

Ruth Chapter 3

Go After It the Right Way

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? ² Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³ Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”

Verse 1 –Here we see Naomi wanting to actively help Ruth find success and security. Naomi is operating in the role of a mentor to Ruth. Here are some traits of a good mentor:

- Good mentors are excited about your future; they want the best for you.
- A good mentor and a divine appointment will be concerned about your well-being and want the best for you.
- They tell you what is worth pursuing.
- They are not after what you’re after...not after your harvest.
- They tell you how to properly pursue it.

Verse 2 – Naomi points out that Boaz is kin folk. Our best is represented in the person of Boaz in the story.

Naomi understands the process for harvesting and tells Ruth where Boaz can be found and what he will be doing. He will be winnowing barley in the threshing floor.

- Winnowing or sifting or throwing the barley is used to separate the grain.
- Law called for the kinsman to marry the relative’s widow so that the name could continue. See Deuteronomy 25:7-9.
- She wants Ruth to go to Boaz for divine protection and to keep the estate from perishing.

Application for Today: We also have a rich relative represented in Jesus Christ. Our security and future rests in our submissive relationship to him.

Verse 3 – Naomi gives Ruth instructions to prepare for meeting Boaz.

- Wash up.
- Anoint yourself.
- Put on clean and appropriate clothes.
- Get down to the threshing floor.
- Wait until he’s done eating and drinking to celebrate the harvest.

Naomi – her mission now is not just pitying her situation. She is looking to hook Ruth up. Notice she is broke, can’t hook anybody up in the natural. But she can greatly help Ruth with what she does have.

Naomi has considerable knowledge of who Boaz is in relation to them and his biblical role as a kinsman redeemer. She doesn't have wealth but she does have a wealth of knowledge and experience. She knows Boaz. Knew about the law of the kinsmen redeemer (goel). There is a huge application here.

The harvest is over....her work almost done....time for the Redeemer to step in big. There will be a reward behind Ruth's faithfulness.

- Lev 25:48 – out of slavery
- Num 35:19 – an avenger
- Lev 25:25 – get stuff back
- Deut 25:5-10 – preserve your name/future

Verse 4 – Further instructions to Ruth are to mark the place where he lies down and go in and uncover his feet and lay down at his feet. He will then give her further instructions.

- You will get divine instructions before you get the divine promotion.
- Go after it the right way; dress for success....you may need to get rid of some stuff, wash some dirt off you.
- Notice the instructions here. She is to follow Boaz (type of Christ) and observe and follow him to the place where he lies down. She is supposed to then humbly follow and lie down in the place where he is...at his feet. When she does that....when she approaches him in this manner....then he will tell you what to do next. Oh, there is a spiritual application here for real. If you don't come correct....you may not know what to do in order to receive God's best.
- Naomi knows the traditions of the land. She knows that they harvest during the day but are separating the grain from the chaff during evening when the winds pick up. She knows they stay with the grain to protect it.
- In some of my favorite commentaries (David Guzik) it is noted that to uncover feet, was a custom or act of total submission. It was a sign of approaching someone in a humble way and looking to come under their protection.

Application for Today:

One day my son who was in high school at the time was getting ready to interview for a summer job. He was about to leave the house for his interview when I noticed how he was dressed. He had some khaki shorts, white sneakers and a button down short sleeve shirt. I stopped him quickly and asked him about his dress. I told him I didn't think that was appropriate attire for a job interview. Of course he didn't see the problem with how he was dressed and he pushed back against changing clothes. Then I remembered this story of Ruth Chapter 3. I pretty much told him the same thing Naomi says to Ruth. I told my son I wanted the best for him. I asked him how many job interviews he had been on previously. His answer was none.

Note: It is always good to be led by the Spirit in finding the right question to ask. Always try and use it in the form of a question rather than an accusation so the person can search themselves rather than focus on you.

I explained that I had considerable experience in both being interviewed and interviewing others. I told him I have been involved in more interviews than he has underwear in his drawer. In the end, while he didn't wear a suit, he was convinced enough to put on a more business casual uniform with long pants, shoes and a nicer button down shirt.

When he returned from the interview, I asked him how it went. He was hired, but not just hired. He was given an opportunity to shadow other workers who were engineers on medical equipment. It was a comfortable indoor job which helped to inspire him to later major as an engineer later in college. It was indeed the best job they had offered. I asked if other people who had interviewed were hired. He said yes, some were but they were hired for outdoor maintenance type work. Now in the hot humid summers of Alabama, there is a huge difference between working outdoors and having an indoor air conditioned gig. I asked him how the others kids were dressed for their interview. They all wore shorts and sneakers. I had made my point.

God may often place a mentor in your path, whether parent or minister or someone else who is connected to God to help guide you through the Word of God to lead you closer to Him and nearer the path He desires for your best season.

⁵ And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. ⁷ And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

Verse 5 – Ruth promises to obey these instructions. Naomi gives good advice since Ruth has not pursued this before.

Verse 6 – Ruth obeyed....that is a key to arriving at His best.

Verse 7 – Her approach, didn't interrupt the celebration and she came softly.

Application for Today:

- The key to receiving God's best is to be humble and obey the instructions given in the current season, so you can be in position to be promoted and move into your next or better season.
- Without her obedience, Ruth will never be in position to receive God's best.
- The same principle holds true for us today. Humble submission and obedience to the word of God is the key to your miracle.
- Hearing the Word, knowing the Word, and understanding the Word is important. But if you don't obey and apply the Word to your life, knowledge of the Word alone will not do you much good.

⁸ Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."

¹⁰ Then he said, "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the Lord lives! Lie down until morning."

Verse 8 – At midnight, he was afraid as he woke up and realized there's a woman at his feet.

- Boaz represents her redeemer or goel. So like Christ is our redeemer, we should be found at his feet.

Verse 9 – Boaz asks who it is. Her reply is Ruth his handmaid. So she asks for him to cover her because he is her near kinsman redeemer. She is applying for the kinsman redemption clause.

- Uncovering his feet was a sign in those days of asking for protection.
- She is exercising her rights; her legal and spiritual rights. Come boldly to the throne of grace.
- Some of us may need to hit our knees, fall down at his feet, and file an appeal for His favor and protection.
- Jesus may be referring to this same principle when he describes in Matthew 23:37; ***O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!***

Verse 10 – He blesses her because she has increased in her level of kindness. Kinder and better now than when she was humble and first started with them. Why, because she didn't seek the easy way out and didn't follow after the wrong guy or a different source of relief.

- Choices can have consequences; she was faithful until the end and didn't pursue after others.

Verse 11 – Boaz tells her to fear not. What did she have to be afraid of for Boaz to tell her not to worry? There was the fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of not being redeemed, fear of not getting God's best, etc. How does Boaz calm her fear? He makes a promise that he will fulfill her request and redeem her. Because all the city could tell she was a good woman.

Application for Today:

- Interesting...she is broke, but she is celebrated as being a good woman. Your bank account, house, and clothes will not qualify you to be good.

- People notice you while you are going through transition by your faith in the promises.
- When you are in right position at the threshing floor...a place of separation....you don't have to fear separation from Him.
- Just as Ruth faithfully awaits the promises of God, we too should continue to stand on the promises of God. Don't become weary for He is faithful to deliver you. This is the story and testimony of Ruth.
- Boaz compliments her by saying her faith at the beginning by humbly coming to this place and leaving her past behind was a great start and commendable. But even more impressive is her continued faithfulness to this point.
 - Many a Christian may start the race well, but greater is their faithfulness to continue to trust in Him.
 - He that began a good work in us is faithful to complete it (Philippians 1:6).
- Too often we want to bypass the process and fast forward to the reward and happy ending.
 - It doesn't work like that in the natural or the spiritual.
 - You can't be a sports champion without practicing and working out.
 - You can't get to the level 7 blessings and God's rest and peace without going through the other 6 steps in their proper order and sequence. It is the process and plan of God.

Verse 12 – Boaz tells her there is another kinsman who is closer in relationship or older than him who has the first rights. Refer to Leviticus 25.

- The next of kin could buy back a relative's property if they lost their inheritance. The near relative could get it back for them.
 - They must be willing to pay
 - They must be able to pay
 - They must be free themselves
- God intended to restore people so this is written in the Word.

Application for Today:

- We too have a close relative in Jesus Christ through belief in his shed blood for the remission and forgiveness of our sins.
- Christ was willing to pay the price.
- Christ was able to pay the price.
- Christ is free indeed.
- The purpose of Christ's ministry is to fulfill the plan of God for our lives which includes the restoration of His people. That is us who are believers in Him.

Verse 13 – She receives instructions. Ruth is to stay there tonight. In the morning, he will see if the other kinsman is willing to perform the part of the kinsman redeemer. But if he doesn't do that for her, then Boaz promises to step in and redeem her. She is to rest until morning.

- There's an obstacle that night; but in the morning the obstacle will be gone. Don't be discouraged if there are obstacles in your path on the way to His best or your better season.

- Don't become discouraged if He doesn't take care of it that night or right now...just keep hanging around Him.
- Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning.
- She still hasn't received God's best yet, but she can praise Him because she has a new promise that she will be delivered.

Application for Today:

- The same principle holds true for us as believers today. If you know the promises God has toward you, you may find the same relief that Ruth has and be able to rest at night because you can trust God to keep His promises toward you.
- If you don't know the promises God has for you, it can be found in the Bible and it can also be found in this story of Ruth.
- He is the same God. If He can make this happen for Ruth, He is willing and able to do the same thing for us. That is the plan!

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, "Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵ Also he said, "Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.

Verse 14 – Boaz is concerned about her honor. He points out that some folk don't need to know some stuff...even if innocent. Boaz didn't take advantage of her. While you're waiting on God to work out your problems in the morning; don't be found sinning at night.

Verse 15 – Before she goes, he blesses her with 6 measures of barley. Why 6? She returns to the city.

- While she is waiting...she gets blessed. While 7 is the number for spiritual perfection, 6 seems to indicate the blessing is incomplete...so more must be on the way.
- That was probably all she could carry or handle at the time.
- Boaz didn't give her more than she could handle.

Note: Some commentaries may mention that the advice Naomi gives Ruth is not sound or wise counsel. It would seem that sending Ruth to a man at night may not be spiritually wise and pose considerable risk. Certainly in today's climate, this may be true. Perhaps the culture of time and the fact it was Boaz makes this acceptable. It is not my challenge at the time to debate this. The greater fact is that she followed a process which every believer must pursue and is blessed along the way, which encourages her to remain faithful and see the glory and restoration of God manifested in her life as a testimony and encouragement to others. There is more value in this process for my ministry than in debating less significant points.

Application for Today:

- Don't complain about the blessing you receive. God knows what you can handle and His best is still in front of you.
- She doesn't yet receive the manifestation, but she has a promise and a blessing to encourage her along the way.
 - It will work the same way for us. While we continue faithfully through the process, we must stand on the promises and take note of the blessings along the way. They are designed to encourage and sustain you through the wait.
 - The indwelling power of the Holy Spirit within the believer should be blessing enough to sustain your faith in the promises to come in your life.

¹⁶ When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her. ¹⁷ And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

¹⁸ Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Verse 16 – Ruth returns to her mentor and tells her what happened. It is a good thing to tell your divine connection what is going on.

Verse 17 – Given 6 measures so she wouldn't go home empty to her mother-in-law. God will provide what you need to get you through to your next break through.

- See how Naomi is also blessed as well and by design and on purpose. It is the will of God that both sower and reaper receive a reward (see John 4:36).

Application for Today:

- You won't come out of this empty if you help others reach His best.
- He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Verse 18 – More good advice...sit still and rest and watch Him work. She had done all she could do and needed to do. Boaz is at work now. Perhaps another reason why she receives 6 measures and not 7.

- Sit still until you see how it will work out.
- Boaz will not rest until the work is finished that day.
- Her answer is on the way.

Application for Today:

- We have a near kinsmen in Jesus Christ. He will not rest until the plan of God is fulfilled.
- There is a point in the journey where we cannot rely on our own strength or efforts and must merely surrender and trust in God.
 - In fact, when we receive the Spirit and new birth, we should already be relying on the power of God within us and not our own flesh to finish the work. We cannot complete His will or please God in the flesh.

Other Notes and Observations from J. Turner

- Before God makes another move in your life, you may need to get rid of some stuff. Wash some dirt off and change your clothes.
- God gives divine instruction before divine protection.
- Pursuit is the part you must play in order to fulfill your destiny and God's best.
- Wanting it real bad is not good enough.
 - We want to be blessed but sometimes keep doing dumb things trying to get there.
- Know your rights; you have a right to be blessed.
- It is not how you start, but how you finish.
- There is a possibility that Ruth might start thinking that Boaz won't save her. Boaz tells her not to fear or worry about that.
 - Jesus like Boaz also tells us to fear not. Christians can become fearful along the way.
 - Fear can keep you from God's best.
- The Law (Old Testament) represents legally what we were under; it is the example of the nearer kinsman before Jesus/Boaz. Boaz/Jesus will take care of the matter for Ruth/Us.
 - Jesus fulfilled the Law just as Boaz follows the Law.
 - Some obstacles you can't handle yourself.
- While you wait, hold out your hand and receive the measured blessing now.
- Don't complain about the measure, the outpouring is still on the way.
 - You don't have all of it yet because you can't handle it yet.
 - If Boaz had poured it all out on her, Ruth wouldn't have been able to handle it.
- While you wait, God will never let you return empty.
- Boaz is working it out for Ruth; Christ is working it out for us.
- Boaz/Jesus may be out of your sight, but he's behind the scenes working it out for you.