

Ruth, the typical Gospel gleaner (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

[0 : 00] We are considering today a portion of the Word of God that is found in the Book of Ruth, in the second chapter and the sixteenth verse.

And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

But these words are the words of that great character in the Bible, whose name was Boaz.

A prince of the tribe of Judah, an ancestor of David, and in accordance with the flesh of Jesus Christ.

The scripture sets him forth as a mighty man of power and wealth and goodness, so that indeed he is one of the great outstanding characters in the Old Testament scriptures.

[1 : 52] And as we were observing this part of the Word this morning, we saw how these two characters, Boaz, the prince, and Ruth, the poor, poverty-stricken, penniless, Moabitish damsel, who had been widowed by the death of her husband, and had come out of a strange country, and from a totally opposite or heathen people, and had found herself among the Israelites, the children of Israel, as she accompanied her mother-in-law, Naomi.

Back from Moab to the land of Israel, where she was born, and of which she was a native. I say these two characters, they appear in the scriptures for a very wonderful purpose.

And that purpose, we would seek to grasp and understand. Because they are here in the annals of the holy word of God, in order that we might learn something more of the compassion and tender mercies and goodness of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Boaz is a very wonderful type.

And when we come to look at Ruth, we see in her the characteristics typical of all those who are seekers after the Lord and his salvation.

In many ways, she demonstrates the very attitude and existence and vicissitudes of a person that is seeking after the things of God and the salvation of the Lord.

[4 : 31] So we get two types then. One is a type of the Lord Jesus, and the other is a type of those who come to him, and belong to him.

And like Ruth, and like Ruth, eventually she was joined to Boaz as husband and wife. And so every real believer is joined to Jesus Christ, as he is their beloved, their husband, and their friend.

So let us look, therefore, at this part of the scriptures, along those lines, keeping in mind always, as we examine details, here and there in this word, that we are being presented with a glorious illustration of what Christ is to his people, and what they go through when they are seeking after him, seeking to know him, and seeking to follow him, and needing him with all the heart, wish, and desire.

Let us try to remember that both these characters are wonderful types. Now, I want first of all then to look a little at the character of Ruth, and then we will come and examine, furthermore, as we were this morning, of the ways and works and relationship that Boaz had with Ruth.

Now, we look at Ruth then first, and we find there was a wonderful fact revealed in Ruth's life and experience.

[6 : 46] She was, as we read tonight, she was part of that country of Moab which was recognized as an idolatrous country that had no worship of God in the midst of it.

It was far removed from the worship of Jehovah the Lord. It had no respect for his laws or his holy word, and it was regarded by the children of Israel as being a nation of aliens and enemies to God and godliness.

Now, Ruth was a member of that race. she had married one of the sons of Naomi and Elimelech and they had lived together for ten years and then her husband had died and all power her sister-in-law also lost her husband and these two women were widowed together and there was very little to choose between them.

Both of them were in poverty stricken circumstances and there was very little prospect or hope for either of them.

The only thing they could have done, and that is merely from a natural standpoint, was to remain and to have perhaps found a husband in the land of Moab.

[8 : 43] And listen, they come as Naomi decides to return to her own land and her own people, and to the worship of God that she once knew and entered into, we no doubt very heartily and earnestly.

As she returns, therefore, these two women come with her. And there comes a point when Naomi realizes that if they go on, they come into a people that are totally strange to them, and thus Naomi, not having faith at this point to believe that either of these girls or women could have been affected or changed in any way by accompanying her into the land of Israel.

her. She can only see from a natural standpoint of this particular part of her life, and she says, go back, go back, go back to Moab.

May each of you find rest in the house of your husband, but you will find more satisfaction among your idolatrous friends and people, native of which you are, and of Moab, than you will if you came and accompanied me and appeared with me among my people, the people of Israel, who are the people of God.

God. And of course, all power as we read, she very readily accepted the opportunity of severing her connection with Naomi permanently and forever, and she went back, went back to her people and her gods, to her religion.

[10 : 57] We never hear again on the annals of the holy word of God anything about Orpah. She went back.

But look at the other character, Ruth. at that very same instance and point of time, at that very moment when there was a dividing experience with her sister-in-law, that very moment, Ruth clave, clave to Naomi.

Not only to Naomi, did she cleave, but she cleaved to Naomi's God and to her people. Now this is very remarkable. She had never known any other than Naomi among the children of Israel.

The only example of the children of Israel she had before her in her mother-in-law, the widow Naomi. And yet, she said, thy people shall be my people, thy God shall be my God.

Entreat me, she says, in all what beautiful language it is, entreat me not to leave thee, for where thou livest, I will live, and where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.

[12 : 35] during the war, Churchill was in company with representative of the American president, the secretary of state, and this man, the secretary of state, and he was in a time when this country was at its very lowest, darkest, most serious situation prevailed in our affairs.

We were alone as a nation, facing all the military might of Germany, and this secretary of state rose at this meeting of Churchill and several others who were present, and he said to all present, I'm going back to America, my country, and I'm going with a message, and this is a message, a message that comes from the best of books, that my mother loved, my Scottish mother loved, and others who are, or were born in this country, because they were in Scotland at that time, have ever loved, and highly respected, and this is the word that I shall take to the President of the United States, entreat me not to leave thee, for thy people shall be my people, and thy

God shall be my God. The Lord do so to me, if aught but death, part thee and me. And the writer that describes that little scene says it was amazing to see tears flowing down Churchill's face when he heard those wonderful words.

You see, they're words that express a close affinity. They're words that determine, so to speak, the attitude toward another person.

They were outstanding words, decisive in their character and nature. and they came, let us remember this, they came not from an Israelite, not from one who might have been taught and steeped in traditional religion from their very earliest moments, but it came from one who had come right out from a foreign land and a foreign people and a foreign religion.

[15 : 40] entreat me not to leave thee. And you know, the scripture sometimes is very forceful. If you notice what it said at the close of that wonderful utterance, Naomi ceased to speak any more with her.

She couldn't. There are times when things are so precious and so vital to us that words are impotent.

We cannot express anything. And so it was with Naomi. It brought her complete silence when she had such a demonstration of love and of unity as appeared from the heart and lips of Ruth.

Now there is this character. I say there we have a type of a real believer. This is where, this is the history really of all true believers.

They come out from the world. They come out from a false religion. They come out from a heathen nation. They're brought out by God's grace and they're made to feel a unity with the people of God.

[17 : 10] They're made to realize that that people, they may be despised and they are despised, but they're my people and that isn't people I want to be among, to be part of.

I want their God. I want to live their life. I want to die their death. So do to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

Now, let us look at her then. We see her history. We see from when she comes. We see how that corresponds so clearly with all the believing people of God.

they all come from the same place, out of nature's darkness, into God's eternal and ever glorious light. Whatever may be the experience, that's the fundamental direction and change that is made where grace comes into the heart of a sinner.

Well, now, we find her then next on the pages of the scripture, having returned with Naomi to Bethlehem, where Naomi, of course, belonged, where her kindred were still found.

[18 : 41] But you can see this, the whole of the city of Bethlehem gathered around them. They were stirred up when they saw this bedraggled person coming back.

It was once the prince's wife had wealth on her side, everything on her side. She went out full, as she says.

She'd come out, she'd come back and returned to her native land empty, penniless, with nothing. And you hold the whole of the company of the Bethlehemite.

They moved about her to look at this astonishing sight. Here's one that has come right down in the world. Here's one of our rich neighbours.

He's now putting the mouth, as it were, in the very dust of poverty and want and need. But look, there's someone with her.

[19 : 46] There's a Moabitish woman, a stranger, what does this mean? Is this Naomi? You can almost hear the contempt sounding behind those words.

Is this Naomi? We don't want very much to do with her. She's got nothing to give us. We can well forget all about her.

Naomi. And Naomi says, call me not Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

Now what has happened? These two women are in dire need. And we look, we forget for a moment or two, Naomi.

We're concentrating our thoughts upon Ruth, the type of the believer, the Lord Jesus Christ. And what happens?

[20 : 58] She's in desperate straits. The first thing we see and hear and read about her is this, that out of sheer necessity she must go and glean in some field as handy as possible but she must glean in some field in order that she might exist and live and that also of her mother-in-law Naomi.

So she goes forth out of necessity. I often said here and I say it again tonight, one of the great ingredients of real religion, of the real experience of real religion is the feeling of necessity, is being hemmed in by a necessity and being moved by that necessity to do what might be well called a commonplace inferior kind of thing, gleaning.

It was only the very poorest that ever gleaned. To go gleaning would mark you out as one of the poverty stricken people of the day and people that need charity first and foremostly.

But here was one who was out of sheer necessity. She had to go and glean. And we are told that she went and gleaned, not knowing where she might glean, but she struck the very field that belonged to Boaz.

This is one of the great events of providence in the word of God. There are some very wonderful things in providence. There are handfuls of purpose of which we were speaking this morning, meted out by the Lord in his providence, providential dealings with his people.

[23 : 13] They are wonderful indeed. And you will trace them in your lives as Ruth traced them in this field of Boaz.

And they will be surprising to you, wonderful in your eyes, when God, your Lord, meets out for you his wonderful handfuls of promise and of providence.

Now she was there then, in the field. And she has to come here and she has to say this, and this is the first word that comes from her lips.

She says, let me glean in the field. That is her request. I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers.

You see, though she had a right under the law of God, she wasn't perhaps familiar with these rights. She was coming, she'd come out from Moab. Possibly at Moab, people were forbidden to glean unless they had permission.

[24 : 31] But she'd come into the land of Israel where the law of God permitted the poor to glean in the fields of harvest. And it permitted the poor to take any grapes that might be hanging over the wall that were not being gathered by the vine dresser at the particular time.

But Ruth, nevertheless, though she had the right to do this, she asked permission to do it. She said, let me, I pray thee, glean after the reapers.

So you see, here was one desperately in need and earnestly in rectitude of attitude.

she humbled herself completely. She did not go like good many people will today. They'll go and take things because they say we've got a right to them, whether they have or not.

Hardly matters. They simply go ahead and they take what is not theirs and they run roughshod over all liberty and license and everything else.

[25 : 51] but here is one who was preeminently humble and also sincere. And the first word that we have falling from her lips after that wonderful utterance to her mother-in-law Naomi, let me glean after the reapers.

let me glean. And so she gleans in the fields of Boaz. And as we will return to Boaz in a moment, let us just follow her in this field of Boaz.

A hard task indeed is the task of cleaning. She may get a little, may get a handful. She might have to bend her back again and again and reach down to her feet to find a grain here or a grain there.

And you know how laborious such a task could be and how wearying and back aching it would be. But she was doing it from morning to evening, till the sun was setting.

And as she went on, she found right in her very path, not one straw or two straws, but a handful.

[27 : 33] They'd been amazingly left for her, right in her very pathway. She couldn't avoid but picking them up and gleaning them because they were intentionally placed there right in her very path.

Now can you not see something very beautiful in this illustration? If you're a seeker, there's without any doubt whatsoever in my mind, you'll be in this very experience as you go along searching for a grain here, a little comfort there, something to hold your head just as it were above the water, water, and then all of a sudden you find a handful, a whole bunch as it were, right in your very path.

Who could have dropped this for me? Who could have done this wonderful thing for me? It must be the Lord, the one I've been seeking, hoping he might take notice of me, and here he has dropped right into my very path, a precious portion that has given me hope and reassurance and confidence that he is my God and will not leave me.

Yes, she was gleaning then and finding handfuls of purpose left for her by Boaz.

Now let us come to Boaz for a moment or two then. And I always keeping in our minds that he is a very wonderful type of Jesus Christ and the Lord Jesus you remember said when he was here on earth, I am the way, the truth and the life.

[29 : 50] Let us see how those three things are brought out in the case of Boaz. First of all, here we find the Lord speaking in the ninth verse to Ruth in this way, let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, go thou after them.

Christ said I am the way. Boaz tells Ruth what is the right way, the best way and he says to Ruth let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap and go thou after them and he goes on and speaks kindly and wonderfully to her.

But here it is, I am the way said the Lord Jesus and the first word that Boaz we find in this scripture speaking to Ruth is a matter that will direct her in the right way.

There's only one way, there's only one field for Ruth to be gleaning in and that is the field of Boaz. Now let thine eyes be on that field and let them not wander in any other way or direction whatsoever.

Now that's real good counsel. People will go in all directions at times. They will be moved and easily moved from this thing and that thing, from that sentiment and that sentiment on one hand and on the other.

[31 : 42] And if a persuasive element comes into their lives they're carried away in a few moments. But this is the counsel of the word of God.

This is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is Boaz. Let thine eyes be on the fields where they do reap. Go not thou in any other.

This is the right way. This is the only way. My dear friends, we cannot afford to turn from real religion, from the pure gospel.

We cannot afford to turn from the fields in which we glean and receive the vital precious life-giving food from the hand of our heavenly Boaz.

That's the first thing then. Then secondly in verse 11, Boaz answered and said unto her, this is after she had said to him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

[32 : 53] Boaz said unto him, It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband, and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

Christ, the truth. He knew all about Ruth. Even when he asked that question that we were dealing with this morning with the those who were set over the reapers when he said whose damsel is this?

He knew who she was. He knew all about her. He now tells her himself that it had been fully shown to him all her life, her experience.

Her most innermost thought had all been revealed to him and he knew everything that was to be known about her. So he shows her this and thus he shows to her that he is a man of truth.

He knows the truth and as Jesus said in the 14th chapter of John I am the truth. So you find again wonderful type of Jesus Christ in Boaz.

[34 : 24] and then thirdly we look at verse 12 this is the beautiful words that he utters remembering that he is the life the Lord Jesus is the life he says the Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust I am the life the Lord recompense thy work what recompense the work for work did Ruth require she wanted life she wanted life among the people of God she wanted to have a place among the children of Israel she wanted to have a possession that she could call her own she wanted life where God was and where

God's people were and Boaz says to her the Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee the Lord God of Israel under whose wings thou art come to trust what a beautiful type this is then of the Lord Jesus and furthermore Boaz is also a very wonderful type of Christ in this respect he is one that receiveth sinners you think of it now from a natural standpoint here was a prince a wealthy man Boaz he was counted as one of the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel head of Judah and yet here was a poor foreign penniless person that entered into his fields out of necessity and yet he gave her all the welcome showing his heart was full of tenderness there was nothing hard or harsh about the heart of

Boaz he says to her come hither at mealtime and eat of the bread and dip thy morsel in the vinegar and she sat beside the reapers and he reached her not the reapers he reached her the parched core I say what a wonderful beautiful type this is of the Lord Jesus Christ when he was there at the supper he took the sop of the dish of the Passover and he reached it to every one of his disciples he showed to them his tenderness his heart was full of tenderness his bowels melted with love

Boaz is the same toward Ruth yes and there are three things I want us just to notice here first of all he's a wonderful director is Boaz he takes charge of things pretty forcefully and in a determined way and manner he doesn't let anything slip he says to his reapers those who were set over his reapers let some handfuls of purpose fall right in the pathway of this poor woman let them fall there don't be scanty don't be niggerly in your action let plenty come her way it is my purpose and my desire

I have purposes for this poor woman and I want those purposes to be meted out to her in handfuls and that is how the Lord does meet out to his people not in dribs and drabs so to speak but in handfuls of mercy and goodness and love so then he is the wonderful director he holds the hands the reins in his hands and he says to her let fall some of the handfuls of purpose and let her glean them then secondly he is a dispenser he is a dispenser in these handfuls of purpose and they had a wonderful purpose to as I said this morning it was not just a purpose in the mind of Boaz that Ruth should have a good old bundle of grain to take home to her in the evening there was far more than that in this provision he could see something beyond this time and event he could see here was a woman that had a right to an inheritance she could claim an inheritance if she could find a redeemer to redeem her inheritance he had his eye on this and this was all involved in the purpose that he was now meeting out to her by way of this grain these grains of corn he was a wonderful dispenser he knew just how much to give how much to order and ordain should be left in the pathway of Ruth not too much but enough and then thirdly he was a wonderful defender because he says to the reapers and to all others rebuke her not rebuke her not don't let any semblance of a rebuke be heard by the ears of this dear woman rebuke her not let her have free course let her go the way she is going she has the eyes on the field and therefore let her have the full range of my field and let her have all the opportunity she may of gleaning in the fields of

[41 : 47] Boaz and rebuke her not it's a wonderful defender and you know when the Lord Jesus will defend he will defend his people and that power that force whatever it might be who attempts or aims at destroying the people of God the believing people of God why that force will be overthrown utterly brought to naught and the Lord will say to every one of his seeking ones longing ones rebuke them not take put nothing in their way he was a wonderful defender was the Lord Jesus and so was Boaz well now my dear friends we come to what must have been the conclusion of this and we find that

Ruth at the end of the day beat out what she had leave now that's an important thing you know I think when we come to the house of prayer and hear the gospel it's very needful for us to prayerfully beat out what we hear if God has given you a little grain in your heart through your gleaning in the fields of the gospel then beat that out go home and seek to understand it better pray about it work upon it ask the Lord to guide you into his word that you may know more and receive more she beat out what she had gleaned that means to say she thrashed as it were the grain the straw and emptied the kernels out of their shelves and when she came to gather up the heap that was left as a result of this beating out there was an ephor a whole ephor or as we should say ten omas and I think I said this morning one oma was counted by God to be sufficient for one man's daily food

Ruth had ten and so she had a wonderful gathering far more than she expected when a person comes to the fields of the gospel they may sometimes think oh dear same old minister same old sermon get weary of them be better if we had something fresh perhaps then perhaps you find this when you go home and think over perhaps tomorrow there may be a situation arise in your life when you will see how much this subject has been bearing will bear upon you and be a light to you and help to you in your troubles tomorrow you will see what a wonderful gain you have had from the precious word of god oh may we be like ruth and glean in the fields of boas and if we do we shall be undoubtedly meeting with boas the heavenly boas the bridegroom of our souls who became the bridegroom of ruth eventually because he was willing to redeem her inheritance and as he redeemed her inheritance he also redeemed her as his wife forevermore a wonderful account of christ and his people may we follow it may we receive the truth of it may we be encouraged by it may we be helped indeed to be real seekers and real gleaners in the fields of christ amen amen in number 76 to 409 his and

Thank you.