

## Boaz And Pentecost

Christ's Work of Redemption

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Have you ever read a book and wondered why the author, editor, or publisher decided to call it by the name that is on the cover?

I tend to like to read classics and I remember reading the *Iliad* when I was a teenager, and I wondered why did Homer, or whoever, called it the *Iliad*, because it is really about the Trojan War. So, why did they not call it the Troy-i-ad? I never understood why it was called the *Iliad*—well I did, and I did not. You see, the name *Iliad* comes from the city of Ilion, or Ileum. And, Troy was the name of the city-state in which Ileum was in, and that Prium was the ruler of. We call them Trojans because they were from the city-state of Troy, but the city was named Ileum.

But, as it has come about over the past three thousand years, the names have become interchangeable. So now, we call the city Troy. But, Homer (or whoever) wrote this, I am sure he did not put the title to it—some people are not even sure that Homer even existed—regardless, the first words of the story are, "The wrath of Achilles. . ." And that is the theme of the story. Why did they not call it, *The Wrath of Achilles*? I do not know. But, the whole thing is about why Achilles was angry, and what the consequences of that anger were.

And then, one of my favorites is *The Lord of the Rings*. That is a thought-provoking title. Each of the three books in the collection has its own name—*Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Two Towers*, and *The Return of the King*. But the whole story is named *The Lord of the Rings*.

Now, the Lord of the Rings is a powerful being named Sauron—he is the enemy in the story, the bad guy, the evil one in the background. As a matter of fact, in the entire three books, which are about a thousand pages total, this evil being, Sauron, never once appears personally, but his presence is there, in the background, the shadowy, evil character who is the cause of all the bad things that happen in the story.

However, the collection is called *The Lord of the Rings*. The book is actually about nine companions going to destroy the stupid ring. Why did the author, J.R.R. Tolkien, not call it, *The Destruction of the Rings*, or *The Quest to Destroy the Rings*, or *Frodo's Big Adventure*. Nonetheless, he called it *The Lord of the Rings*. It is really thought-provoking. Tolkien was a very thoughtful man, so much so that it took him about 17 years to write

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the whole trilogy. And, he ended up calling it *The Lord of the Rings*.

There is a book in the Old Testament that may fit the same pattern—the idea that a book is called one thing, but the subject matter is about another. This book's title is the name of one of its characters. Granted this person is a prominent character in the story—because a lot of action occurs around that character—however, if you performed a word search of the story for the names of the people, you will find that one person's name occurs 21 times, another person's name occurs 19 times, while the title character's name appears only 12 times. Who, then, is the real main character of the book?

Maybe this book's title should be something else. It seems to me that while the title character moves the action along, the other two characters can be considered more central to the themes and the instruction.

In this sermon, I want to focus on the character whose name is mentioned most in this particular book—the book of Ruth. The person mentioned most often—21 times—is Boaz. And Boaz is a type of Christ. So, in relation to Pentecost (which is an underlying theme of the book of Ruth) this use of Boaz' name 21 times hints at just how much our Savior is involved in our Christian lives.

We will read Exodus 23—we never want to get very far away from holy day itself.

**Exodus 23:14-16** "Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field.

Here is the first mention of the biblical Day of Pentecost, although called here, "The Feast of Harvest." What is emphasized as significant to this day? Remember the law of first mention that we have talked about before. Here, the first thing that is mentioned about the Feast of Weeks is that it is a harvest festival. It is a festival of harvest, of when they reap. And particularly it is the harvest of firstfruits. So, the law of first mentions would indicate to us that the main theme of the Day of Pentecost is the harvest of the firstfruits. And that, of course, is what we have always taught in the church of God (since Mr. Armstrong's time) that this day commemorates—the memorial to us of the harvest of

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firstfruits. But, in a greater way, as we will see here, it is a memorial to God's work in bringing in the harvest and what He does to make that happen.

Now Pentecost, of course, is seven weeks or fifty days from the waving of the sheaf after the Sabbath during Unleavened Bread, so it is also called the Feast of Weeks, because you count seven weeks, or fifty days—Pentecost = Count Fifty. Either way, you come out on this day, today.

Now, let us go to Leviticus 23, and keep in mind, here, what is said about the feast of harvest from Exodus 23. The feast of harvest, the fruit of your labors that you have sown in the field. I always find it interesting that this is mentioned in the covenant of Exodus 23, and then it is mentioned in the book of holiness (the Holiness Code) in Leviticus 23. We are going to read a couple of long sections here.

**Leviticus 23:9-13** And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.

**Leviticus 23:15-17** 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the LORD. You shall bring from your dwellings two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah [the same size as the one above]. They shall be of fine flour [meaning either very finely ground, or wheat which was typically finer than barley]; they shall be baked with leaven [this makes it very unique to say the least]. They are the firstfruits to the LORD.

**Leviticus 23:18-21** 'And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the

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first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits as a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. And you shall proclaim on the same day that it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work on it. It shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Now, in terms of the book of Ruth, the next verse is important:

**Leviticus 23:22** "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God."

This is put there purposefully. It seems like it does not belong, like it should be put in some other place in the law. But no, it is right here in the Pentecost instructions.

The reason why I have read all these verses beginning with verse 9 is that this whole period from the wave sheaf offering all the way down to the Day of Pentecost concentrates on the firstfruits. The wave sheaf is of the firstfruits; it is the first of the firstfruits. And as we know, it represents Jesus Christ being accepted before God on our behalf as our High Priest. He is our Forerunner. He is the first of the Firstborn.

And then, throughout the whole fifty days, we are supposed to be concentrating—by counting, being aware of the count—on the theme of this period: on the harvest and what God is doing in the harvest.

And, the period ends with another waving—the waving of the firstfruits. At the beginning there is the first of the firstfruits, the barley; and then there is the firstfruits themselves, the larger group, the ones in whom leaven is present—representing the people of God, the called ones, the elect.

And this waving of the firstfruits in the form of a loaf of leavened bread pictures the Father's acceptance of very fallible human beings into His Kingdom.

So, we have the entire panorama, you might say, of God's work with His firstfruits shown from the first of the firstfruits—Jesus Christ being accepted—all the way to the point where all of His brothers and sisters—the children of God—are accepted into the

## Family of God.

The holy day culminates a period of harvest—all this symbolism—and in this harvest, in the first day, what is emphasized is the firstfruits—the children of God. And it almost excludes everything else. God is concentrating on His people.

Now, back in Exodus 23:16 and Leviticus 23:16-17, there is something emphasized that a lot of people miss. Back in Exodus 23:16, God calls the harvest, "the firstfruits of **your** labors." And He says, "which you have sown in the field." The Pentecost offering, in Leviticus 23:16, is to be of new grain; it is offered from your habitations. There seems to be a heavy emphasis on what we do in this period of time. We are hard at work. Obviously, they have clear New Testament connotations.

Pentecost tends to emphasize the Christian work both of individuals, and of the whole body. It is your labor. It came out of your habitation.

So, it pictures a time of intense labor of sowing, cultivating, and reaping carried out by human beings both as individuals and as a body. But, God is firmly in the picture. He is perhaps not completely in the foreground. However He is lingering there side by side with us. He is blessing the efforts that we do, just as He would bless the efforts of our physical harvest.

Sure, the farmer goes out, plants the seed, pulls the weeds, and expends his sweat and tears in bringing the harvest in. But who gives the rain and the sun? Who made the soil? Who put all the good things into the soil? God is there and active in the work, but the people are the ones out there doing the upfront labor, you might say. That is what is seen. God is also there, unseen, helping things along. So these joint efforts produce the new grain—the new creation.

God is firmly in the picture during this period in at least three ways in terms of Pentecost and what we know from the Old Testament and the New Testament too. The first is the tradition that the law was given on the Day of Pentecost, or very near to it. It was obviously in the third month, Sivan. God provides us with the law, the standard by which we are to live.

And then, of course, in Acts 2, there is the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the power and the inspiration and the help that we need to do what is right—to follow God, to see Him, and to make right decisions.

And then, the third thing is that there is the wave sheaf offering. It starts the whole

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period. It is the most important part of this whole process because Jesus Christ, our Savior and Mediator and High Priest, has opened the way. He has shown us the way. He has become our Forerunner. He has done what is needed so that the rest of us can follow.

So these three things are there. They are done, we might say, in an invisible way. But they all play a part in the harvest of the firstfruits. A very important part, I should say.

So while we know what God does for us in providing salvation to us, certainly, we also understand that it surpasses all that we do by far. The emphasis during the time of the wave sheaf and Pentecost—that whole fifty days—seems to be on our work and what we have to do. And the reason for that is we know God is going to do His work—that goes without saying. He is faithful. He is not going to sit on His hands. We can be guaranteed that He is not going to slack off. This is why the emphasis has to be on what we do because we are certainly going to slack off.

And so, we need to be prodded every year that there is work to be done. We have to get in line with God the Father and with Jesus Christ—the wave sheaf, the Firstfruit—so what He intends, purposes, and wills for us is accomplished. While our part may be small, it is very important. We have to get in line and get with the program.

In the book of Ruth, we see a lot of this. Ruth is a very productive worker. We will see that as we go along; that is her part in all this. When you go through the book of Ruth and read about what she does; she is constantly working, doing something, helping. And she is growing during this whole period of time; she is constantly being commended for what she does.

But then, there is Boaz. We should not forget Boaz. As many of you know, the book of Ruth is one of the five Megilloth. This is the Hebrew word for "Festival Scrolls." These books are called this because they were read during the festival seasons. They seemed to be tied in somehow.

The Song of Songs was read on Passover. Lamentations was read on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, which was the day that the Temple was destroyed—twice. Ecclesiastes was read at the Feast of Tabernacles. Esther was read at Purim, which was begun in the book of Esther.

The book of Ruth is read on Pentecost and the main reason why the Jews assigned it to Pentecost is because all the events occur during the fifty days leading up to Pentecost from the wave sheaf offering in or near Unleavened Bread.

The story says that it begins near the beginning of the barley harvest, which the wave sheaf commences, and the events at the end of the book take place at the end of the wheat harvest, which is the Pentecost season.

The events of the book of Ruth take place during this time. Naomi and Ruth return from Moab and arrive there right about wave sheaf time. Ruth encounters Boaz and soon he redeems her and marries her. The events all come to a happy conclusion.

Now, because of the prevalence of the "no-works doctrine" in nominal Christianity, we have spoken a great deal lately about how necessary our works are to the sanctification of Christians. As a matter of fact, we have spoken about it so much you are probably getting a little tired of it. But, it is important. Today, I want you to look at the other side of things. I want to concentrate on Boaz, the Christ-figure in this story, so that we can be reminded (after all we have said about works and those sorts of things) about the balance of this mutual effort—to feed, redeem, and prepare us for the Kingdom of God—the final harvest.

Now, Boaz does not come into the story until chapter two. Chapter one sets the story up explaining why Ruth comes into Israel at all. She comes with Naomi, of course. Ruth is a type of a worldly person. She is a Moabitess. She is not an Israelite. She is a foreigner. She is not part of the covenant. She is outside the covenant. And, there is even one place in the law where it says that Israelites are not to marry Moabites.

So, this seems to be an exception, but the exception is a necessary one because it shows us coming out of the world. Ruth is a type of a worldly person. And later, she becomes a type of the Christian. Now in the story, she is already had long contact with Naomi. Naomi is at least a type of Israel, and in certain places, she is a type of the Israel of God, or the church of God—Galatians 6:16.

So, in certain parts, she is obviously the physical people of Israel, and in other parts, she is obviously a part of the whole body of the church. It just depends on where she happens to be in the context of the story.

But by the time that Boaz comes on the scene in chapter two, Ruth is already committed. She is committed to following Naomi, meaning that she is committed to becoming part of Israel, or the church; and she has already committed to following Naomi's God.

Now, there is an interesting little hint here that God was not quite her God yet. She was committed because of what Naomi did, and from what she knew of Naomi, and how

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much she loved Naomi; but God was not quite real to her yet. He was an unknown in many ways. But if Naomi was devoted to this God, then she would be devoted to this God also. "Where you go, I will go. Your God will be my God."

So, she is already committed, but she does not have a lot of knowledge. She has not had a relationship with Naomi's God yet.

Now, one thing we have to understand about the book of Ruth is that I believe that it was a historical occurrence. But, it was written to us in the church of God, and we are to take it as a kind of parable. With parables, not every detail is important; some if it is, but some of them are not. To make the story real, certain details have to be included. So we must realize that not everything is going to have an analogous or parallel meaning to us as Christians. But, there are some details that are very significant. So, we have to be very astute, and let the story have some leeway.

Things like the timing of certain events may not coincide exactly with what happens in our Christian lives. For instance, in this story, Ruth is redeemed by Boaz at the end of the story in chapter 4; whereas, Christians are redeemed by Christ's sacrifice at the beginning our Christian process.

You can look at it two ways: Maybe Ruth was not truly converted until that time. Or, the other way around: We need to look and realize that we are not fully redeemed until we are resurrected or changed.

So, we have to give some things a bit of leeway and not try to shoe-horn everything in to make it fit. So, not everything will be precisely analogous all of the time.

Now, let us get into chapter two. I just want to read the first verse:

**Ruth 2:1** There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.

He is introduced as a kinsman of her husband. And her husband's name was Elimelech. Elimelech means God-is-King. So, the family we are talking about is the God-is-King family. And he (Boaz) is a kinsman of God-is-King.

Now, it says that Naomi's husband was God-is-King. Who was Israel's husband? YHVH—God. The king—God, YHVH—was her husband. So, this is where you can see that Naomi is a type of Israel, and also a type of the church. The same thing happens to

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us because Jesus Christ is the husband of the Bride.

So, you can see that the analogy, the parallelism between this particular story and the New Testament reality, is very precise.

It also says that he is very wealthy. Well, of course he is. God owns everything. So Boaz is a fitting type of Christ and God. Wealth is also a symbol of spiritual riches. And who is the most spiritually rich being in the universe? Of course, God is. And of course, His Son Jesus Christ is equally spiritually rich.

So, you can see all the little details falling into place. All the details point to Boaz as being a type of Jesus Christ.

Oh, by the way, it also says that Boaz came from Bethlehem. So, if you did not get it before, there it is.

Now, we are going to go to Ephesians and what I want to do here is to see all the things that Paul says that God the Father through Christ has done for us, or is doing for us. This will be a template. We will not come back here again. Remember, this is a template to help evaluate Boaz.

**Ephesians 1:3-12** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

So, Paul praises the Father here for all the wonderful things that He has done for us in

and through Christ. They work at this together. Christ is the front man. But the One who receives the glory is the Father. Christ does too, but in this case, Paul is addressing His praise to the Father for the things that He has done through Christ.

So he praises Him for His manifold blessings; he praises Him for His calling of us; he praises Him for His adoption of us; and he praises Him for His acceptance of us, His redemption of us, His revelation of His will and purpose for us, His giving us an inheritance, and all the things that God has revealed to us. You could probably spend weeks just studying this chapter for all the things that God does. We have to understand that God, through Christ, has done all these things to every one of us or for every one of us—not just to the church, but to each of us individually. He is busy on His throne making these things happen for each one of us.

So, keep these things in mind. You do not have to know them by heart, but just keep these things in mind as we continue through the story of Boaz.

To organize the study of our subject, Boaz, a bit better, I have separated his part in the story into three overall themes.

## **I. BOAZ AS GRACIOUS PROVIDER**

**Ruth 2:2** So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor."

Now, she did not know who would give her favor. She just asked Naomi permission to go and glean in a field where she may find favor of some farmer.

**Ruth 2:2** And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

Now, in passing reference, she calls her, "My daughter." Ruth was Naomi's daughter-in-law. But Naomi, as a type of Israel, has already accepted Ruth. Ruth has been married to Naomi's son. So, in a way you could say, she is already familiar with Israel. She is already partway there. She has had some experience with Israelite ways and what the God of Israel expects. And so to Naomi, Ruth is her daughter, no longer her daughter-in-law. She is not an outsider to Naomi. She has been accepted already.

Also, as another aside here, if you look in Matthew 13, Jesus specifically says that the field is the world. So, that is the symbol here. Ruth is going out into the world hoping to

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find favor of some farmer so she can glean in the field.

**Ruth 2:3** Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers.

She just went out and picked a spot. "This is where I will go, and just follow these reapers, and glean the edges of the field," just as we read there in Leviticus 23.

**Ruth 2:3** And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech [God-is-King].

Aw, she just happened to go into this field that was Boaz' portion of the field. This was the field that Boaz was working in, and she just happened. . . . The Hebrew says, "Her chance, chanced upon this field." This is in the same vein as "Holy of Holies." It is in the superlative. It is the "wink, wink, nudge, nudge, she just happened upon," Boaz' field.

Do you understand that when they doubled an expression in Hebrew, it is being raised to a greater or to the greatest height as in "Holy of Holies" or "Song of Songs"? In Ruth 2:3 it says, "chance chanced" telling us, in their Hebrew way, that there was no accident whatsoever about all this. It is just an expression. She was led to Boaz' portion of the field.

And then, if we did not get it already, the first part of verse 4 says,

**Ruth 2:4** Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, . . .

God is laying it on thick so that we can understand what is going on. This Ruth, a Moabitess, a foreigner who has some connection with Israel, goes out into the world looking for food—sustenance, spiritual help and nourishment—and she just happens to find God-is-King's field. Also 'Boaz' itself means, "In-Him-is-Strength."

So, she finds the strongman. Remember in the parable the stronger man casts out the strong man? Ruth finds the stronger man. All these types are coming at us all at once so that we will not miss them.

And there is more.

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**Ruth 2:4** Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!"

More thickness!

What does he say? "The Lord be with you," is a parallel structure to the title, "Immanuel." It is almost saying, "Christ has come!" "The Lord is here!"

And of course, the reapers answer him,

**Ruth 2:4** And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

What else do you say to, "God-is-King?"

**Ruth 2:5** Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

First he calls out to them, "The Lord be with you," which announces himself to them. And then the very next thing he says is, "Whose young woman is this?"

What is on his mind? Who is on his mind? What is getting his attention during this time of the harvest? It is the young woman. It is the Christian in the field.

**Ruth 2:6** So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

Notice that twice in the verse he says that she is a Moabitess, and she came back from Moab. He is emphasizing her foreignness. "It is that foreign woman who's not like us. Can't you tell that she's not an Israelite?"

**Ruth 2:7** And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

Each field had a little house or shed where someone could get out of the sun to rest a little. And what this servant is saying here is that she had been there working really hard all morning up to this point, only taking a small break in the shed. Otherwise, she is been hard at work.

**Ruth 2:8-9** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

So, here we see Boaz' and Ruth's first meeting. Notice that first of all he found out about her everything he could from his servant. And then, without any recorded greeting, he starts giving her commands. First he says, "Now listen up!"

The English construction, here, sounds like he is looking down or talking down to her. But, in the Hebrew, it is not quite like that. It is more like this: "These are dangerous times, so you need to listen to my instructions carefully so you can stay out of trouble." He is helping her, not berating her or any such thing. He is giving her a very gentle warning and telling her that he knows what he is talking about.

His immediate concern is Ruth, her safety, and a few other things. So, he gives her instructions. It is very interesting that Boaz' speech to Ruth is almost all commands—basically six commands here in verses 8 and 9. I want to go over them with you now.

I also want to draw your attention to the fact that when he speaks with Ruth, he does not mention her foreignness at all. He calls her, "my daughter." The first time he meets her, he is already at the same level as Naomi in accepting her.

Now the six things that he tells her to do, or not to do, is very interesting. He gives these commands. You must remember that Boaz is a type of Christ, and he is lord and master. He is in complete control of the situation. He is the farmer and husbandman. He is the one that is in complete control of the harvest. And so, he knows what she should be doing and gives her clear instructions about it.

This is the equivalent of Christ telling us, "Don't gather spiritual food from any other source." Do not try to get your spiritual food from some polluted field. His portion of the

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field is his, but the rest of it is not his. There are other portions of the field where there is "polluted" food (not as good food and not as high quality as in His field). And so Boaz is telling Ruth that, "If you want to be among my women, and have the opportunity to glean, you have to stay here in my portion of the field."

This is equal to, "Fellowship with other members of the church of God, not the world." Now, this is not entirely exclusive. Obviously, she had to go home, she had to leave the field every once in a while. But, he was saying that you are safest when you are staying within the fellowship of the church of God. He is telling her to fellowship with like minds.

Essentially, this means that life revolves around the church of God. Your eyes are where your focus is. Your focus should be on His field. His field is where you gather your spiritual sustenance. His field is also where you have your spiritual fellowship. And so, he is saying that if you want to be among my women, she will have to keep her eyes focused on his part of the field. If your eyes stray someplace else, you are going to get into trouble.

This is equivalent to following good examples among the brethren. Just as Paul said to follow him as he follows Christ, this is saying, "Follow the other young women, go after them, and watch what they do; notice their lives, and do what is good."

The young men are equivalent to the ministry. They are His servants. And He has commanded that the young men are not to touch her. Of course, the implication is sexual, but for us—what we are to take out of this spiritually—is that the ministry is supposed to be kind and proper toward the people of God. They are not to "lord" it over them, nor to take advantage of them. They are not to treat them harshly. He had commanded the ministry to be kind and proper to the people.

1. Do not glean in another field.
2. Stay close by my young women.
3. Let your eyes be on the (my) field.
4. And go after them (the young women.)
5. The young men will not touch you.
6. Drink from what the young men have drawn.

This is the same thing as to learn from the inspired teaching of God's servants. Now, it says, "what the young men have drawn." God has inspired the young men—the ministry. We pray and hope that He does. But he tells her as a young Christian to learn from what He has inspired the ministry to teach.

So, there is a lot of good advice in that one little section. And it is quite a lot for her to have taken in all at one blow, but it would keep her safe and on the right path. Of course, Jesus Christ does this for us, giving us a whole book of instructions. And He wants us to follow them because they will keep us in the right way, and keep us going toward the harvest.

**Ruth 2:14-23** Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives." Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field." So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

The implication back there in verse 14 is that she ate with Boaz personally. They shared a meal. They had fellowship together, Boaz, Ruth, and the other reapers there were close by. He, during this day of work, provided her with one-on-one, specialized, intimate instructions. That is all found in that section, "Come here and eat of the bread, and dip your piece in the vinegar." This is a very interesting allusion to Psalm 51, as well as the final Passover meal where He dipped the sop and handed it to Judas Iscariot. But this intimacy with Ruth is devoid of the deceitfulness found in those allusions. They

shared the meal, and they shared it so intimately that they were both dipping out of the same bowl.

So, he has already accepted her to the point where he is giving her personal instructions and his time.

He also added to her lunch pail from his own provisions. The parched grain that he gave her would have been a luxury to her, a poor woman. It was dainties from the king's table, if you will. This also brings up another allusion regarding the Gentile woman who says, "Do not the dogs lick up the crumbs which fall from the Master's table?" Here, Ruth is a Gentile, just like the Sidonian woman was. So there is a lot of neat little things going on here.

Then, he takes two further steps with her: He tells his young men that she can glean even among the sheaves, and that grain was to be purposely dropped for her to pick up. So, these were well beyond the bounds of generosity and were things that he did not necessarily have to do. But he wanted her to have a surfeit of food. He wanted her to have, as it says in Luke 6:38, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. It is the same character here who is doing that and providing so much for her.

So, that evening after a hard day's work of gleaning, she found that she had an ephah of barley that she had beaten out. This is probably a bit over a bushel of grain. So she had roughly nine dry gallons of threshed barley, which was enough for at least two weeks or a bit more for her and Naomi. She had quite a bit. That was quite a successful day's work. And that is why Naomi says, "Where did you glean today that you brought home so much?"

And beyond all that, Boaz said, "You can stay here throughout the whole harvest season." So, he not only provided her with her gleanings that day which could last for a couple of weeks at least, but he also provided for her for the entire period of the harvest. There was not a day that was going to go by that she was going to go hungry again. He would give her sustenance for every day of the harvest.

Now, Naomi verifies that this is the best situation for them both. "Do not go to another field! He is also a near kinsman, able to be a redeemer. So, stay there. There is no better provider and patron than Boaz." She would not want to associate with anybody else. Once you hit the big time, you do not want to go down the ladder at all.

That is what Ruth had done. She had gone to the very best bachelor in the whole community. Not only the one with the most money, and could provide for her, but also

the one with the best character.

This next passage is after he promises to redeem her.

**Ruth 3:15-17** 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. So 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. 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.'"

He sends her home with six ephahs of barley; this is close to seven bushels, or 54 dry gallons. That is a huge amount. This shows you the wonderful attitude of Boaz of giving blessings to her so freely, so much more than she could ever imagined to glean over a whole week. If she gathered about an ephah per day, then six ephahs was a whole week's worth of work if kept at that pace. And, Philippians 4:19 says something to this effect:

**Philippians 4:19** And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

That fits the character of Boaz to a "T."

## II. BOAZ AS RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

Let us go back to the book of Ruth again. This next passage is back when he had given her all those instructions, and then,

**Ruth 2:10-13** So she fell on her face, bowed down 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?" And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not

like one of your maidservants."

It says there that he had spoken to the heart of Ruth. He had reached her in her innermost being. That is what she wanted—she wanted acceptance, she wanted help and instruction, and he had given everything to her that she needed.

So Boaz obviously has knowledge of Ruth and her activities and character beyond what the servant had told him earlier. As a matter of fact, you get the impression from reading this that Boaz knows everything. He had full knowledge. He had all the facts. And if it were Christ Himself, we would say that he was omniscient. How many times in the gospels does it say that Jesus knew what was in their heart? Or, Jesus knew all men. Or, Jesus knew all things, or whatever. But, Boaz has some of the same attributes. And he should, because he is the type of Christ.

And then in verse 12, he makes a judgment based on his perfect knowledge. And, his judgment is that God will bless her, reward her for her sacrifices, and her works. And this judgment that he makes is an articulation of his favor. And what is favor? What is God's favor? Grace. It could just as easily have been written, "Why have I found grace in your sight?"

So, Boaz extends grace to Ruth.

Now, I need to just point out that even though she is self conscious about her foreignness, because she mentions it twice, "since I am a foreigner," in verse 10; and "though I am not like one of your maidservants," in verse 13. He does not mention it at all. As a matter of fact, he praises her for having such strong convictions that she is able to forsake the land of her birth to join with people that she had never known before.

And this sounds very much like Jesus' instruction in Luke 14:26 where it says, "If you want to be one of my disciples, you must hate mother, father, sister, brother, etc." And Ruth was a paragon of this virtue. She was willing to forsake her worldly family to come into Israel and then into the church.

Now on into chapter three, I want to point this out also: Verse 2 is important as it sets the stage for Boaz' role in this entire chapter.

This is Naomi speaking:

**Ruth 3:2** "Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our

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relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

He is winnowing. Evidently, in Israel, it was the boss' job to winnow the threshed grain. And, what is winnowing? Winnowing is cleaning the grain by taking the threshed grain and throwing it up into the wind, which blows away the chaff while allowing the grain to fall back down where it can be gathered.

So, Boaz is shown separating the wheat (or barley) from the chaff. It is a picture of judgment.

Here John the Baptist is speaking:

**Luke 3:16-17** John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

What we are seeing here is that Boaz, in this chapter, is the judge. He is going to make a very significant judgment. He is going to separate the wheat from the chaff. As a matter of fact, we would say that he is going to be the decider in an event that would decide Ruth's fate. He is the judge. His decision is the central most important point of her life.

**Ruth 3:6** So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her.

Now, in this case, Naomi is the church. And Ruth is the Christian doing what the church has instructed her to do.

**Ruth 3:7-11** 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. Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 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." Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you

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have shown more kindness [*chesed* = covenant loyalty] at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 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.

So, Ruth obeys Naomi's instructions to the letter, she beseeches Boaz to take her into his care by redeeming her, and the first thing he does is to bless her. "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter!" And then he praises her kindness, her covenant loyalty to him and to her adopted family, the family of Elimelech, for choosing him over a young man. And, the idea here is that she went against the normal course of this world because the normal course of this world for a young woman would be to marry a young man or a rich man.

She was not swayed by youthful good looks nor by wealth. But she did what was right. She followed the covenant law. The covenant law was that as a widow, she had to marry the near kinsman. And Naomi had instructed her in this, and she obeyed Naomi to the letter.

And so Boaz praises her for following the law. He said that she had shown covenant loyalty in all of this by choosing Boaz her near kinsman and not some young man out of her own fancy.

She did not go after the dictates of her own heart, but she followed what was right. She did what God intended for her to do.

So, then he reassures her, "Do not fear," which reminds me of, "Do not fear little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom of God," which Jesus said in Luke 12:32. He would do, he says, everything that she has asked for. He would redeem her.

And then he makes another judgment. He pronounces her virtuous. In a sense, he pronounces her righteous, which justification accomplishes.

**John 14:13-14** "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

And that is what Boaz said to Ruth. He said, "I will do for you all that you request."

### III. BOAZ AS LOVING REDEEMER

**Ruth 3:18** 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."

Naomi knows Boaz. She has had experience with him when they were both younger before she left for Moab. What she says, here, is the equivalent of the many times in the Bible that we are told that once God says something, He does it. It is accomplished.

**Isaiah 46:11** Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

And in the same way, he said that to Ruth. Naomi says that that is the man's character. If he says that he is going to do something, you can be sure that he will not rest until it is accomplished.

And so, he has relentless dogged determination—Christ does—to bring us into His Kingdom. It is His foremost desire. And He is on the job night and day to redeem us from this world. And that is what He does always.

**John 14:1-3** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

**John 17:19** "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

**John 17:24** "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

**Hebrew 6:19-20** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

**Hebrew 7:22-27** ...by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

**Hebrew 10:19-23** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

That is the assurance that Boaz gave to Ruth, and Naomi also gave to Ruth—that Boaz would not sit still until he had purchased her redemption.

**Ruth 4:1-11** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it." Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and

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exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal. And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day." And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses."

Boaz does just as Naomi had predicted he would, knowing his character.

Now, we need to know that Boaz is not only determined, but he is carefully, even stringently lawful. Notice what he does. Everything is done by the book. He makes sure all the forms are followed and leaves nothing out. The transaction is done in the gate where judgments were to be done. He took ten witnesses to testify for what he was about to do. He gives the near kinsman every opportunity to do his duty. He hides none of the facts from anybody. He presents all the pertinent details so that everybody is clear as to what is going on. Even the short speech at the end sounds like a contract.

And God works within the boundaries He has created, so that no one will be able to accuse Him of cutting corners, of being unjust, or of being unfair. Because He loves us, He redeems us lawfully so that there is no question as to who is whose.

**Isaiah 1:27** Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.

**Isaiah 62:1-3** For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. [showing both the determination—the restlessness as it were—and the righteousness by which God redeems us.]

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Let us end, then, with the happy conclusion of the matter.

**Ruth 4:13** So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LOORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

**Ruth 4:17** Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

One final detail is worth pointing out as we talk and think about the harvest of Pentecost. Boaz and Ruth marry, have a son, and give him the name Obed. The name Obed means, "Servant of God," or "Worshipper of God."

In other words, the product of Christ and a committed converted Christian is a worshipper and servant of God. This is the aim of God's harvest of firstfruits—a new creation.

Is it not beautiful to see the fruit of God's work in us?