

Ruth (Love Defined) - Part 4

Sunday, March 10, 2024

Several weeks back we began a series on the Book of Ruth examining it through the Lense of... **LOVE DEFINED**

What should I look for in the Book of Ruth...

- The lack of true love in the world
- God's love for us
- Our love for God
- Our love for each other
- The characteristics of what love should look like

We talked about the Pictures of Love that we see in Chapter 1

Pictures that represented the LACK OF LOVE experienced by Naomi and Ruth, and which mimic our own culture, lives and experiences

- **Days when the judges ruled.** (Verse 1)... An Atmosphere *(Culture) that lacked love
 - Wicked and selfish... every man for themselves (did what was right in their own eyes)
 - **Horrible atrocities of evil** (especially in chapters 17-21 much of which centered around Bethlehem)
 - **Lack of love** (For God, for each other, for righteousness)
- **Famine in Bethlehem (Verse 1)**
 - No bread in the house of bread - (I would also say a famine of love... leaving people without something they need to live)
- **Death of husbands leaving them alone and without anyone to love and care for them**
- **The hopelessness's and bitterness of Naomi, even casting doubt of any possibility that God loved her or cared for her**

But then we turned our attention to the pictures that remind of us God's love for us in the midst of a world that lacks love

- **Bethlehem** - The birthplace of "The Love of God"

- **Barley Harvest** - reminding us of the provision of salvation that God's LOVE made available to us. LOVE that breaks the stronghold of the enemy. A love that is defined by understanding that God alone is the source for real love... That the fake imitations of the world will never give us the nourishment that we need... That Jesus is LOVE DEFINED!

Then we turned our attention to THE WHO'S of LOVE

PART 2 - THE WHO'S OF LOVE (Includes...)

GOD'S LOVE TOWARDS US

- **FORIEGNERS (People who don't know or love God - Moabites of which Ruth was one)**

"God loves because of who God is, not because of who we are." - Philip Yancey

The Who of God's Love is us... NO matter who we are... NO matter what we've done, God Loves US!

- **PRODIGALS (Those who walk away from God - Naomi)**

Even when we walk away from God, Even when we go our own way, even when we are mad at God and blame Him for the circumstances our own choices create for us, even when we don't believe in Him anymore; He still believes in us and He STILL LOVES US.

OUR LOVE TOWARDS GOD AND OTHERS

- Love God
- Love Our Neighbor
- Love Our Enemies

Next, we looked at some more specific ways that LOVE is DEFINED in the book of Ruth...In Chapter one we learned that Love is...

- **Love Is A Choice**
- **Love Means Commitment**

Commitment means continuing to make the same choice again and again

John 14:15

15 "If you love me, keep my commands.

- **Love Requires Sacrifice**

PART 4

Ruth 2

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." 3 So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

4 Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!"

"The Lord bless you!" they answered.

5 Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?"

6 The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. 7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. 9 Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."

10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"

11 Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. 12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

13 “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. 15 As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. 16 Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. 18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!”

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

20 “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”

21 Then Ruth the Moabite said, “He even said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”

23 So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

God always has a plan

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” 3 So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

4 Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!”

Love begins with KINDNESS

11 Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.

20 “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”

Kindness: the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate:

Love PROVIDES

9 Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink (Matthew 10:42, Mark 9:41) from the water jars the men have filled.”

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. 15 As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. 16 Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. 18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

Even our love of God is defined this way

James 2:14-22

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless[\[a\]](#)? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

1 John 3:18

18 Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

Love is HARD WORK and WORKS HARD

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” 3 So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters.

Gleaning was hard work

Leviticus 19:9-10

9 “When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

Ruth worked hard

7 She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters. She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.’

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. 18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered.

23 So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished.

Love should be the BY-PRODUCT of a real relationship with God

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

4 Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!”

“The Lord bless you!” they answered.

12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

John defines love this way.

1 John 4:7-8

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Love always PROTECTS

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. 9 Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you.

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”

Psalm 121:7-8

7 The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; 8 the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love treats others like FAMILY

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter,

10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

This is how God has loved us and how he calls us to love others

1 John 3:1

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!

Love is REWARDED by God

11 Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. 12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!”

20 “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law.

God rewarded Ruth's love by providing food for her and Naomi to eat... He rewarded Naomi's love of Ruth... He Rewarded Boaz with a beautiful wife... He rewarded Ruth with a kind and loving husband... He rewarded them with a offspring, and a great grandson who became King (David) but more than that he blessed them by being part of the lineage of Christ. (Luke names Boaz in his genealogy and Matthew names both Boaz and Ruth)