

Ruth

Week 3 Ruth, Chapter 3

Title: You are what you practice

Introduction:

- Discover Trinity September 15
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Mike

Review the Story: (Picture of Samson)

- The book of Ruth takes place in the time of the Judges.
- The Judges are militant leaders that arose after Joshua passed away.
- Remember: Not everything the Bible reports does the Bible endorse.
- This is a dark time in Hebrew history - they have abandoned their mission to be the love and light of God into the world and the world has infiltrated them.
- Oppression, violence and famine have driven Naomi and her family out of the Promised Land.
- **Naomi's** story goes from bad to worse. In the land of Moab she loses her husband and sons.
- Based on nothing more than a rumor she returns home with one of her mourning daughters, Ruth.
- Finally, back with the Hebrew people Naomi and Ruth meet a man named Boaz and work to survive by connecting with him.

Scripture: (Picture of Boaz and Ruth until we read the scripture)

It's end of the harvest season. Boaz does what many do during this season. They take the wheat to the threshing floor. Usually this is large, flat round stone. They would literally crush the stalk against the rock to separate the grain from the husk. This was often done in the evening and when the wind was still. Boaz has worked hard late into the evening and fallen asleep with the grain on the threshing floor. Ruth, under her mother-in-law's direction, makes her way to Boaz as he sleeps and offers herself to him. These two women in survival mode make a play for survival by means of sexual advance. Boaz awakens and most assuredly is aroused and impressed with her, yet he seeks honor.

Boaz will make this right. Boaz will honor God in private and in public. This is where we pick up in the text. Tangibly, he sends her away with food for her mother-in-law. Actually, he sends her away to prepare for a new life.

Ruth 3:14-15

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said,

“Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

Observation: (Picture of Naomi and Ruth)

- Ruth comes to him while he is sleeping, uncovers his feet and lays down next to him. Let's be really clear. Naomi asked Ruth to make a sexual advance on Boaz. It's possible from textual evidence (Ruth 3) Naomi knew Boaz would respond with honor, but the sexual advance was made.
- *Ruth 3:4 (FSB): lie down The Hebrew word used here, shakav ("to lie down"), is used eight times in vv. 4–14; this term is often used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Gen 30:15–16; 2 Sam 11:4; 13:14). -Faithlife Study Bible*
- Boaz turns her initial sexual advance down. Very few of us have been in a position like this, where someone exceedingly attractive makes a full advance on us in a way that would have been seen by our peers as acceptable. Sexual intercourse outside of covenant marriage would have been wrong even in that day but the greater Hebrew culture during the time of the Judges was a mess as explained in the earlier sermons in this series. Her prostitution for survival wouldn't have been uncommon.
- Here is the incredible reality. The rejection of Ruth wasn't actually a rejection. Boaz accepts Ruth's truer offer. He pauses her sexual advance to address her deeper need...a family.
- Boaz actually labels Ruth with a new title. The phrase for “a worthy woman” (vs. 11) is the same Hebrew expression used in Proverbs 31:10 to identify an ideal wife. He defines her before any action has taken place and the character he will help her live into.

Application:

- Boaz represents the hands and feet of God in this story. What can we learn?
- Boaz sends her away with not only food, but also a future. He loves not only her physical beauty but the things that she loves too.
 - Truth to know:
 - God loves me and cares deeply about the things I worry about.
- Boaz says no to part of the provision Ruth was seeking and instead gives her what she really needs.
 - Truth to know:
 - God may say “no” to some of the things I ask him for so he can meet my needs in a right and true way.

- Boaz speaks a truer identity into Ruth to live into while she is making an inappropriate offer.
 - Truth to know:
 - God sees more than what I am, but what I could be. He will put Godly leads into my life to help me live into it.

Final Thoughts:

This leads me to one final thought.

How do we become people like Boaz?

Boaz made the decision to be the kind of man who wouldn't accept sinful offers long before Ruth offered herself to him.

Here is the truth:

You are what you practice. Times of temptation are like times of stress. We are reduced to what we train for.

Last week my wife went to a training on emergency situations. They played the audio of the Columbine Shooting. The audio was the 911 conversation from the librarian, the woman in charge in the room where most of the people died. The 911 operator urged her to lock the door. What did she do instead? She put the students under the desk. "Lock the door" turned into "get under the desk." How did this happen to an intelligent college educated teacher? Because in times of stress we default to our training.

Boaz trained through worship of God and honor for years to be the kind of man that would respond right when Ruth offered herself to him.

Why do you need to make church, Bible reading, prayer, Christian community and generous living a continual habit? Because in times of stress and temptation you will default to what you have practiced.

Next Steps Cards:

What spiritual habits do you need to commit to practice?

Resources:

The Holy Bible: English Standard Version. (2016). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

The Bible Project: Judges; www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOYy8iCfIJ4

Threshing Floor: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threshing_floor

Boaz and Ruth: creationartist.com

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible (Ru 3:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

3:11 worthy woman. See notes on 2:1; 4:11; cf. Prov. 31:10, “excellent wife,” using the same Hebrew expression, ’eshet khayil. Crossway Bibles. (2008). The ESV Study Bible (p. 481). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.