

Ruth 2:1-16 – The Benefit of work; the Blessing of sharing

TSK, HebrewLexicon, Pulpit, Handfuls, Delitzsch, Trapp, TSK, Henry, Poole, Barnes, Clarke, GrayConcise, Gill, INT, Ps 36,57,91

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: It is easy to be thankful for gifts – a birthday present, a raise in pay, or being left in someone's will. **But have you ever been thankful for hard work? And have you ever been thankful for the opportunity to share?** These are gifts too! You will hear about this today, Thanksgiving Day 2020.

Our headings are:

The Benefit of Work

The Blessings of Work

Our goals are: **That you will learn to work hard and learn to share with others, now that you are a redeemed child of God with your renewed life and promise of heaven.**

The Benefit of Work

1 There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz. 2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "**Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.**" And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

1. Ruth wanted to provide for herself and her mother-in-law and so she asked for permission to leave her mother-in-law.

Ruth was not looking for permission to work. She expected to work! She struggled with caring for her mother-in-law and providing food for her.

Ruth did not expect others to provide for her needs. She was not a socialist. **She wanted to work.** She knew work was a blessing! God commanded work and blessed work!

Ruth did not complain about the hardness of her life but she simply accepted her providential circumstances! She didn't say, "I'm a believer now; I should get better things!"

Ruth was not jealous of others who had a better life than she.

3 Then she left, and **went and gleaned in the field after the reapers.** And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.

2. Ruth then went to a certain field to work, following the reapers to pick up what they left behind.

This was called gleaning. Gleaning (picking up the leftovers) was God's plan to provide for the poor. The poor had to work if they were able! So when the crops were harvested, the **harvesters could not harvest to the edges of the field** (they would make a circle at the corners) and they could not pick up what fell off their carts. That were left to the needy.

Leviticus 23:22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, **you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field** when you reap, **nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest.** You shall **leave them for the poor and for the stranger:** I am the LORD your God.'"

4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "**The LORD be with you!**" And they answered him, "**The LORD bless you!**" 5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "**Whose young woman is this?**" 6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

3. Ruth happened to work in the Boaz's field, a relative of her mother-in-law, one designated as Naomi's kinsman redeemer.

He was a godly man who was highly respected by his employees.

Boaz inquired of the woman who was gleaning in his field and was told she was a Moabitess, the daughter-in-law of Naomi.

7 "And she said, 'Please let me glean and **gather after the reapers** among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

4. Ruth asked permission to glean in the Boaz's field and worked hard, from morning to evening with little rest!

It was long, hard work in the hot summer sun.

No one had the right to glean directly after the reapers. Gleaners had to get permission to do so.

5. Lessons:

a. Learn to care for others, especially those close to you and the poor! Think how some of the people who died this year died because their relatives did not want them in their homes! Think about brothers and sisters who need help in Canada and elsewhere...and offer it! **At least you can work in Canada!** Think about sending some food to those overseas who have nothing!

b. Work is hard, but you must work hard. It is because of sin that work is as hard as it is today.

c. Don't expect others to provide for you. Work hard so you can share with others who are providentially hindered from making a living. Don't focus on what rights you have a Canadian citizen. Focus on the responsibilities you have as a Christian.

d. When you work there is a fulfillment – a satisfaction – regardless of the job you have! Don't be prideful! Take the gift!

e. If you are needy, ask for help. It is to your shame if you don't. You are denying your brothers the opportunity to help.

f. Maintaining a good relationship with your employer or employee brings good to them and glory to God. Don't see your employer as your enemy. Look at them, even if they are unkind, as God's means of providing for you and for others.

The Blessing of Sharing

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, **but stay close by my young women.** 9 "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. **Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?** And when you are thirsty, **go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.**"

1. While it is common in most parts of the world to abuse the poor and treat them like dirt, Boaz responded with kindness to the young widow.

Boaz urged Ruth to stay in his fields where she would be safe. He knew his workers were godly, but they may not have been the same way on other farms.

Boaz permitted Ruth to stay with his women – who were the reapers – so they could be an extra protection for her.

Boaz then made sure Ruth would have enough water while she was working in the summer's heat.

He didn't have to do any of this, but he did! He had a lot, so he shared.

What a testimony this must have been to his workers!

10 **So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground,** and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, **since I am a foreigner?"**

2. Ruth's response was thankfulness and made kind inquiries as to why Boaz was so kind to her.

After all, **she was a woman.** After all, **she was a foreigner.** After all, she was **a Moabitess,** from the most despised nation to the Jews. Her people were **known for their cruelty** to the women and children of Israel. **Ruth expected revenge not kindness.** Ruth bowed to honor Boaz for sharing of his gifts.

She was bowing down, like David in Psalm 110, to her own Kinsman Redeemer who would come through Boaz!

And this same Jesus would send his missionaries to preach the Gospel to all the nations and save them from their sins!

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "**It has been fully reported to me,** all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and **have come to a people whom you did not know before.**"

3. Boaz's response was he and others knew Ruth was godly.

Ruth did not have religious talk, but she had religious walk.

Ruth cared for her mother-in-law, who was technically not her mother-in-law anymore.

Ruth left wicked Moab behind and **committed herself to the God of Israel.** She wanted Naomi's God as her God.

12 "The LORD repay your work, and a **full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel,** under whose wings **you have come for refuge.**"

4. Boaz even prayed to the one true God of heaven and earth for more blessing to come to Ruth, knowing she needed more than food and drink.

And being under God's wings was a place of refuge!

Psalm 91:4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, Nor of the arrow that flies by day,

This is really the key to understanding this text: Ruth was blessed because she trusted in God and rested in his care!

13 Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; **for you have comforted me,** and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

5. Ruth then expressed appreciation for Boaz's kind words, protection, and promise of food.

All of these blessings were even more striking to Ruth because **she was not even equal to one of Boaz's maidservants.** Yet Boaz gave Ruth comfort!

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "**Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.**" So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and **kept some back.**

6. Boaz then translated his talk to more action by inviting Ruth to share in his lunch meal.

This was a good meal for workers. It was bread dipped in wine (sometimes with a little olive oil added) and freshly parched grain. The wine brought refreshment to the thirsty! Again, her Kinsman Redeemer refreshed her thirsty soul! She ate and was satisfied.

7. Ruth then kept some of the fresh parched grain to share with her mother-in-law, something that is so easily missed in the text.

What a kindhearted woman! She could have said that she worked hard and should receive the better reward, but she didn't! But she wanted to share like Boaz shared with her. **Sharing was contagious for God's children.**

15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "**Let her glean even among the sheaves,** and do not reproach her. 16 "**Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her;** leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

8. Boaz then blessed Ruth with much.

He urged his men to **allow Ruth to glean among the grain** that was reserved for himself. He received much so he shared!

He ordered his men to **let a few bundles "fall of the wagon"** so Ruth would have more.

So Ruth was not rewarded according to her labor, but above her labor!

9. Lessons:

a. Blessings follow those, like Ruth and Boaz, who live godly lives and bless the people of God! So live godly lives. Be kind. Reflect who your God is. Reflect who your Savior is. The more you recognize the wonders of your Savior's work, the more you will show kindness. And what blessings follow! **Ruth and Boaz became the direct parents of the Jesus Christ!**

Colossians 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

b. You don't have to have a job or lots of money to be kind! Share your ear! Write an e-mail...even a text message! Invite someone for a meal, or for coffee, or tea if they aren't refined enough to drink coffee!

c. "Mouth mercy" is not good enough! You need money-mercy. You need message mercy. You need a meeting mercy. You need milk-mercy. Show mercy!

d. Blessings may come in this life only, or they may come in this life and in heaven! Keep working hard and let God decide how he will bless and when he will bless.

e. Let your children catch the sharing disease from you! Expose them to acts of kindness!

f. Christ, your Kinsman Redeemer, continues to feed you today with his Word and Sacraments. Eat and live.

Conclusion:

Work is a good gift – even if work is hard! When you are rewarded with your work, you must share with others. Why? The Lord is the one who has blessed you! He chose you, he called you, he justified you, he sanctified you, and he will glorify you. He feeds your body and soul today.

So brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Work hard. Share. Everything you have, you have received!

2. Teach your children to work, even to work hard. Teach them it is **noble to work** and **not to expect others to provide for their needs.** **Teach them to share.** Rewards from work can make people selfish, but remind them the produce of their work is a gift of God and he must regulate how they spend it. Christmas time is coming...and it would be a good time to reinforce this in them.

Finally: God cares for his children. If you are not God's child, you are outside of his blessings. Do you want to be God's child? Ask him! He adopted a Moabitess! He will adopt you too. Jesus died for sinners such as you!

Psalm 107:1-15 – Responsive Reading

1 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,

3 And gathered out of the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way; They found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, Their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And He led them forth by the right way, That they might go to a city for a dwelling place.

8 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, Bound in affliction and irons —

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, And despised the counsel of the Most High,

12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labor; They fell down, and there was none to help.

13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, And He saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, And broke their chains in pieces.

15 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Our gracious Father, God of heaven and earth:

We thank you for saving us and adopting us as your children through Jesus Christ, even though we strayed and fell into sin... help us to worship and work for you.

We thank you for your Holy Spirit who lives with us and prays for us...help us to repent when your Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.

We thank you for husbands and wives...help us to love them as Christ has loved us and gave himself for us...

We thank you for mothers and fathers...help us to honor them and provide for them as you give us opportunity...

We thank you for our children...help us to raise them for your glory and for their own good.

We thank you for our pastors, elders, and deacons...help us to learn from their wisdom and submit to them.

We thank you for our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ...help us to pray for them, encourage them, and support them, using the abilities you have given to us.

We thank you for teachers in school...help us to learn the truths about your world and put them into practice for your glory.

We thank you for our education and our jobs...help us not to be selfish, but to provide for our families, give to you, and help the poor...

We thank you for our bosses and supervisors...help us to work hard to please them and work for their profit...

We thank you for a safe and peaceful country, but help us to safeguard it from falling into sin and destruction...

We thank you that we are free to worship and serve you...help us not to ignore the opportunities you give us to worship by pursuing selfish things.

We thank you for food in abundance...help us to share with those who don't have and learn not to waste what we do have...

We thank you for comfortable places to live...help us to worship you in our homes...and to care for the widows, orphans, and foreigners...

We thank you for clothes to wear...help us to dress modestly...and remember to help those who have no clothes...

We thank you for friends...help us not to take them for granted, but to serve them...

We thank you for being able to be witnesses for you in a world of spiritual darkness...help us not to be ashamed of Christ's Work, but proudly speak of your Fatherly kindness.

Yes, we have much for which we must thank you, Lord, and we ask that you forgive us for not thanking you enough.

May your Holy Spirit move us to thank you as we should, not only today, but throughout the next year.

We ask these things through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ruth 1:1-16

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