

MAY 6

Ruth 2-4

As you read these chapters, notice how different the spiritual tone is here, compared to what we've read in Judges. One man like Boaz influenced a very small community. Notice that Boaz tells Ruth to stay in his fields and not to go to the fields of others. Naomi even warns Ruth against this. The danger of her being sexually molested was real. Boaz didn't have a huge influence that changed all the neighbors, but these fields and these servants were affected by this guy who loved God. One of the surprises is that Boaz is very kind to Ruth. Or is it that surprising? I think Boaz's family history shaped him in this story. There are some notable men and women in his background including Tamar and Rahab, two Gentile women.

Ruth 2

Vs. 1-3 It is interesting that suddenly everything began going the right way. There was this great guy named Boaz, and Ruth just happens to end up in his field. Regardless of how things go, God is always involved and we follow, but it is nice to see how He can smooth the way. Boaz and his kinship to Elimelech is mentioned a lot.

Vs. 4-7 Boaz seems like a good guy and he was very observant.

Vs. 8-13 In Boaz you see the wise man of Proverbs and lover of God in one glance. It was possible to follow God during the times of the judges. Remember too, that this story is describing the family background and spiritual heritage of David. And for that matter, this is the family background of Jesus.

Notice that Boaz mentions that Ruth has taken shelter under God's wings.

Vs. 14-16 In response to Ruth's humble answer, Boaz really gets kind. I wonder if he was having stirrings. ☺

Vs. 17-23 According to John Reed in the Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 423, this was quite a haul for one day's work, about 30 pounds of flour. During these weeks it could be that both Boaz and Ruth began getting the idea that God was bringing them together. I say this because Boaz had already looked into the legalities of who was the nearest kinsman. As we'll see in chapter 3, Naomi was also revived in spirit and was playing matchmaker.

Ruth 3

Vs. 1-5 Apparently the threshing floor was a public place used by everyone. It would have been reserved for this day by Boaz; then when they finished, they would have celebrated and Boaz would have slept there to guard the barley until it could be hauled away in the morning. This was a fairly private meeting place. Ruth was told to uncover Boaz's feet and lie down. I have heard some bizarre explanations of what this was. I think it is simply what it says. It was cold. She uncovered his feet and lay at his feet and when he woke up to cover them up again, holy moly, there was a woman! And that's all this was.

Vs. 6-13 Although Boaz was surprised, he understood what was happening and was honored. In what she was doing, Ruth was being obedient to Naomi and she was honoring God.

V. 12 Apparently Boaz had already given thought to taking responsibility for Elimelech's family. This was the real issue. It didn't have to do with a field; it had to do with preserving the name and inheritance of a dead brother or relative. It was no small matter and involved some risk. In essence, Boaz could have lost his name and all of this land would have gone into the dead man's name.

Vs. 14-18 They both kept the matter very quiet, but Boaz showed Ruth that he meant business by sending her away with more barley.

Ruth 4

Vs. 1-6 So, the other redeemer just happened to pass by. What a break. Notice v. 6. The risk was that the child would be called the son of Mahlon, who was the heir of Elimelech and husband of Ruth. This guy was afraid of having his name lost and his property belonging, not just to his son through Ruth in the name of Mahlon, but to those of another family. Boaz had no fear of this because he knew he was following the Lord.

Vs. 7-10 Here is the public ceremony of the one guy giving up his right as a redeemer. This is very significant and very symbolic that Boaz is now recognized as the redeemer.

Vs. 11-12 Notice that the people knew the family heritage of Boaz. Boaz's background was special in that two Gentile women were part of it, and Boaz was in the lineage of the Messiah.

Vs. 13-17 Don't you like a happy ending, finally? If Samuel was writing this, it was probably after he had anointed that teenage boy, David, to be the future king of Israel.

Vs. 18-22 Notice here that although Boaz had a son who should have been named for Ruth's first husband, Mahlon, God honored Boaz. Boaz is the named father of Obed in the line of David.

One slight tension in this text is that we can pinpoint the time when Boaz and Ruth lived, because of the lineage of David, from Boaz to David. But between Boaz and Salmon there are about 250-300 years. Now, people back then did live a little longer than today, but obviously some of the people in between are not mentioned. But this isn't a huge problem. It was common to call someone the "son" of a famous forefather. For example, Jesus is called "the son of David" meaning the descendant of David, not the immediate birth son of David.

John 4:43-54

Vs. 43-45 Although Jesus went to Galilee, He didn't go back to Nazareth. It is only in Nazareth, twice, that the words of v. 44 are quoted. Nazareth (in the territory of Zebulun) was His own country. Instead, Jesus went to live in Capernaum (in the territory of Naphtali).

Vs. 46-50 Jesus' sharp response to the official was to see how sincere he was. The man was humble and was not there to see a sign, but to save his son. The fact that he came to Jesus meant that he believed. That Jesus simply told him to go, and that his son would be well without Jesus going with him, is a great proof of the faith of this man.

Vs. 51-54 The impact of this man meeting his servants must have been known among the disciples. The apostle John knew, so the others must have known also.

The thing in this passage that speaks to me as a disciple is in vs. 50 and 53. The correspondence between hearing what Jesus said, believing His Word and doing it is what makes a disciple. Jesus never would have found this kind of faith in Nazareth. I think Jesus wants this kind of faith among His laborers in the harvest who make disciples, who also have this same kind of faith.

We forget in all of this proof of Jesus' identity, that as we work in the harvest we are introducing people to the only person who can make sense of this tragedy on earth. We obey, but we are compelled because of His amazing love and gentleness. He suffered so that we can be saved. We follow out of love and give our lives so that others can know Him and be saved and follow Him. We spend our lives so that disciples can be made who will make disciples for Him into the generations to come, until He comes. And He is loving and compassionate. He is our source of hope and He hears when we cry out to Him.

Psalm 105:16-36

We are in the middle of a psalm, probably written by David, celebrating the faithfulness of God to Abraham in saving Israel and giving them order through David. Underline or circle every occurrence of *He*, and see if that helps you get to the point of this psalm and what it means to us.

Vs. 16-24 Notice that God afflicted Joseph in order to save Israel. Joseph was then blessed so that the people could be blessed. This was what God did in faithfulness to His promise to Abraham.

Vs. 25-36 Notice that God is the cause of v. 25. Again, He brought affliction to make the people ready. Then He sent Moses and He showed His deliverance, as we will see, because of the promise to Abraham.

I think this psalm is going to end in a call to grateful obedience and praise to God. The argument of the psalm is that praise should be natural, and confidence in God's faithfulness should be overpowering. He loves His people and remembers His covenant with Abraham.

Do you remember how often in Deuteronomy God and Moses told the people to always be telling the story of Israel's deliverance to their children? I don't think they did that, but here David is putting the story into song. When the man healed of the legion wanted to follow Jesus, Jesus told him to go home and tell the story of his rescue; and he did. It was the wonder and fascination of Christ and being rescued by Him that gave the man his story and message. In the same way it is our love for our Lord because He saved us that gives us our message in the harvest.

Proverbs 14:26-27

Amen, and I think this is exactly what Psalm 105 is getting to.