

Title: **God Fills An Empty Cup (Part 2)**

Passage: **Ruth 2:14-17**

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

Number: **1112Ru2.14-17(7)**

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{Read Passage}

Hard to believe it's been just 3 days short of a mo. since I've last been in t/pulpit. We're back in Ruth & we hope to get thru v. 17 this am.

But since it's been so long this is a good time to refresh our memories as far as this book is concerned.

[iv] Several overlapping themes in Ruth

Genealogical theme

Ruth tells us about the genealogical history of King David & connects t/dots between King David of Judah who was born in Bethlehem & the King of Kings, t/Lion of Judah, JC, who was also born in Bethlehem.

Redemptive theme

The book shows us the personal side of Deut. 25:5-10 (law of levirate marriage) & establishes t/concept of t/Kinsman Redeemer as a prophetic type of JC.

Redeeming the genealogical line in Ruth required a kinsman redeemer (Boaz). Redeeming t/fallen race of men in t/world requires a Kinsman Redeemer, JC.

It's a book that foreshadows the Gospel – Sinners saved from God's wrath by grace apart from the works of the law.

Striking is the absence of any reference to Moses, the Exodus, or the Covt. at Sinai – even though those events weren't far removed from t/time of t/Judges.

Eugene Merrill, professor of OT studies at DTS & past president of the ETS notes that ==>

The narrator is writing, among other reasons, to clarify the fact that the Davidic dynasty is not something which sprang out of the conditional Mosaic Covenant but rather that it has its historical and theological roots in the promises to the patriarchs. Israel as the servant people of Yahweh might rise and fall, be blessed or cursed, but the Davidic dynasty would remain intact forever because God had pledged Himself to Abraham to produce through the patriarch a line of kings which might find its historical locus in Israel but which would have ramifications extending above and beyond Israel. [Eugene Merrill, Bib Sac, April-June 1985, p. 135-36]

Ramifications would find their complete fulfillment in JC.

It's a reminder that the Gospel is for all men, not just the Israelites. Ruth was a Gentile and her lineage is traced to the Redeemer of the World, Jesus Christ. Gentile blood links JC to the entire world.

Ruth has been customarily read by t/Jews during t/feast of Weeks (Shavout) or "First Fruits". Ruth was a Gentile. Gospel is for all nations.

That message most clearly driven home in Acts 2. Day of Pent. when men from every nation under heaven were gathered together in Jer. And God birthed t/NT CH.

What Joel prophesied was being fulfilled, "Everyone who calls on t/name of the Lord shall be saved." [everyone = Jews and Gentiles]

Day of Pent. was another name for t/Feast of Weeks.

Covenant Faithfulness of God

The book answers the ? of how King David emerged out of the dark period of Israel's history known as "The Judges."

It's a reminder to us of God's unchangeable faithfulness.

Shortly before his death in 1960, t/poet & author of many hymns Thomas Chisholm wrote: ==>

My income has never been large at any time due to impaired health in the earlier years which has followed me on until now. But I must not fail to record here the unfailing faithfulness of a covenant keeping God and that He has given me many wonderful displays of His providing care which have filled me with astonishing gratefulness.

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father! There is no shadow of turning with Thee; Thou changest not; Thy compassions, they fail not: As thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide, strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed Thy hand hath provided—Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

[adapted from Osbeck, K. W. (1996).

Amazing grace: 366 inspiring hymn stories for daily devotions (348). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications.]

Psalm 9:10 echoes ==>

And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

The book centers on the concept of Hebrew *chesed* - (word used 3x).

Strong relational word that wraps up in itself several concepts . . . love, mercy, grace, kindness, goodness, benevolence, loyalty, covenant faithfulness . . . [Block, 605]

It's a commentary that out of t/darkest days God will keep a remnant alive. No matter how bad things become, no matter how unfaithful t/CH may appear to be at a given time in history, God will preserve His remnant. We are never alone.

The period of history we know as the Judges was a dark time. But after the darkness of t/Judges came the light of t/Davidic Dynasty (temporal rein of King David that foreshadowed t/eternal rein of his desc. JC).

No matter how dark are the times, light is just around t/corner!

I don't know what that means for us as a nation. I know one thing that's evident following t/national elections of 2 weeks ago: t/CH of JC needs to be unafraid of proclaiming t/truth of t/Gospel (X slain for sinners). We're not only a deeply divided nation (more divided than we've been since t/C.W.) - we're a deeply confused nation. We need articulate spokesmen for truth to stand up and be counted. To say: you know what, you're confused about things like sex, marriage, responsibility, priority -- & you will cont. to be confused until you are awakened to t/fact that God is. Not only that He is, but who He is.

Acts 17:22–31 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. [not untrue today whether t/religion of men is secular humanism, new age spirituality, or a perverted form of Xnity]

23 “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

[everyone worships something; most do so in ignorance]

24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;

[nor on Capital Hill]

25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

[He's sovereign]

27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’

[we are uniquely created in t/image of God; we are unlike t/rest of t/created order, in contradistinction to t/religion of Evolution]

29 “Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30 “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, [why?]

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

2 Peter 3:3-13 - good reality check in light of our crumbling culture.

To bring it back to t/BOR ==>

God's sovereign providential rule over all things

The continuing and often unseen activity of God in sustaining his universe, providing for the needs of every creature, and preparing for the completion of his eternal purposes. [Manser, M. H. (1999). Dictionary of Bible

Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. London: Martin Manser] —

No such thing as chance / coincidence in G's economy.

"4 act drama:" (each chapter serves as a sep. "Act" in t/drama & w/i t/Acts there are several "scenes").

Each chapter / Act centers on t/over-arching theme of t/Royal Line (Kingly genealogy of David (foreground) ==> JC)

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

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

III. Act Three: The Royal Line with Hope at Risk (3:1-18)

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

Brings us to chapter 2 ==>

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

A. Scene One [opens with]: 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 (“Kinsman”)

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

Heb. phrase *’iš gibbôr ḥayil* can be translated: "man of great wealth" but that's an implied idea. Probably better to render this as does the ESV or the NIV.

a worthy man [ESV]

a man of standing [NIV]

B. is a special man. He knows t/LORD. A man of 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.

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.” . . .

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.

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.

“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.

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

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"

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!"

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/further's 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.

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.

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

Going beyond t/letter of t/law. She was being treated like one of his workers -- [^]

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 שפחה

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

b. Example of genuine humility

Don't think more highly that yourself than you ought to (Ro. 12:3)

Pride and it's kissing cousin Selfishness are always entangled in t/root of our deepest sin. Few things are so deceptive in their ability to extend their tentacles into our souls - deceptive because we so often fail to recognize it. At t/heart of all our sin lies unbelief.

Ruth was humble. She was broken. In short, her cup was empty.

God can't fill your life if it's overflowing with you.

God only fills empty cups.

“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. [^]

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,

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.

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

That's the end of the verse ==>

“. . . under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.”

Picture of protection.

Brings us the 3rd scene ==>

C. Scene Three: Ruth Rewarded - Part 2 (vv. 14-17)

1. Grace Realized: Boaz Provides for Ruth (14-17)

Ruth's Rest (14); Ruth's Rights (15-16); Ruth's Reward (17)

a. Ruth's Rest (14)

And at mealtime . . .

Lit. "at the time of the noon meal" (this verse shows a passing of some time between vv. 13-14).

Ruth would have separated herself from the rest, as would be expected from a foreigner.

. . . Boaz said to her, “Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.”

(1) Meals had cultural significance, as they do in so many parts of the world even today (Parallel to our meals as a church)

Hospitality (Gen. 18:1-8); Special celebrations (Ps. 23:5; Mat. 22:1-14; Luke 12:36, 14:8); Confirmation of treaties & covenants (Gen. 31:54; Exo. 24:11).

Cf. the Lord's Supper meal. (remembering t/New Covt.).

... **“Come here, that you may eat of the bread . . .**

Specially provided for the workers. Likely a grain cake cooked in oil.

... **and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.”**

(2) "Vinegar" (wine-vinegar) = יַיִן אֶחָד a fermented liquid or sauce w/a sour taste

Not something you would drink but something you would use as a condiment to add flavor. (cf. mustard / pretzel)

So she sat beside the reapers; . . .

[she's sitting w/the male and female workers]

... **and he served her roasted grain, . . .**

(3) Don't miss that -- Who is serving who? B ==> R.

The man ==> W (culturally sig.). Israelite ==> For. Prominent landowner ==> poor & culturally insignificant.

As much as Ruth is an example of humility, so is Boaz.

Boaz served Ruth "roasted grain" a staple in an Israelite's diet consisting of barley roasted on an iron plate over an open fire.

. . . and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.

Emphasizes Boaz' generosity.

This was more than just feeding someone. Extraordinary care.
A demonstration of Hesed.

(4) Some may think that Boaz is treating Ruth like this because he has some sort of an agenda (can't trust a man, ever!)

She's a young eligible woman. . . .

Not at all indicated in the text.

If anything, Boaz is treating her as a relative. He's exemplifying Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Tim. 5:2.

He's also taking care of Naomi (he knows about her plight as well).

OT scholar Daniel Block ==>

The text offers no hint of any romantic attraction between Boaz and Ruth. Given the racial and social barriers that separated them, the thought would not have crossed Ruth's mind, and she could not have known that he was a kinsman of her deceased husband. As for Boaz, he was simply a good man, "sent" by God to show favor to this woman. The wings of God are not only comforting to Israelites; they offer protection even for despised Moabites. [Block, D. 667]

a. *Ruth's Rest (14)*

b. *Ruth's Rights (15-16)*

(1) Two positive exhortations and two negative prohibitions

**When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying,
“Let her glean even among the sheaves,**

and do not insult her.

**And also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the
bundles and leave it that she may glean,**

and do not rebuke her.”

Insult ==>

כָּלַם (kā·lām): disgrace, bring to shame, embarrass, mistreat

Rebuke ==>

רָעַר (gā·‘ār): reprimand, disapprove, i.e., to tell another that they have done wrong.

**When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying,
“Let her glean even among the sheaves,**

Boaz commands his workers emphatically to permit Ruth to glean among the sheaves.

**And also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the
bundles and leave it that she may glean,**

Note an Arabic cognate that means "to pull out" as pulling a sword from its sheath.

Ruth does not even need to cut or pull out the grain she is gleaning. As the harvesters cut the standing barley, they were to pull out some of the stalks and leave them for her.

a. Ruth's Rest (14)

b. Ruth's Rights (15-16)

c. Ruth's Reward (17)

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

(1) Don't miss Ruth's work ethic here

Boaz' generosity must not overshadow Ruth's industry.

Grace is not something to presume upon. We don't work for our salvation but we do work it out (Phil. 2:12).

Parallel to our sanctification (not our justification which has no real synergistic elements - we were dead) but in sanctification we are alive. Romans 6 applies.

So she gleaned in the field until evening.

Then she beat out what she had gleaned,

She would beat out the stalks of grain on a threshing floor, a hard surface used by the community. Using a stick or rock to separate the grain from the chaff.

and it was about an ephah of barley.

and it was about an ephah of barley!!

An עֲפָה was a measure of dry goods.

An ephah of barley would have weighed 30-50 lbs. About a months worth of grain required to feed a family.

Quite a feat for Ruth to glean and carry home. (As Campbell says, however, we not need to add to Ruth's virtues that she was strong as an ox!).

Who is this man! Naomi knows!

D. Scene Four: Ruth Reports (vv. 18-23)