Series: Reclaiming God’s Purpose

Ruth

March 10, 2019

Message 2:

**How Does This Happen?**

Ruth 2

**Intro:** Review chapter 1 part of the story …

Through that we learned some things about making good choices in hard times -

* When we make our choices, we need to make them with good people.
* When we make our commitments, we need to make them to last.
* When we stay committed in hardship, we make a difference.

Enter a new character into this play … Boaz … good name for a son!

Ruth 2:1-2 - Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech.

One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.”…

*Levitical law …*

Ruth 2:2-5 - Naomi replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.” So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.

While she was there, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters. “The Lord be with you!” he said.

“The Lord bless you!” the harvesters replied.

Then Boaz asked his foreman, “Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?”

She got noticed - what got her noticed?

You might think she was good looking! She might have been - she probably was - but that’s not what the Bible says -

Something far beyond her appearance got her noticed - and got her more than noticed - it was her character.

Sometimes people think that some folks are just lucky …

* born with a silver spoon …

How does this happen? Why do things seem to go so good for them?

Let’s remember - Ruth and Naomi have gone through some very hard times … yet kept their faith and their commitment to one another through it all - if good things are going to happen to them, it’s not just going to be dumb luck.

What we are going to learn here today does not mean that if you always have good character you’ll never have a hard time … things will always work out … It’s not, “You do this and life will always be good, never be hard.”

No - good and bad happens to everyone - How do we increase our chances for good things to happen, even though both happen to everyone? Are there things we can do to encourage better things happening in our lives? I believe the answer is yes - and this story from the Bible illustrates that.

Someone observed a trend that happens in extremely wealthy families with very great fortunes:

- the first generation works to earn the fortune

* the second generation maintains the inherited fortune
* The third generation squanders and loses the fortune - they’ve lost the values of character that caused the fortune to be earned.

Proverbs on hard work and laziness …

Proverbs 12:14 - …hard work brings rewards.

Proverbs 12:24 - Work hard and become a leader;

be lazy and become a slave.

Proverbs 13:14 - Lazy people want much but get little,

but those who work hard will prosper.

Proverbs 13:11 - Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears;

wealth from hard work grows over time.

Proverbs 21:5 - Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity,

but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

**Big Idea: Good character leads to great blessings.**

A lot of people can have good character - there are people who are not followers of Jesus who still have good character and receive these blessings - and they don’t even know or realize that it is the Bible that tells us what good character is - and it is for the purpose of being open to the ultimate blessing.

How does this happen?

Five aspects of good character that will lead to great blessings listed here:

**> Hard work**

Ruth 2:6-9 - And the foreman replied, “She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi. She asked me this morning if she could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes’ rest in the shelter.”

Boaz went over and said to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don’t go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field. See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well.”

Aunt Elsie … Dad …

Work hard at school … at your job …

Work hard toward a talent … you might be gifted, but it still takes work to hone the craft.

Lee Trevino on hitting a ball in from the sand …

**> Commitment to family**

Ruth 2:10-12 - Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. “What have I done to deserve such kindness?” she asked. “I am only a foreigner.”

“Yes, I know,” Boaz replied. “But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers. May the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done.”

Ruth 2:10 MSG - …“How does this happen that you should pick me out and treat me so kindly—*me*, a foreigner?”

The character we saw in chapter 1 was not only noticed - it was talked about!

Country song: “Let’s give ‘em something to talk about!”

I think we can give people something better to talk about!

Hard work can illustrate a commitment to our families …

Hard work can also eclipse our commitment to our families …

We have to be wise … We have to do both without harming either one.

Dale …

My Dad … IUK & work travel …

**> Kindness**

Ruth 2:13-14 - “I hope I continue to please you, sir,” she replied. “You have comforted me by speaking so kindly to me, even though I am not one of your workers.”

At mealtime Boaz called to her, “Come over here, and help yourself to some food. You can dip your bread in the sour wine.” So she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her some roasted grain to eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over.

This seems so simple - why is it missing? Why do we miss it? Why can’t we practice this?

Fruit of the Spirit …

How hard is it to just be kind -

* The person at the checkout counter, or the waitress -
  + Maybe they’re a single mom working two jobs who doesn’t have time for their kids - barely has enough money to support them - maybe they’ve been beaten and battered -
  + Maybe they’ve just been told their mom has Alzheimer’s - or their dad has cancer
  + Maybe their husband just left them for another woman -

How hard is it to just be kind - everyone is broken - and everyone is going through some kind of a battle.

**> Generosity**

Ruth 2:15-21 - When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without stopping her. And pull out some heads of barley from the bundles and drop them on purpose for her. Let her pick them up, and don’t give her a hard time!”

So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket. She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal.

“Where did you gather all this grain today?” Naomi asked. “Where did you work? May the Lord bless the one who helped you!”

So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, “The man I worked with today is named Boaz.”

“May the Lord bless him!” Naomi told her daughter-in-law. “He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers.”

Then Ruth said, “What’s more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed.”

This goes far beyond the Levitical law … Boaz is purposefully having them drop grain …

He is cutting into his own profit margin …

He is giving of his own income …

He is a faithful man - already tithing - already giving to the Lord … this goes beyond -

This giving is not going to show up on his receipt … not going to get credit -

We worry about having to give a certain amount - the character of God is to give without even worrying about what we will get out of it or what it will cost us.

Look at notes from 2nd Corinthians 8-9 -

Boaz would end up giving even more - because the Law said that if a woman’s husband died, the next closest relative had to take that woman as his wife - to take care of her - it was taking another person on - another mouth to feed - in some cases more than one -

But in this giving, Boaz would reap great blessings.

It’s the same with us - when we are generous beyond reason, we reap blessings beyond imagination!

**> Protection**

Ruth 2:22-23 - “Good!” Naomi exclaimed. “Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you’ll be safe with him.”

So Ruth worked alongside the women in Boaz’s fields and gathered grain with them until the end of the barley harvest. Then she continued working with them through the wheat harvest in early summer. And all the while she lived with her mother-in-law.

Do we have a desire to protect people?

A lot of people come under attack - in many ways …

We may know them - we may not - Boaz is just getting to know Ruth … he knew something about her - but they were still not close at this point.

Are we only interested in the protection of those who are close to us, or are we willing to stick our neck out to protect someone, just because they are a human being who doesn’t deserve to be attacked?

Examples ?? …

Could this not be a way to witness the goodness of Jesus to other people?

Ways in which Jesus protected people …

* Woman caught in adultery …
* Woman/Mary who came under attack for anointing His feet …
* The cross … the ultimate protection …

The Bible talks about us living in the shelter of God - Being under His wings as a bird protects her young.

The instinct to protect people is a characteristic of God. It should be part of our character.

**Concl:** There is an ultimate blessing that we cannot receive simply by having good character …

Eternal life -

None good … none righteous … gift of grace …

You should strive to have all the above characters that are listed here - but there is more - This character will help you in this life - but not in the next life …

In this story, Boaz is a picture of Jesus - the ultimate family Redeemer …