

Title: **God Fills An Empty Cup (Part 1)**

Passage: **Ruth 2:8-13**

Theme: **Only cups that are empty can be filled**

Number: **1012Ru2.8-13(6)**

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{Read Passage}

We find ourselves in Act 2 of t/4 Act Drama that is t/inspired OT book we know as Ruth.

First Act (chapter 1) ==>

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

What do we mean by "Royal Line"? Royal Family Line. Genealogy / Family Tree through which runs royal blood.

The last word in t/book of Ruth explains where t/entire book is going. "David" -- How did such a great King come out of t/hapless period of Israel's hist. known as "Judges."

Because we have t/benefit of t/NT - we stand on this side of t/Cross - we know that Ruth also looks a millennium ahead of King David to to his greatest descendant: King of Kings / Lord of Lords - JC.

Why was ==>??

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

At 1 level because they left Beth. (esc. famine) & went to a foreign land, Moab, where real disaster struck. All t/men in t/family died (Partriarch Elimelech & his 2 sons) leaving behind 3 widows.

At a 2d more imp. level because there was no descendant to carry on t/family line.

I know what that's about to an extent. I'm t/last male on this branch of t/Bartolucci tree. My dad had no brothers; I'm an only child. I have a daughter who is also an only child. t/Bartolucci family tree stops w/me. Kinda sad but in light of eternity not that significant.

Tragic if I lived in OT Israel, however.

That's t/level we have to keep in mind as we go this this book.

How will t/family line of Elimelech & Naomi survive extinction?

B. Scene Two: Ruin in Moab (vv. 3-5)

C. Scene Three: Returning to Bethlehem (vv. 6-22)

II. Act Two: The Royal Line with Hope Renewed (2:1-23)

A. Scene One: Ruth Reaping (vv. 1-7)

1. Verse 1 Introduces us to a new character ==>

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

a. Writer gives us 4 details about him in this verse

(1) First, he is a "relative" of Naomi's husband

(a) "Kinsman"

(2) Second, he is described as a "man of great wealth"

Heb. phrase 'îš gibbôr ḥayil has a range of meanings -- "man of great wealth" is only one of them (probably not the best).

a worthy man [ESV]

a man of standing [NIV]

Boaz is a special man. He knows t/LORD.

As we'll see - a man of great spiritual integrity.

(3) Third, we're told that he is from the "family" or "clan" of Elimelech

(4) Fourth, we see his name: Boaz "in Him is strength"

2. Verse 1 gives us a preview of what's to come

It's an introduction to t/first scene of Act II.

a. That scene opens with Ruth & Naomi

I picture them at their new home in Bethlehem. We don't know what that was. Rem. Beth. was a very small village. They didn't have much; they were widows. Maybe it was a tent or a single room in a mud or wooden structure. Wasn't much.

They had little more than t/clothes on their back.

Depressed? Appears Naomi wasn't being very proactive so Ruth says to her (v. 2) ==>

... **"Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor."** ...

b. "Gleaning" was a common practice whereby those who were poor could provide food for themselves

Any time a field is harvested there are always leftovers -- grain or vegetables that are overlooked and left behind.

Most poor people in our culture are concerned about paying t/next mos. cell phone bill.

Then, as is true in so many parts of t/world today -- big concern was what you were going to eat. There was no Wegmans or Walmart around t/corner.

Deuteronomy 24:19 “When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Naomi gives her permission. Ruth heads out to what would have been a large agricultural field shared by all t/villagers. Each family would have a parcel that they owned, marked off by stones or pillars.

By God's Providential leading Ruth ends up in t/part of t/field owned by Boaz.

c. End of verse 3 is key to chapter 2 if not the entire book

. . . and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

(1) Literally in the Hebrew text ==>

. . . and she happened to chance upon . . . OR

. . . her chance chanced upon the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

An affirmation that Ruth's coming into the portion of the field owned by Boaz was not a humanly contrived event. It was ordained by God.

(a) A way of affirming that God is sovereign over things that may seem “coincidental”

Prov. 16:9 **The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.** (cf. 20:4). He directed Ruth's steps to t/field of Boaz.

God's "hidden hand of Providence" - His control of small things in life that we later realize aren't so small after all.

Boaz arrives (v. 4); he sees Ruth -- He would know all t/families in Beth. Here's a young woman he doesn't know.

Asks his foreman ==>

“Whose young woman is this?”

“I don't recognize her. She must be new in town & she must have some family or a husband. To what family or husband does she belong?”

The foreman replies to Boaz' question (v. 6) ==>

“She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.

He also does not give her name, something socially significant in that culture. Not something he is particularly concerned about. *“Just a young Moabite woman, the one who came with Naomi from Maob.”*

“And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ . . .

. . . Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while.”

If we read between t/lines Ruth at this point is not in t/conversation. Perhaps t/foreman standing w/Boaz points in t/direction of t/shelter where Ruth was resting a short distance away.

Curtain rises on scene 2 of our second act ==>

B. Scene Two: Ruth Rewarded - Part 1 (vv. 8-13)

Boaz provides for Ruth's needs by granting her undeserved privileges that reflect her position under God's protective wing.

Grace Revealed / Received / Rewarded

1. Grace Revealed: Boaz The Gentleman (8-9)

Boaz initiates grace. Not only that, but Boaz demonstrates w/his life what we learned about him in vv. 1 & 4 (man of integrity / who knew & served t/Lord).

Boaz either calls for her or walks over to her. Either way, he is t/one who initiates t/conversation (would be expected - he was a man, a landowner, & Israelite - she was a woman, a poor widow, Gentile).

Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter"

Lit. "have you not heard?" A way t/Heb lang. uses a neg. ? as a way to affirm t/positive. Makes it emphatic ==> "Listen carefully!"

a. "My daughter"?

Expression that we wouldn't take literally. She wasn't his daughter. This may be a reflection on his age -- he was an older man

Ruth 3:10 Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.

That said, this isn't a picture of December trying to hook up w/May. A man in t/winter of his life looking for a women who has just bloomed in spring!

10 Years (not bad)

Elvis Presley . . . Priscilla Presley (Priscilla Beaulieu)

Ronald Reagan . . . Nancy Reagan (Nancy Davis)

25 Years?

Humphrey Bogart . . . Lauren Bacall

Michael Douglas . . . Catherine Zeta-Jones

Paul McCartney . . . Heather Mills

Rod Stewart . . . Rachel Hunter

Benjamin Harrison . . . Mary Dimmick (He: 62, 23rd U.S. President [married after leaving office]. She: 37. Year: 1896.)

Some of you are familiar w/the great Scottish Reformer John Knox.

He as a 50 year old widower took a wife, t/daughter of a friend, Mary Stuart, who was 17! (33+)

3 years ago this month, Oct. 09 - t/modern day record was set when a Somalian man, Ahmed Muhamed Dore, at t/ripe old age of 112 (if you are 112 you are indeed ripe) married a girl 95 years younger than he. (U do t/math.)

At the ceremony in central Somalia, Mr. Dore - who already has 18 children by five wives - said he would like to have more with his new wife, Safia Abdulleh.

At t/ceremony he was quoted as saying ==>

'Today God helped me realise my dream,' (yeah, no kidding).

Boaz was older. No doubt old enough to be her father (40? - unusual in that culture).

(1) Have to look beyond age

This is also a very kind and caring form of address. For one thing, he knows she's not an Israelite. Yet he calls her "daughter".

Nothing inappropriate. He's being a gentleman. At this point he's not looking at her as a potential wife -- I think that's t/furthers thing from his mind.

He's extending grace. True grace isn't looking for something in return. If it is, it's not grace, it's merit.

That's t/grace of God in Christ.

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

b. Boaz the Gentleman is gracious and merciful to Ruth the foreigner (8b-9)

Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.

First 2 statements sound redundant, even contradictory {restate}

The 2nd statement could be transl: "Do not go beyond the limits of this field."

IOW - don't go anywhere else & be sure that you stay w/i t/boundaries of my field. Why?

Because I'm going to give you a special privilege.

(1) Special privilege and protection

As a foreigner she had a right to glean. It was in Israel's Law. If she were denied the 1 denying her was in violation.

But she didn't have a right to glean among the sheaves (cf. v. 15). Boaz didn't want her wandering outside of his field into another's.

... stay here with my maids.

Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them...

Gleaners would be cleaning up far behind t/reapers. Boaz is giving

Ruth permission to sick right by t/women who were binding t/cut grain into sheaves. She would be in t/thick of things.

"Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you . . ."

Boaz would have done this between t/space of vv. 7&8.

נגיע - lit. "to touch" can have a neg. meaning (to hurt someone physically). Some commentators have speculated that Ruth may have been in danger of physically or sexually assault by t/workers. (picture t/modern day stereotype of construction workers . . .)

Probably all Boaz is saying is that his workers will not bother her.

Maybe you've been in a sit. where someone in charge gave you special permission to do something or be somewhere that you otherwise had no place being. Restricted area or activity. And while someone in authority gave you permission, you wonder about others who may see you and say, *"What do you think you're doing?!"*

Boaz is alleviating her fears (cf. v. 13).

". . . When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."

This is provision way beyond what t/Law demanded. She was being treated like one of his workers -- and even better since she was being allowed to freely gather food for herself.

(1) Grace in action: there's special priviledge and protection

(a) Has God not extended that same kind of mercy to us at a far greater level?

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

Provision.

But God also gives us protection.

John 6:39 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day."

10:27–28 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

1 Peter 1:4–5 Brings both together ==>

4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We could also add that this is t/kind of grace, provision and protection we ought to extend to one another.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Extend grace/forgiveness to OA // provide for OA (whatever t/need) // protect each other. CH ought to be a city of refuge. Go beyond what is required being lavish in our love for one another.

2. Grace Received: Ruth the Humble Foreigner (10,13)

a. How does she respond? (10)

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

(1) She responds with an action and a question

Action ==> dropped to her knees, touching her forehead to t/ground.

Question ==>

“Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

“You're going beyond what even a poor Israelite could expect. You're extending me t/care of a family member when I'm a foreigner.”

(2) No sense of entitlement (cf. verse 13)

Then she said, “I have found favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

(a) Bit of a wordplay here involving the Hebrew noun שפְּתָהּ

A שפְּתָהּ was a female slave, someone of t/lowest possible social status. By claiming the status of שפְּתָהּ female slave Ruth views herself as occupying the lowest rung on the ladder.

b. Ruth gives us a wonderful example of genuine humility

Without a doubt in my mind humility is central to living t/Xn life. Pride is always lurking in our hearts. Even when we deny it.

A short time ago a well-known Xn leader, a man who wrote a book on humility, stepped down from his ministry for a time because of his sinful pride. In fact, it was others who pointed it out to him. This is an older man, well-seasoned in ministry.

Reminder to all of us that we will never arrive in t/Xn life. We will always be battling t/sin of pride, at t/heart of which is unbelief.

Principle here ==>

God only fills empty cups.

Ruth's cup was empty. She was an empty vessel.

How full are you with your own self? Supposed "rights."

"Grace is not intended to replace lowliness with pride. It's intended to replace sorrow with joy." [Piper, 65]

“Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

Is a ? that goes beyond Ruth & Boaz to one that every believer asks of God. Nothing is more imp. than t/answer. [^]

3. Grace Rewarded: Boaz and Ruth Under the Same Wing (11,12)

“Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

And Boaz answered and said to her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me,

Boaz' foreman didn't I.D. her, not by name at least. But as soon as he filled in some details (6b) t/lights came on for Boaz.

He hadn't seen her, but he'd heard about her. This was t/woman everyone in Bethlehem was talking about!

and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

Cf. 1:15-17.

“May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel . . .”

John Piper asks a relevant question here ==>

Does this mean that the writer wants us to think of Ruth's love for Naomi as a work that merits Boaz's favor and the favor of God? Does he want us to think of grace as a kindness we earn? I don't think so. If Ruth has earned the favor of Boaz (and of God), then we must think of her as a kind of employee rendering service to her employer—a service that is so valuable that he is indebted to pay her. She merits the pay. That's not the mage the writer wants to create in our minds. Verse 12 gives another image that makes the employer-employee image impossible.

Boaz says in verse 12 that God is really the one who is rewarding Ruth for her love to Naomi. Boaz is only the instrument of God—as we will learn from Naomi in just a moment. But now notice the words, "The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" In spite of the word "repay" (which could be translated "reward" or "recompense"), this verse does not encourage us to picture Ruth as an employee of God

providing needed labor that he then as employer rewards with a good wage. The picture is of God as a great winged Eagle and Ruth as a threatened little eaglet coming to find safety under the Eagle's wings. The implication of verse 12 is that God will reward Ruth because she has sought refuge under His wing." [Piper, 66-67]

That's the end of the verse ==>

". . . under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

Picture of protection.

Psalm 57:1 Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, **For** my soul takes refuge in Thee; And in the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge, Until destruction passes by.

Why does God show mercy? Because we seek refuge . . .

Psalm 91:4 He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

How genuinely needy we are.

Ruth esteems God's protection as superior to all others.

God's riches in who He is - His nature - this is the source of our hope. Our blessing comes from His value, not ours. And under the wing of His protection we find the fulness of joy.

Herein is a beautiful metaphor. You know that the wing of a strong bird especially, and of any bird relatively, is strong. It makes a kind of arch, and from the outer side you have the architectural idea of strength. Under the wings, even of so feeble a creature as a hen, there is a complete and perfect refuge for her little chicks . . . And then the inside of the wing is lined with soft feathers for the comfort of the young. The interior of the wing is arranged as though it would prevent any friction from the strength of the wing to the weakness of the little bird. . . . Would not the Lord have us in time of trouble come and cower down under the great wing of His omnipotent love, just as the chicks do under the mother? . . . What a warm defense! When I have seen the little birds put their heads out from under the feathers of their mother's breast it has looked like the perfection of happiness . . . If they run a little way, they are soon back again to the wing, for it is house and home to them; it is their shield and . . . defense and delight. . . . You full-grown saints—is not this your condition? I know it is. . . . “There is no place like this: let us joyously abide together under the wing of God.” There is no rest, no peace, no calm, no perfect quiet, like that of giving up all care, because you cast your care on God; renouncing all fear, because your only fear is a fear of offending God. [Spurgeon]

NT equivalent of this is our abiding in X.

John 15:4–5 4 “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Spurgeon concludes ==>

What was the full reward that Ruth obtained? I do not think that Boaz knew the full meaning of what he said. He could not foresee all that was appointed of the Lord. In the light of Ruth's history we will read the good man's blessing. This poor stranger, Ruth, in coming to put her trust in the God of Israel was giving up everything: yes, but she was also gaining everything. If she could have looked behind the veil which hides the future, she could not have conducted herself more to her own advantage than she did. She had no prospect of gain; she followed Naomi, expecting poverty and obscurity; but in doing that which was right, she found the blessing which maketh rich. She lost her Moabitish kindred, but she found a noble kinsman in Israel. She quitted the home of her fathers in the other land to find a heritage among the chosen tribes, a heritage redeemed by one who loved her. Ah! when you come to trust in Christ, you find in the Lord Jesus Christ one who is next of kin to you, who redeems your heritage, and unites you to himself. . . . When a poor sinner trusts in God he does not expect so great a [blessing], but, to his surprise, his heart finds a husband, and a home, and an inheritance priceless beyond all conception; and all this is found in Christ Jesus our Lord. Then is the soul brought into loving, living, lasting, indissoluble union with the Well-beloved, the unrivaled Lord of love. We are one with Jesus. What a glorious mystery is this!
