



Ruth Part 2

Chapter Two

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Honor Shame Provision Bitter

We are in Ruth, located between Joshua and Judges in the Old Testament. A couple of themes from last week: Difference between Western and non-Western cultures which have **Honor/Shame** as a social currency. If you are poor or sick, you have little social currency and you will see this play out in Ruth.

We also see God's **Provision** strongly in Ruth. But we also see **Bitterness**: Naomi left with a family and returned with only a daughter in law: she is now at the bottom of the rung and has no real value/worth in this culture. However, she casts this onto God and narrates her life as God being the instrument for what happens in her life.

To Glean

To collect leftover grain or produce after a harvest.

Leviticus 19

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.

Gleaning provides for poorer people in a culture by letting them harvest the leftover grains and produce.

Ruth has returned to Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi.

Need Calls us to Risk

The older I get, the more I realize how needy I am. Even after being married almost 30 years, I still am needy. The risk is asking for help: we are part of a culture that gives social shame for asking for help. Therefore, we don't like weakness and asking for help. The risk is usually asking for help.

Ruth 2:1-3

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.

Remember over and over in the book, Ruth is known as Ruth the Moabite. Moabites are bad, esp women who are seductresses and evil. So this description of Ruth is important.

Ruth goes out to collect food by gleaning..."It so happened" (wink, wink) is not an accident but God's providence. Remember, it is dangerous for her to go and glean.

Where is God asking you to risk?

2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Where is God asking you to risk?

You are well acquainted with your neediness; boasting is saying you need help from God and his people. These are hard things: God is always working on this in my life.

Do you remember not having [Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com) to get a job? When I was a teen, I had to go into businesses to get paper applications. I was scared to do this so I got a friend to help

me: God helped me in this way.

Another example: I had to get a medical stress test so I asked Rod (the walking Xanax) to come with me. Rod is funny and calmed me down. But it was terrifying for me to ask for help!

Where are you needy? where do you need help? Ruth took a risk.



Kindness and Gratitude are
revealing!

Ponder this: kindness and gratitude are revealing: when a child says thank you, it reveals so much about them and their parents.

Ruth 2:4-7

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."

But Ruth is also a romance! Boaz means "with strength." We know his character is one to bless people.

These details are given to Boaz, almost redundant (the Moabite from Moab), she's a hard worker (not lazy like Moabites). Ruth is kind, unassuming, and hard working...Ruth, the Moabite.

Ruth 2:8-9

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."

That he calls her "my daughter" is saying she is his kin, not a foreigner. He also tells his men not to harm her, further emphasizing that what she is doing is very risky, especially in being taken advantage of by men. He's going to take care of her and he doesn't call her a Moabite.

Ruth 2:10-12

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.**"

Her immediate response is gratefulness. He knows the gossip of the town about Ruth: he knows she is kind and takes care of her mother-in-law, having left everything that is valuable to her to do this.

The highlighted areas reflect that Boaz will be an instrument of God to take care of her because of her kindness.

Ruth 2:14-15

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.



Ruth 2:16-17

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.

An ephath is 30-40 pounds...Boaz asks his people to help her as she lugs this around.

How is your strength expressed? Our culture says things like physical strength, financial, authority are signs of strength.

How is your strength expressed?

Philippians 2:3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Gratitude are two of the clearest ways strength shows up in God's

Boaz offers kindness and Ruth offers gratitude: strength is expressed through kindness and gratitude. What do these things look like in your life?

Ask others how they experience kindness and gratefulness from you: I love it when small children express thankfulness to me, even if their parents set them up. The more we are able to name what we are thankful for, God will show up!

God will show-up!

Ruth 2:18-19

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

Ruth 2:20-21

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.'"

Ruth 2:22-23

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.

Quick note: Ch 1 ended with "Ruth the Moabite" has changed to God's kindness. Naomi understands God's sovereignty is everywhere and she insists that God be the storyteller. She highlights that Boaz is the guardian redeemer, which will be discussed more next week.

Think about areas where God has provided: are you willing to stay there or do you want more?

Where has God already made provision, and are you willing to remain there?

Colossians 2:6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Maybe you want to dwell on God's provisions for you but I want us to think beyond tangible things. Consider Col 2:6: the reality is that God has already made provision through Jesus through his death and resurrection. Can you stay in that or are you running out to find the next thing that will make things OK.

The way we can interpret the world is by staying rooted in what God has done for us! Can you stay there? What is moving

you away from this?

For me, as a journaler this morning, I realized I don't trust that Jesus has everything under control and I am unwilling to narrate my life as one where God is in charge. I think it's mostly up to me. Ruth (the book) invites me to understand the need for more humility in my life and trusting that God will work it out. Jesus's provisions are enough.

A couple of thoughts:

1. God shows up in our need and this always involves risk, usually in the form of asking for HELP.
2. How is your strength expressed? Is it kind and generous? When I think about this as a 6'4" 260 lb, I can usually get what I want through intimidation. I need to understand this about me and offer what is good to other people.

• **God shows up in our need.** And need always invites risk.

Where is God inviting you to risk?

How is your strength expressed? Is it Kind? Is it generous?

• **Stay in the field.** Ruth didn't move on.

Where is God providing—and are you willing to stay?

There is a strong tendency to move on from things: from churches we don't like, from restaurants, from jobs. 75 percent of people don't like their jobs and

want to go somewhere better. We as a culture want to look for something else.

These are the things God has laid on my heart...

