

Ruth the Expat

2. Character & Reputation

Ruth 2:1-23

What comes to mind?

- What comes to mind when you hear someone's name?
- Determined by memories, associations, experiences
- What about my name? How do others respond to my name?
- What comes to mind when you hear "Boaz" and "Ruth"?

Ruth 2:1-23 (NIV)

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

² And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favour.'

Naomi said to her, 'Go ahead, my daughter.' ³ So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

⁴ Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, 'The LORD be with you!'

'The LORD bless you!' they answered.

⁵ Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, ‘Who does that young woman belong to?’

⁶ The overseer replied, ‘She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. ⁷ She said, “Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.” She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.’

⁸ So Boaz said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. ⁹ Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.’

¹⁰ At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, ‘Why have I found such favour in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?’

¹¹ Boaz replied, ‘I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband – how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. ¹² May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.’

¹³ ‘May I continue to find favour in your eyes, my lord,’ she said. ‘You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant – though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.’

¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz said to her, 'Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.'

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. ¹⁵ As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, 'Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. ¹⁶ Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her.'

¹⁷ So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. ¹⁸ She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

¹⁹ Her mother-in-law asked her, 'Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!'

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. 'The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,' she said.

²⁰ 'The LORD bless him!' Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. 'He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.' She added, 'That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.'

²¹ Then Ruth the Moabite said, 'He even said to me, "Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain."'

²² Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, 'It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else's field you might be harmed.'

²³ So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Background

- **Wealth and poverty:** A reality in the Bible and in life
- **Caring for the poor:** “Gleaning” a way to help the poor
 - *"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the alien. I am the LORD your God."* Lev 23:22
- **Guardian-redeemer** (kinsman-redeemer): A family member who helps out when there is risk of losing property, name, descendants (Lev 25:25)

Our lives, attitudes
and actions reveal our
true character and
build our reputation

Characteristics of Ruth and Boaz

Characteristics of Ruth

- **Positive attitude** – although a foreigner, she offered to help
- **Initiative** – willing to go out to help alleviate their situation
- **Hard worker** – worked hard all day long
- **Modest** – not demanding or asking much
- **Reputation in town** – the workers heard, Boaz praised her (v11)
- **Humility** – worked in the fields as poor servant
- **Gratitude** – thanked Boaz for his kindness
- **Generous** – shared proceeds with Naomi
- **Faithful** – stayed with Naomi, served Yahweh

Characteristics of Boaz

- **Good memory** – son of Salmon and Rahab
- **Respected in community** – man of standing
- **Family friend** – relative of Elimelek
- **Generous** – allowed Ruth on his fields, gave more gifts
- **Protective** – had a heart for a stranger
- **Encourager** – gave credit to Ruth for her commitment
- **Responsible** – not avoiding his responsibility
- **Fair** – stayed within the rules

Behind the Reputation

- **Key verses 11&12:** Ruth accepted Naomi's God as her own
- Ingredient of true Character and Reputation: It's about God!
- God can be seen in this whole story

Ultimate Guardian-Redeemer

- Kinsman-redeemer requirements: related, willing and able
- God is such a Redeemer
 - In Old Testament: God saves Israel again and again
 - Jesus Christ is the Ultimate Redeemer
 - Isaiah 59:20 *“And a Redeemer will come to Zion”*
- Jesus died to set us free, paid the price for our redemption
 - *“Bought with a price”* (1 Cor 7:23)
 - *“Redeemed by Jesus”* (Rom 3:24)
 - *“You were slain and by your blood you ransomed people for God”* (Rev 5:9)
- Our invitation: Take refuge under the wings of God by accepting God’s provision in Jesus the Ultimate Redeemer

What comes to mind...?

- What do people say about you and me?
- How will we be remembered?
- Philippians 1:20-21 should be our prayer: *“I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

Prayer