *chance* in God’s world.” [Lusk, 39]

That means that Ruth and Naomi did not first seek this blessing from God – it was God who brought them to the blessing they needed.

For that is the way of our God.

He seeks us before we seek him. And then, like Boaz, he greets us not with mere permission to be in his presence, but with an insistent invitation. He offers us not just non-interference but protection. He gives us the water that will refresh and restore us. He offers us not only a place among his workers, but he invites us to his household table. He provides over and above our expectations. He sends us home with an embarrassment of riches.

Brothers and sisters, *that* is your God. That is the God of the Bible. That is Yahweh. That is Jesus Christ. That is how he reaches out to you. That is what he offers you.

See him as he is held out here. *This* is what he is truly like.

## **THE FIRST CALLING FOR US: IMITATE RUTH**

Ruth chapter two holds out before us a picture of what our God is like.

And with that picture of God, is also gives us a picture of ourselves – or at least of what we should be like.

We see that picture – that model for us to imitate – in two places. And the first place we see it is in Ruth.

Ruth, again and again, is a model of faith and of the Christian life for us.

And that is true right from the beginning, with Ruth leaving Naomi to go and to glean.

There's something heroic in Ruth's setting out. She knows her situation is not good. She is a foreigner, she is a woman, and she is poor. But she trusts God and sets out, getting to work doing what she is able to do, and trusting God to provide. [Lusk, 41] And God does provide. By God's grace "her chance chanced upon" the field of Boaz.

And Boaz was drawn to Ruth – but it is crucial that we see what it was about her that he most valued.

What is it that Boaz found attractive in Ruth – what drew him to her? He says it in verses eleven and twelve – he says to her: "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. Yahweh repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

In the next chapter Boaz will describe these acts as Ruth's *hesed* – her lovingkindness and covenant faithfulness. [Lusk, 44]

But in this chapter Boaz describes Ruth as a new Abraham. And we see that in the phrase he uses in verse eleven. That phrase seems to intentionally echo the calling of Abraham. In Genesis 12 God called Abraham, saying "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you." [Block, 132; Lusk, 45] By using such a similar phrase to describe Ruth's actions, Boaz is saying that what is especially praiseworthy in her is that she has followed in the footsteps and thus in the faith of Abraham.

And that point is driven home even more clearly in one more parallel that follows. A few chapters after Abraham walks in faith, God leads him to Melchizedek –a picture of Christ [Hebrews 7] – who invites Abraham to a special meal of bread and wine [Genesis 14:18]. And here in our passage, just a few verses after Ruth is described as a new Abraham, Boaz – who is also a picture of Christ – invites Ruth to a meal of bread and wine. [Lusk, 45]

The links are meant to highlight that Ruth is indeed a new Abraham. Like Abraham, she has walked by faith. In fact, much of the description of Abraham's faith found in the book of Hebrews could just as easily describe Ruth – the author of Hebrews writes: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land.” [Hebrews 11:8-9a]

That is a picture of the faith we are called to as well.

It's not a faith in our ability to know what will happen next. It's not a faith in our own skills or power. It's not a faith in our own worthiness or merit. It is a faith that rests solely on the power and grace of God. *That* is the faith that enabled Abraham to leave his homeland behind and follow God's call. *That* is the faith that enabled Ruth to abandon her homeland to go to God's place. And *that* is the faith that we are called to as well – a faith that is willing to step out, not knowing where we are going, or what will come next, but knowing that God's promise is sure.

When Ruth steps out in faith, she receives God's grace and deliverance through Boaz.

And then, how does Ruth respond to that grace?

We see that in verse ten. She falls down and asks “Why have I found favor in your eyes that you should take notice of me?”

As one writer puts it: “Her question is the question that every Christian puts to God: ‘Why have I found grace in your sight?’ True grace always astonishes the repentant. We know we haven't done anything to earn God's favor. We have done nothing to merit our status. We haven't earned any of the gifts God gives to us. Grace is humbling. Grace is astonishing because we know we do not deserve it. Ruth gives the only proper response to the grace exhibited by another.” [Lusk, 44]

Ruth shows us the faith of Abraham. She shows us the gratitude of one who has received true grace. And finally, she shows us the steadfast attachment of one who knows the value of the grace she has received. In verse twenty-two Naomi urges Ruth to continue to glean each day in the field of Boaz, rather than looking elsewhere, and in verse twenty-three we're told that that's exactly what Ruth did. True faith trusts, it gives thanks, and it perseveres in clinging to the source of grace. [Lusk, 50]

In all these ways, Ruth gives us a model of faithfulness.

## **THE SECOND CALLING FOR US: IMITATE BOAZ**

But along with that, there's one more picture for us to imitate ... and that is the picture of Boaz.

Boaz is first a picture of God's – of Christ's – love for his people. That is true. But as such, he is also a model of how we are to love others. We are to imitate him as he imitates Yahweh. [1 Corinthians 11:1]

In Revelation 3:12 Jesus says of that the one who conquers in faith, “I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God.” That is supposed to be a goal we are called to – to be so faithful that God uses us as a pillar in his Church.

And it’s something Boaz achieved – signified in the fact that Solomon named one of the literal pillars in the temple after Boaz. As one writer puts it: “If you want to be a pillar in the house of God, there is no one better to study and imitate than Boaz – except of course [...] Jesus Christ himself. If you want to know what kind of materials God uses to build his house, look at Boaz.” [Lusk, 34-35]

Consider everything we said earlier about the personal and extraordinary grace Boaz showed to Ruth. That is first and foremost a picture of Christ’s grace to us. But it is secondly a picture of how we are to treat others: to treat those in need; to treat those in the church who are struggling or hurting; to treat the people in our families; to treat our friends, acquaintances, and coworkers; to treat those in our community who do not know the Lord. We are to show forth the personal and extraordinary grace of God in how we treat them – just as Boaz did.

And that grace we are to show is not rooted in our own superior ability to muster up moral actions and sentiments. It is rooted in knowing our own story, and what we have received.

And that reality is present right there in the gleaning laws that form the starting point of this chapter. As Rich Lusk puts it, in the gleaning laws “God points out Israel’s past as slaves and how he cared for them. The Israelites were fatherless, destitute, in the condition of a widow who had no one looking out for them or providing for them, and God redeemed them. Now, in turn, God commands Israel to do the same for others who are in a similar position [– he tells them]: You are to imitate my grace toward you by showing this kind of grace and mercy towards others who are in the same kind of situation, those who are enslaved or oppressed in some way.” [Lusk, 37]

In other words, we are to love because God first loved us. [1 John 4:19]

## **CONCLUSION:**

And so let us open our eyes and behold the great love God has shown us – pictured for us here in Boaz. Let us seek to receive it like Ruth received it. And then let us strive to show that love to others, that they too may come to know the personal and extraordinary grace of our God.

Amen.

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### **This sermon draws on material from:**

Block, Daniel I. *Ruth: The King is Coming*. Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015.

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