In the Fields of Boaz

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Preacher: Joey Snodgrass

[0:01] Amen. As always, I'm thankful for our worship team leading us so well in praising God together as! we gather together to sit under the teaching of his word.

! If we could please keep all phones away.
It's very easy to distract yourself or distract those around you with being on a phone. So if you would please keep those away for tonight and pay attention to what God says to us through his word.
And so with that, if you would open with me to Ruth chapter 2. We started a brief series through the book of Ruth last week, finishing chapter 1, and we'll be in chapter 2 tonight.
And so last week, as we looked at Ruth chapter 1, we saw our title was To Moab and Back. And we were introduced to two of our three main characters, Naomi and Ruth.
[1:14] Naomi was married to a man named Elimelech, and that couple and their two sons went to Moab to evade a shortage of food, a famine in their home country, hometown of Bethlehem.

In the course of time, when they're in Moab, Elimelech dies, so making Naomi a widow. Her two sons marry two Moabite women, and then her two sons die.
And so now it's just Naomi and her two daughters-in-law. One of them stays behind in Moab. Ruth goes back to Bethlehem with Naomi. And we get their journey back, and it ends them entering Bethlehem during the beginning of the barley harvest at the end of chapter 1.
The main conflict of this plot is the emptiness of these two women. They're without husbands. Naomi is even past her childbearing years.
And that problem is the primary issue with this story. And this story, as we looked at last week, is largely carried along by the conversations that the main characters have.
[2:24] And so Ruth and Naomi were speaking last week. We're introduced to another main character tonight. And so the conversations in this book are really like the muscles or the engine that move this story forward.

And if those conversations are the muscles, then the backbone or the skeleton of this story would be scene changes. So we were to Moab and back last week.
And tonight, we're primarily in the fields of Boaz. And so our main points each week will really revolve around these scene changes. That's how the author is indicating to us to pay attention. There's a change in scene. There's something new coming. And so firstly, we'll have three points tonight. But firstly, at home with Naomi. At home with Naomi.
Verse 1 begins, Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And just like at the end of chapter 1, at the beginning of chapter 2 here, the narrator or the author is speaking directly to us.
[3:29] There's no conversation happening. There's no advancement in the plot so far. He's just giving us some information. And he introduces us to our third main character named Boaz.

And he doesn't really elaborate on who this guy is. He just introduces us to him, says he's a family member of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband.
But why is he telling us about this dude? It kind of piques our curiosity. It kind of draws our attention in. Why would he interrupt his story to tell us about this random guy?
Well, he gives us this information at the front because he'll become a key player in the rest of the story and even in the rest of this chapter. But he's described as a relative of Naomi's husband.
And this is important because Naomi would not have been a stranger to Boaz. Boaz likely would have known who Naomi was. Elimelech was a relative of some kind to him.
[4:30] And so he likely would have known about or at least known of his wife, Naomi. And he's described as a worthy man. And this Hebrew phrase is gibor hail.

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And it's used of like war heroes, like David's mighty men who conquered giants and defeated nations in battle. And so these are, this term is used for war heroes, men of great bravery or valor, or just used of wealthy men in general, men who have conquered, men who have been successful in their field of business.
And Boaz is incredibly successful and incredibly wealthy, as we'll see later on in this chapter. He's presented here as a strong and successful man.
And so far, that's a contrast to every other man in this book so far. The other three men that have been introduced in this book have died. Elimelech ran away from the promised land to evade a famine.
Their boys, Siki and Ikki, died in Moab. But here's someone who's strong. Here's someone who accomplishes God's will. And even his name, Boaz, means in him is strength.
[5:44] And so he's not just a strong character. He also has a strong name. And he's introduced to us as a worthy man. And so he stands in contrast to the men of this book so far.

But remember when this book was taking place. It was in the days when the judges ruled. And so this isn't just a strong, righteous man in comparison to the other men in this book.
This is a strong, righteous man in comparison to the rest of the dark days of the judges. He is a shining beacon of light during these dark days.
Why does the author tell us about this guy? He knows Naomi. He's technically related to her by law. And perhaps he will have some obligation to her. Maybe these family ties will pull on his heart to provide and provide for and protect these two widows.
[6:45] And what we know is that if he decides to act on those feelings, if he decides to act on those legal obligations, he certainly has the means, he certainly has the money to provide for them.

But his introduction here in verse 1 is no guarantee of his involvement in the plot of this story. But with this little bit of information about him, we know way more about him than Ruth does.
Naomi might know him distantly. Naomi will remember his name. But Ruth doesn't know anyone. She doesn't know who Elimelech's related to. She just knows she's in a strange land with her mother-in-law.
And so she would have zero clue who this is. And in verse 2, we get a glimpse into Naomi's living room. It says, 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 so it doesn't seem like a lot of time passes since these two ladies came back to Bethlehem. And now Ruth is saying, Let me get to work. Let me provide for us. Let me find some food for us. And so let me go and glean.
[7:52] Let me go get some food. This is a risky plan. Her safety is not guaranteed. Being a single woman out in the fields of Israel would not be safe, especially because she was a foreigner.

She was from Moab. And so this was a risky plan. But she risks her safety in order to work for an opportunity to provide for herself and her mother-in-law.
And this word glean shows up here in verse 2. The author is going to use this about 12 times throughout the rest of this chapter. So this is really the key word of this chapter.
And so what gleaning was is during the harvest time, these harvesters would go out with like sickles in their hand, and they would just cut down all of the grain that had grown up out of the ground. People would come behind them, and they would bundle up this standing grain and lay it in piles in the field.
And what gleaners would do is they would come behind those reapers and pick up anything that was left on the ground. So any stock of grain that had fallen down on the ground, they were free to pick up.
[8:56] Any individual pieces of grain that had fallen on the ground, they could go through and pick up. And the law of Israel actually required farmers to not go back and pick up things that had fallen down.

This was like a work-based welfare system for those who were impoverished, or for foreigners in Israel. And so this was a way to stay alive. This is a way to provide some food, but this would not have been a luxurious living.
This would have been like living off of recycling cans. Like you're going to maybe be able to scratch by, but it's not going to be very pretty. And so it provides for her, but she's saying, I just want to ask permission to go glean in someone's field, just so we can eat today, just so we can have another

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meal for ourselves on the table.
And Naomi says to her simply, go, my daughter. And this is the first conversation they've had since chapter 1, verse 17, where Naomi says, hey, where you go, I will go.
And Ruth just doesn't even respond. Naomi doesn't even respond to her. They just walk in silence. And now kind of tersely, almost coldly, Naomi just says, go.
[10:05] Now she calls her my daughter, so there's still affection there, but she doesn't say, hey, good luck, or hey, be careful, watch out. She just says, go. And that brings us secondly to Ruth in the fields of Boaz.

Ruth in the fields of Boaz. Verse 3 says, so she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers.
And so these three words set out, went, gleaned. They kind of quickly transition the story from the city to the countryside, from Naomi's house to some field out in the country where the harvest is taking place.
And it says, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. The author is kind of winking at us here.
She just so happened. And in the original, it's even, it's like by chance, she happened to come upon this field that belonged to Boaz.
[11:11] Remember, she doesn't know who Boaz is. And these fields aren't labeled in Israel. They're just open fields. And so she's just wandering around and happens to show up in Boaz's field.

And I say the author's kind of winking at us here because this is exactly how God's providence works. It's so normal. It's so just making routine, daily decisions.
But we know there is ultimately no chance or luck in this universe that is governed by God. God is providentially behind the scenes, guiding every step that Ruth takes.
God has guided her steps to the field of Boaz, even though she didn't know that yet. She didn't even know who Boaz was. She didn't know that the Lord was providentially guiding where she went.
And again, she doesn't even know who Boaz is at this point. But as you live your life, this is how God's work in our lives typically looks. Typically not anything miraculous.
[12:19] Typically not anything that's going to grab our attention. But when we look back, it's like, I see God was working in that. And for me personally, I've seen this several times in my life.

I've seen it a lot of times in my life. But one of the primary ones that stands out is my family coming to this church. And so from the first 15 years of my parents' marriage, we went to a church in Yukon.
And when I was in ninth grade, my parents were like, hey, I think we need to change. I think it would help you if you went to school. You go to school in Mustang. And if you went to church in the town you went to school in. So Mustang Church because you go to Mustang schools.
And so we're going to plan to try out all the Baptist churches in Mustang. And we just so happened to come to First Baptist Mustang on that first Sunday. Where the pastor just so happens to be Michael, who's preaching from God's word.
Who's preaching very clearly and explaining what God's word means. And we had never heard anything like that before. And so we stayed. We didn't go anywhere else. And as I grew up here, as I was learning God's word here, there just so happened to be a girl here that I got close to and is now my wife.
[13:31] And so I look back on my wife and I can clearly see God's providence working in all of those details.

But in the moment, it was just so ordinary. It was just so routine, so day to day. And so Ruth is providentially guided.
She just so happens to come to the field belonging to Boaz. Now, if the two of them could just meet each other.
If the two of them could just have some interaction. And verse 4 says, and behold. The author's like, surprise. Guess who showed up to work that day? Boaz.
He's got multiple fields. Ruth just so happens to come to a field that belongs to him. And Boaz just so happens to come to that field on that day that she's there. And Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to his reapers, Yahweh be with you.

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[14:35] And they answered, Yahweh bless you. But that word behold is like, look, pay attention to this. This is a key detail. And Ryle, our youngest son, he just turned two earlier this month.

He's starting to have a lot of conversations with us. It's so precious. But one of the things he's liking to do right now is calling attention to whatever he's got in his hand. So he'll be like, you know, helicopter. He can't say that. But he tries to say helicopter.
And it's like, oh, you got a helicopter? And he says, Wook. Wook. And he will not stop saying that until you're like, stop what you're doing. You're like, oh, yeah, that's cool. So he's wanting to draw us in.
And really, this is the author of Ruth saying, Wook. Boaz showed up in his field. And he doesn't have a typical greeting. Typical greetings in Israel, even to this day, would be shalom, which means peace.
And so they're saying, peace be with you. But Boaz says, Yahweh be with you. This is a very God-centered man. He centered his life around God.
[15:37] He's created a gracious work environment that's centered on the reality of who God is. And now, why is he here? He's probably just checking in on things.

He's probably just checking in on the guys he's set to supervise this field. Hey, you doing good? You need anything? Everyone show up to work today. How's production looking? But something catches his eye.
And in verse 5, Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, whose young woman is this? Boaz is highly aware.
He's organized. Probably why he became successful at what he's doing. But what exactly is Boaz asking here? Whose young woman is this?
Well, he could be asking about her family. Who's her dad? What family does she belong to? He could be asking about her employment. Who does she work for?
[16:34] I haven't hired her. Who is she working for? Or he could even be asking about her marital status. Whose wife is she? Who is she married to?

And then why does she catch Boaz's eye? Well, it's likely that he could tell she was a foreigner. It seems like she's standing off to the side waiting to get permission to glean in this field.
But we don't know exactly what Boaz is meaning by this question. We don't know exactly what piece of information he's after. And what we'll see starting now is as this plot thickens, the author continues to use kind of intentionally vague words.
He's using words that really are kind of open to interpretation. That could have multiple different meanings depending on how the speaker intends himself or herself to be heard.
And that vagueness is kind of enticing to us. It kind of draws us in. What exactly does he mean? And he gets a really very specific answer from his foreman here.
[17:40] He says she's the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. And so it's likely that Ruth checked in and was like, hey, do I have permission to glean in your field today?

And he just sent her off to the side to say, hey, you're going to have to ask the owner of the field. Or he didn't want to deal with it. And so he sent her off. But she's standing there waiting to receive this permission because she says in verse 7, please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.
And this supervisor says, so she came and she's continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest. I don't think she had started working yet because in the next verse, Boaz actually gives her permission.
And so I think what's happening is she's standing off to the side waiting for the owner of the field to walk by so that she can ask him herself. And I think this supervisor is saying she's stood there, she's waited until now, except for a short rest.
And if you've got a new American standard or legacy standard, it says something about a house, doesn't it? Is that right? Yeah. So it's like she's made her home here, kind of is what the guy is saying. And so Boaz is asked about her.
[18:47] He's learned some information about her. And now Boaz and Ruth are about to meet. And in movies or in plays or in books, what this is called is a meet cute, M-E-E-T cute.

It's boy meets girl. It's serendipitous. They pass each other in the hallway. They make eye contact. Something initiates their conversation. And here Boaz and Ruth are about to share their first

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conversation.
Verse eight, Boaz said to Ruth. What will he say? Will he be kind to her? Or is he going to shoo her away?
He has the right to do either one. He says, now listen, my daughter. So there's likely an age gap between them. Boaz seems to be in Naomi's generation.
And he speaks to her with great tenderness and great care and great kindness. Do not go to glean in another field or leave this one.
[19:52] And you can almost see him pointing at the ground. Don't leave this field. But keep close to my young women. 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. He is abundantly kind to Ruth.
She doesn't deserve this by nature. He's incredibly kind to her. And he says, keep close to my young women at the end of verse eight. And if you remember back in chapter one, it says, Ruth clung to her.
It's the same word used in Genesis two of holding fast to your wife. That's the same word Boaz uses here. He says, cling to my young women. Stay with them in the field.
Keep your eyes on this field. And he says, verse nine, I've charged the young men not to touch you. They will not harm you. They will not assault you. They will not lay a hand on you. You are safe here.
[20:53] You are safe in this field. And Boaz doesn't just give her permission to glean in his fields after the reapers, but he also provides for her thirst.

He says, when you're thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn. And that was interesting because in the ancient world, women were usually the ones who went to draw water and they would bring it back for the men who are working.
But in Boaz's field, the men are the ones who go, the ones who go draw the water and bring it back. And so he's telling Ruth, you're free to drink the water that they've drawn.
And this would save her a lot of time, not having to go to the well and get a drink herself. This would also enable her to work longer through the heat. She's able to have access to water. But it's not just a woman drinking water that men have drawn, but it's a Moabite girl drinking Israelite water.
He is incredibly kind and hospitable and generous to her. And Ruth recognizes this in verse 10. 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?
[22:07] She had set out to find a field where she could find favor in someone's eyes. And she has found what she's looking for.

She's found a field where she is safe, found a field where she has permission to work and provide for herself and her mother-in-law. And she says, you took notice of me.
You recognized me. She's saying, you're treating me like you've known me, but I'm a foreigner. And a foreigner was even less than a sojourner. A sojourner is like, hey, I'm just staying here temporarily.
I'm just staying here while I pass through this country. But Ruth is a foreigner. She's saying, I'm staying here long term and I don't belong here originally. I'm a foreigner.
You don't owe me anything. And yet you treat me like you've known me. I found favor in your eyes. And she's not just asking a rhetorical question. She actually wants to know why.
[23:06] Why are you treating me like this? And we kind of want to know the same thing. Like, does Boaz treat every stranger this way? Does he treat every Moabite this way? Does he recognize that she's a distant relative of his because she's connected to Naomi?

What is it that motivates him to do this? Well, he kind of answers, but not fully. Verse 11, he says, Boaz answers and says to her, he addresses that she's had faith in Yahweh and she's been kind to Naomi.
He says, all that you've 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 in your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.
Yahweh repay you for what you've done. And a full reward be given you by Yahweh, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

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He praises her faith. He says, you came to a people in a land that you didn't know. And he's describing her faith in like an Abrahamic way.
[24:14] Abraham left his father and mother and came to a land that he didn't know. And he's saying, you did the same thing. You should be honored for this. May the Lord repay you for your faithfulness.

And he describes this people that you didn't know before. And it literally, if we translate it literally, it says, you didn't know them yesterday, three days ago. And so he's like, last week, you didn't even know who, what Israel was like.
And now you're living here. You've abandoned everything that you used to know. And you've come here to seek safety and refuge under the wings of Yahweh. And so Boaz prays for her here, for divine protection that the Lord would bless her.
And this imagery of wings is common in the ancient world where the picture is like of a mother bird hovering over her young, providing for them, keeping them warm, protecting them from any potential predators.
And he says, may Yahweh repay you for what you've done. What currency is God going to pay her in? What is that going to look like?
[25:22] Is he going to give her food? Is he going to give her shelter? Is he going to give her money? Is he going to give her a husband? What will the Lord do to repay her faithfulness?

And Ruth, once again, in verse 13, says, I have found favor in your eyes, my Lord. And again, the same phrase, this is what she was looking for.
For you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants. She says, you've spoken kindly to me, even though you didn't have to.
You comforted me, even though I don't even belong to you. You were kind to me. And so just with his words, he has undone her fears and he has encouraged her with his kindness.
And what kind of fears has she had since her husband died? Lots of them. How am I going to eat? Who's going to take care of me?
[26:25] Will I be taken advantage of in this cruel and hostile world? Who's going to provide for me? And Boaz, in his kindness and tenderness toward her, washes her fears away.

And gentlemen, this is how you should speak to ladies, okay? Ruth is not a manual for dating or marriage or any of that, but Boaz is an excellent example of speaking with kindness.
Too many guys are trying to riz up some ladies. Just be kind. Like, it's biblical. It's for the Spirit. Just be kind to them. Just speak kindly to them.
But there's also a little bit of fuzziness here in the language that Ruth uses. She says, you've comforted me and spoken kindly to me or spoken tenderly to your servant. Is he just being kind? Are there some romantic connotations in this way that he's speaking to her? Ruth seems to have a desire for ongoing conversation with what she says here.
[27:33] She's almost saying, keep speaking to me. You have allayed my fears. You've comforted me with your kindness. And the narrative skips to lunchtime.

Verse 14. 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.
He goes beyond just permission to glean in her fields. He goes beyond taking care of her thirst. He also takes care of her hunger here. He doesn't just welcome her to his fields.
He gives her a spot at the table. And when was the last time she ate like this? When was the last time she ate until she was full and then had some leftover? We don't know.
But she's abundantly provided for here in this setting. Boaz is welcoming her into his workforce. In verse 15.
[28:38] She gets back to work after lunch. She rose again to glean. And Boaz instructed his young men saying, let her glean even among the sheaves and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean and do not rebuke her.

And so what Boaz is saying here is he's like, hey, make her work easier. And so pull out some of the grain you've got bundled up already and leave it on the ground for her. And she can come by and pick it up.
Don't rebuke her. Let her work. Verse 17. So she gleaned in the field until evening. And she beat out what she had gleaned. And it was about an ephah of barley.

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And so she takes this grain. She takes these crops over and basically gets rid of the husk and just has the grain left. It would save room in her basket or whatever she's carrying this in. It would also allow her to take more grain home.
And it mentions an ephah of barley. This is somewhere between 30 and 50 pounds of grain. And so Ruth was strong. She carried this thing all the way back to the city.
[29:41] So did CrossFit or something. I don't know. But she carries this weight back. And this was about two weeks worth of grain. An average reaper per day would get about two pounds of grain.

And she gets at least 30. And so for one day of work, she gets two weeks of pay, essentially. And so he not only provided for her thirst and her hunger, he's also providing for Naomi through this as well.
All of this generosity is coming at his expense. This is his crop that he's giving to her. This is his food that she's eating.
Why is he so generous? He recognizes that everything he has ultimately comes from God. And so everything he has is because of God's generosity to him.
And so he's going to be generous with what the Lord has given him. And so what we can say about Boaz is that the way he lives his life, his actions, are shaped by his theology.
[30:41] The way he lives is a result of what he believes about God. And the same is true of us. How you live your life is dictated by what you think about God.

And so if you have a very low view of God or you don't think about God, your actions are going to show that. But if you have a very high view of God, a very biblical view of God, your life should reflect that as well.
And so God's kindness to us in Christ should make us kind people. Everything you have, everything I have, is from God.
And we should use it to glorify him. And Boaz is a provider. He's a man. And so gentlemen, once again, be a provider.
Pay for dinner if you go on a date, okay? Don't make her pay. You provide. Boaz, through his generosity, through his provision, is showing her God's love.
[31:39] He's showing her what God is like. And the same should be true of us as individual Christians. It should be true of our church as well. Outsiders should feel loved by Christians.

Outsiders should feel loved by the church. James 1 says, True religion that is undefiled before God the Father is this.
To visit orphans and widows in their affliction. Boaz is being an honorable man. He is worshiping the Lord in purity by taking care of these two widows.
And through Boaz's generosity and Ruth's hard work, Naomi herself is filled as well. And so we see number three, home again, home again. Verses 18 through 23.
So we get another scene change in verse 18. Ruth took it up and went into the city. So she goes home. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned.
[32:44] She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. And so Naomi sees the grain that Ruth has brought back. She also sees her to-go box from lunch that's cooked food that she's provided as well.

And Naomi's like, what in the world? Where did you go today? She asked that twice. She says, where were you? Like, what field were you working in? Verse 19. Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? And before Ruth has a chance to answer those questions, she says, Blessed be the man who took notice of you.
Again, this is about two weeks worth of food. Two weeks worth of pay that she's gained in her first day on the job. And it wasn't even a full day because she was waiting to get started until Boaz showed up. And so Naomi blurts out this blessing before Ruth even answers.
And then Ruth answers. And so she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, The man's name with whom I worked today is... And she's kind of building some anticipation with saying Boaz's name last.
[33:56] This is what you do when you go to your parents asking for permission to do something fun. You're like, hey, since I did my chores, I was wondering if I could... Mom said I could, but I just wanted to... Need to check with you if it'd be okay if we went and did...

The last words out of your mouth are what you actually want to do. And Ruth is kind of doing the same thing to build some tension. She's saying, The man's name with whom I worked today is

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Boaz.
And again, this doesn't really mean that much to Ruth. I mean, Ruth is amazed at the generosity that Boaz has showed her. But from Ruth's perspective, Boaz is just a kind, wealthy man from Bethlehem.
But as soon as this name is said, Naomi's ears perk up. Verse 20, 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. We've known who Boaz is for a while from the opening line of this book.
[35:08] Ruth still doesn't know. And Naomi explains to her who this actually is. And notice that God's name is back on Naomi's lips.

The last time she spoke, the name of Yahweh was saying, He has dealt bitterly with me. And now because of Boaz's generosity, Yahweh's name comes back on Naomi's lips and she's saying, His kindness has not forsaken us.
His kindness prevails for us today. His kindness has still not forsaken the dead. Referring to the men in her family. May he be blessed by Yahweh.
And she says, The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers. And here there's just a ring of hope in Naomi's voice. Maybe these family ties will lead him to continue to provide for these two widows.
Not just today. Not just this week. Maybe his generosity will be ongoing. And light is beginning to dawn on Naomi's soul. Naomi was incredibly bitter at the end of chapter one.
[36:14] Especially toward God. And now she's starting to see what the Lord might be doing through this. All because of Boaz's kindness to Ruth.

Kindness is an encouragement to bitter and weary souls. And she calls him a redeemer. And in the Old Testament, a redeemer was a male relative who had the ability to set you free from financial difficulty.
To pay your way out of trouble. Or to set you free from slavery. If you had sold yourself into slavery because of debt. He could set you free. He could purchase you out of your trouble.
And so the Bible calls this a kinsman redeemer. Someone who's in your family. Who has the ability and the legal obligation to set you free. And this little bit of information.
He's one of our redeemers. Opens up a ton of new possibilities in this story. He's not just a kind and wealthy man. He has legal obligations to continue to help these ladies.
[37:26] What would that help look like? Is he going to just bankroll them? Is he going to continue to feed them? Or are there other long-term solutions that he could provide for their emptiness?

Verse 21, Ruth the Moabite. Again, showing that her race might be a barrier to what could happen. It says, besides he said to me, you shall keep close by my young men until they've finished all my harvest.
And so this isn't just a week. This is until the harvest is over. And so she's got a summer job nailed down. She's got a job, a place she can go continually to provide for them.
And her and Boaz would continue to have some interactions here and there. They'd continue to bump into each other in his fields. And Naomi says to Ruth, verse 22, it's good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted.
Again, it's a dangerous time for a single woman to be in the open fields of Israel. A lot of dark things happened in the book of Judges, especially to women. And Naomi saying, it is good that you found a safe place to go.
[38:46] And just like at the end of chapter one, so here at the end of chapter two, the narrator kind of steps back into the center to bring this scene to a close. So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvest.

And she lived with her mother-in-law. And so this phrase, until the end of the harvest, gives us a time stamp. So about two months have passed.
Roughly seven or eight weeks. And they've been provided for. But this phrase is also transitioning to what's next.
They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the harvest. And now the harvest is over. And she likely would have had continued conversation with Boaz. These women would have been eating well during this time.

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But the scene almost comes to a kind of a thud, like a disappointing end. And she lived with her mother-in-law. Now this is good because Ruth is keeping her promise.
[39:49] She said, where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Where you lodge, I will lodge. And she's being faithful to her word. But the harvest is over now. There's no more work to be done.

And so there's also no more interaction with Boaz. Ruth's been faithful to Naomi. The Lord has provided through Boaz. Their stomachs are no longer empty.
But the primary problem still is not solved. At the end of the day, they're just two widows living alone in Bethlehem.
And in that sense, they're still empty. There's no marriage. There's no kids. Their family is still at risk of extinction. What will happen to these ladies?
What's going to take place in the rest of this story? And while there's some sadness and maybe some disappointments that nothing really developed with Boaz, Yahweh is on the move.
[40:51] They've seen him working. They've seen his kindness through Boaz. They've seen him orchestrating the details. We as the reader have heard his name on the lips of all of the main characters at this point.

Boaz has been the instrument through which God temporarily provided for these ladies. But what about their long-term needs of family? How is the Lord going to take care of them next year or 10 years from now?
What is the Lord going to do? We don't have all the answers yet, but there's enough hope to keep us reading. There's enough hope to help Ruth and Naomi stay alive.
And we've been introduced to the third main character, Boaz. He's a kinsman redeemer. And as the details of this story play out, we'll see this more clearly.
But even in this introduction to him, he points us to Christ. Christ, he's a kinsman redeemer. And Jesus became like us.
[41:56] He became human so that he could redeem mankind. He could purchase us out of our slavery to sin. And Jesus does not just provide us bread.

He is the bread of life. He doesn't just give us some of his resources. He gives us himself. He, as 2 Corinthians said, impoverished himself so that we might become rich.
And as we read about Boaz, we're learning about a historical man for sure. But we're seeing someone who points us to Christ.
And I would encourage you as we continue to learn about him and see what he does, that you would believe in Christ. That you would look to him. He loves sinners.
He loves to have mercy on those who know they don't deserve it. He loves to invite people to his table who don't belong there by nature.
[42:55] He would love to have mercy on you tonight. Let me pray for us. Our Father, we thank you for your goodness to us in providing us all the riches of Christ.

Thank you for this book of Ruth that as we've been introduced to the character of Boaz, that we would see Boaz, but look ultimately to your son, Jesus Christ. Boaz is a type of your son.
He is righteous. He is worthy. He is generous and loving towards outsiders. And I pray as we learn what will happen between these three main characters, that we would ultimately remember your provision for us.
You send our lives through many dark and difficult paths. But I pray that even in the midst of that darkness, we'd be able to know, even if we can't see it yet, that we would know you're providentially working behind the scenes to bring about your will, to glorify yourself, and ultimately for our good as your people.
And so I pray for us that you would give us eyes of faith to see all of your providence in our lives that has already taken place in the past, and that would help sustain our faith through darkness in the present, knowing you are a God who works behind the scenes and nothing is left to chance in this universe.
[44:17] I pray for these students as they go to small groups. You'd bless them and edify them during this time. It's in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

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