

Men And Women Of The Bible – Boaz

Ruth 2:1-23 ~ September 30, 2020

Background on Book of Ruth...

- Boaz = “cheerful readiness” or “promptness in response.”
- The book of Ruth begins with Naomi and her husband Elimelech, her sons and daughters-in-law. They went from Bethlehem to Moab in hopes of finding relief from the famine.
- After the death of their husbands, Ruth and Naomi returned to Judah at the time of the barley harvest in late spring—this bitter woman who had no husband or sons or grandchildren, and a Moabite woman.

What Did Boaz Do?

- Boaz was a near relative of Elimelech, and scripture says he was a “worthy man.”
- The book of Ruth took place during the time of the judges.
- When Boaz saw Ruth in his field among the gleaners, the foreman identified the new gleaner as the Moabitess who had returned with Naomi. And he praised Ruth as a hard worker.
- But Ruth had married an Israelite, she believed in God, and was now technically one of Boaz’s relatives. For many people in the town, she was not even considered a person because of her lineage. But Boaz was a man of grace, and a follower of God.
- Boaz spoke to her, and we see his character. When he told Ruth to continue gleaning in his field, he was offering her a permanent job so she would always have enough to eat.

Kinsman-Redeemer

- Boaz was interested in being a kinsman-redeemer to Ruth. He did not have to do this because Ruth was not an Israelite.
- To be a kinsman-redeemer, a man had to meet four specific criteria.
 - 1) He had to be a close relative. We do not know exactly how Boaz and Elimelech were related, but there was only one other man closer.
 - 2) The kinsman-redeemer had to be a free man rather than a servant.
 - 3) He must be legally able to perform the redemption. This was a problem for Boaz at first because there was a man who was a closer relative, who was younger than he was and he originally thought that Ruth might prefer someone closer to her age. Ruth indicated that she was interested in Boaz, so Boaz kind of tricked this relative into not wanting Ruth.
 - 4) He must be willing to perform the redemption. This would have to be Boaz’s choice, and because he somewhat manipulated the situation with the other relative it showed that he was very willing to take Ruth as his wife.
- Eventually, if we continued reading in Ruth, we would see that Boaz first went to a closer relative, and the man was interested in the property but not in Ruth. He wasn’t thinking about Ruth’s situation or that she and Naomi both would live in poverty without help. Had this man redeemed her, this would have been a marriage of obligation (which many marriages were at that time), whereas Boaz truly loved Ruth.

To Ponder This Week...Boaz was a godly man – he went above and beyond when he didn’t have to, to help lighten the load of a hard-working woman. Where can we help lighten the load for others in our lives? Where are people doing the best they can, but could use a boost? Could use a prayer? A phone call? Some help? That we personally can give.