

Place: Lurgan Baptist 8:3:2005

Reading: Ruth 2:1-17

THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION

5. HERE COMES THE BRIDEGROOM

Years after the wedding the minister met the former Bridegroom. The minister had been late the day of the wedding and had kept everyone waiting. The minister said to the Bridegroom, “*that was some fright I gave you that day.*” The bridegroom replied, “*Yes and I’ve still got her.*” Somehow I don’t think that Boaz felt that way about Ruth. I have a feeling that it was love at the first sight. For when he said to his servant, “*whose damsel is this ?*” (2:5) he was saying in effect, “*Well, where in the world has she been that I have not met her before ?*” He fell for this girl. This was love at first sight. Do you believe in love at first sight ? J. Vernon McGee a well known American preacher tells us that he proposed to his wife on their second date. The reason he didn’t propose to her on the first date was that he didn’t want her to think he was in any hurry. Now our subject this is, “***Here comes the Bridegroom.***” You see, Bible students have seen in Boaz a type or picture of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like Boaz Christ is our kinsman (2:1) for the Lord Jesus became man sin apart that He might be our Redeemer. (Heb 2:14) He is truly a mighty man of wealth for His riches are unreachable (2 Cor 8:9) and He is our Boaz which means, “*in Him is strength,*” for all power is His in heaven and in earth. Now Boaz is presented in four distinct ways in this little book even as the gospels unfold the perfection of Christ from a four fold aspect.

1. He is as (2:1) “*a might man of wealth,*” and He is portrayed like that in Matthew’s gospel where He is the King and where all power is said to be His. (Matt 28:19-20)
2. He is the man who will not rest until the work of redemption is finished at Calvary (4:1) which is the way Mark presents Christ as the tireless worker, the servant. (Mk 10:45)
3. He is our kinsman (2:1) the eternal God who took upon Himself manhood (Phil 2:5) that as man He might be able to die for men. My is that not the way

that Luke portrays Him ? (Lk 5:16)

4. Boaz is set before us as the one who loved Ruth and married her. So John in his gospel sets before us our Saviour as the Lover and Lord of His own.

Now I want us to notice Ruth taking up three different positions in relation to Boaz. Notice, firstly Ruth,

(1) ON HER FACE

Look if you will at (2:10) then (2:13) or “ *I am finding favour in thy sight.* ” Favour is the same Hebrew word translated grace in (2:10) My the great show of benevolence by Boaz to Ruth was overwhelming to Ruth. “ *She was surprised, amazed, bewildered.* ” “ *Why have I found grace in thine eyes ?* ” Now I think I can answer Ruth’s question. If she would just go home and look in a mirror, she’d see the reason. She had everything that is desirable in a woman and a wife, and for that reason this man has fallen in love with her. I can answer that question. But there is a question I cannot answer. *Why have I found grace in the eyes of the Lord ?* Now don’t tell to go home and look in the mirror because I have done that and the image is something that is not quite attractive. I don’t see the answer in the mirror. But God has extended grace toward us. You and I both can ask Ruth’s question as we come to the Lord.

“ *Why have I found grace in thine eyes ?* ” We cannot find the answer in ourselves. We’re not lovely, we’re not attractive, we do not have those qualities that God respects. We’re sinners, and we’re in rebellion against God. And yet in spite of all that, God loves us. And He demonstrated that love, because “ *while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* ” The story of every believers life is a story of grace. In each of our lives there is the story of saving grace, living grace, dying grace. *The commencement of the Christian life, the continuation of the Christian life and the conclusion of the Christian life is a story of grace.* I think of John Newton, the author of

“ *Amazing Grace.* ” Two or three years before he died his sight was dim and he was no longer able to read. A friend and brother in the ministry would have breakfast with him and their custom was that they would read the Word of God. Newton would make a few remarks on the passage and then they would pray. One particular day they read the words of Paul, “ *by the grace of God I am what I am.* ” Newton was silent for the longest and finally he said, “ *I am not what I ought to be. How imperfect and deficient I am. I am not what I wish to be, although I abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. I am not what I hope to be, but*

soon I shall be out of mortality and with it all sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor yet what I hope to be. I can truly say I am not what I once was a slave to sin and Satan.”

“ *Why have I found grace in thine eyes ?*” I heard about a woman who had sixteen children. They were just like steps of stairs. As you can imagine her hands were full. One day the little girl fell into a tar pit. She had tar all over her. It was in her hair, ears, up her nose and under her finger nails. She was covered in tar. Her mother started trying to clean her up and in her frustration said, “ *I declare, I believe it would be easier to have another one than clean this one up.*” My the truth is we were all in a mess. In the state and condition we were in we should have been in hell. But God extended His grace toward us. “ *Why have I found grace eyes ?*”

***“ Why was I made to hear His voice
And enter while there’s room
When thousands made a wretched choice
And rather starve than come.”***

Ruth was on her face. Why ? Why she was on her face in gratitude, wonder, and thanksgiving because of the grace and favour of Boaz. But then that grace and favour showed itself in so many different ways. For notice that Ruth was on her face because of,

(a) HIS WISDOM:

How sweet and cheering must have been his first words to her heart. Look at (2:8) Its as if Boaz was saying,

“ *Continue where you have begun, for I am a mighty man of wealth and I have plenty to satisfy you.*” He tells where to go, “ *Go not to glean in another field,*” and he tells her with whom to have fellowship, “ *abide here fast by my maidens.*” Do you know something ? Sometimes the grass looks greener on the other side of the fence. And many a young Christian has turned away from the things of the Lord only to be caught up by the attractions and distractions of this world. Do you recall what Paul said about Demas ? “ *Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world.*” (2 Tim 4:10) (a)

(b) HIS WARNING:

Ruth was young and we get the impression that she was attractive. She was also a

widow and a foreigner. Some people would not respect her because she was a Moabitess. Also because it was harvest season, much celebrating and revelry and even some misbehaving would occur. Ruth could have been in danger, but Boaz was now protecting her. Look if you will at (2:9) His maidens were watching over her. He had warned the young men not to touch her. *Ruth is now protected by the fellowship of those around her.* You see, Christians need the protection of fellowship. I meet folk who claim that they can survive without the local fellowship.

(Heb 10:25) But I don't think they can ! My we need the fellowship of God's people believers who will walk with us, guide us and rebuke us if necessary.

Is that not what the local church is all about ? Look at (Acts 2:41) Now do you see the pattern here ? Peter had preached repentance and they did repent. You see, repentance and faith are the two sides of the one coin of conversion. (1 Thes 1:9) Now what happened after conversion ? There was baptism.(2:41) Then what happened ? “ *there were added.* ” Now I don't know whether their names were put down in a church roll book. Some folk get all stirred up about constitutions of churches etc; *I tell you some of them know the constitution better than they know the Word of God.* Now here were a group of believers, they are now saved, baptised, and definitely linked with this new work at Jerusalem. Can you see the divine order ? You hear the gospel (2:37) you receive the gospel (2:41) you are baptised, and then added. Now is there anything complicated about that ? My the New Testament knows nothing of “ *going it alone,* ” “ *moving here and there where fancy takes you.* ” No, those who knew the Lord were committed at once to the local churches where they were instructed and shepherded, and were they submitted to the teaching and direction of those whom God had appointed for their good. (Eph 4:12 Heb 13:7) But how did they continue ? Look at (2:42)

1. In the Apostles Doctrine:

No true Christian life is possible apart from prominence given to the Word of God. The apostles doctrine was a *safeguard for these new converts against the danger of error.*

2. Fellowship:

There was this sharing. They fed on the Word together, they broke bread together. Now this was a safeguard for *these new converts against the danger of coldness.*

3. Breaking of Bread:

For they were obedient to the Lord's command, "*this do in remembrance of Me.*" (Lk 23:19) This was a safeguard for these new converts against the danger of superficiality.

4. Prayer:

That is the Early Church had special meetings for prayer. This was a safeguard for these new converts against the danger of independence. Now do you see clearly that the early church moved in a four fold realm ? They *moved in the realm of the Word (apostles doctrine) they moved in the realm of the Fellowship, they moved in the realm of the Cross (the breaking of bread) and they moved in the realm of the Throne (the prayers)* ? They needed the protection of the fellowship ! This is why Ruth was on her face. (a) (b)

(c) HIS WEALTH:

For Boaz was a mighty man of wealth. Indeed in (2:9) he gives her water for refreshment and in (2:14) he gives her bread for nourishment. Do you know something ? Ruth is enjoying the blessing of provision. Did you ever notice that in (Matt Ch 6) the Lord Jesus selects three areas of life where most of us are prone to worry. We worry about what we eat, drink, wear ! We become anxious about the temporal, material, external things of life. *But Christ told us that such worry is needless ! Why ?* Because we have a Heavenly Father who is all powerful and all loving who knows what His children need and is able to supply that need. Do you know what Christ says ? "*Behold the fowls of the air consider the lilies of the field ?*" Do you see how needless worry is ? If God clothes the lilies of the field how much more will He clothe you ? If God feeds the birds of the air how much more will He care for you ? Do you know what our responsibility is ? "*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matt 6:33) (a)(b)(c)

(d) HIS WELCOME:

1. Do you see how he Address's her:

"*Hearest thou not my daughter,*" those gracious words fell with encouragement on the ears of Ruth. Never man spake like this man.

2. Do you how he Appreciates her:

Look if you will at (2:11) Ruth left her parents and land for an unknown people. Like Abraham before her she went out not knowing whither she went. (Heb 11:8) And Boaz noted her sacrifice. Sometimes as Christian workers we can become weary in the work, though never weary of the work. We become despondent for often no-one notices the effort, the sacrifice, the time.

But bless God our heavenly Boaz does and every little bit of sacrifice for His sake He recognises and rewards.

(Matt 19:23 Heb 6:10)

3. Do you see how he Accepts her:

“ *The Lord recompense* ” that figure of speech is derived from Deuteronomy (32:11) adopted by the Psalmist (17:8 36:7 63:7 91:1) and by Christ Himself.

(Matt 23:37) “ *Under His wings,* ” we find **Salvation**. Is that not what Ruth found ? What we ourselves have found ? “ *Under His wings,* ” we find **Shelter**. In (Psalm 91) the psalmist is talking about the subtlety of the enemy and the ferocity of the storm when he says,

“ *He shall cover thee with his feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust.* ”

What a place to hide in the storms of life. “ *Under His wings,* ” we find **Strength**. For God says to Israel, “ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagles wings and brought you onto myself.* ” (Exod 19:4) My do you

see now why Ruth is on her face ? But look again

(e) HIS WORDS:

Look if you will at (2:13) The words of Boaz were words of comfort, they were like honey to the taste, like music to the ear, like scenery to the eye. Literally it means, “ *he spoke to her heart.* ” Boaz didn't simply speak to her ears he spoke to her heart. He said to her,

“ *You don't have to be afraid. You should not worry for I am in control and I'll take care of all your needs.* ” My he encouraged her by the words that he spoke.

Where do you turn for encouragement ?

Some folk when they are experiencing difficulty, try to find encouragement in a bottle, in a pill or needle or in some worldly pleasure. But these things provide only a temporary escape. But the Christian can find true encouragement in the words of the Saviour ! *Can you not testify that often the Lord has spoken to your*

heart ?

When you have been downcast has there not been that cheering word ? When you have been sorrowful has there not been that encouraging word ? When you have been wayward has there not been that challenging word ?

No wonder Ruth was on her face ! There was gratitude in her soul, humility in her heart, praise on his lips as she cried, “ *Why have I found grace eyes ?*” My do you know where we should be this ? On our faces ! In gratitude, in thanksgiving, in worship, in awe !
(Lk 17:18)

***“ Oh, what I am that I should be
The object of Thy wondrous grace
That Thou shouldst send Thy son to me
That I might see Him face to face.”***

(2) AT HIS FEET

For Boaz says in (2:14) Now I want you to notice the progress that she is making. From the gleaners in (2:3) to the reapers in (2:9) to Boaz in (2:14) You see, we gather first of all from the Word of God for ourselves as gleaners, then we profit from the ministry of the reapers representing as they do the servants of God, then finally we find ourselves in His very presence. “ *At His feet.*” Now did you notice that Ruth was at his feet,

(a) BY INVITATION:

For Boaz said to Ruth “ *come thou hither.*” (2:14) She was invited to the place of feasting. If I were to ask you what is the greatest incentive to meeting with God day by day in the light of His Word and in the atmosphere of prayer, what would you say ? Would you say, “ *My greatest incentive to meet with the Lord is the fact that the Lord wants to meet with me.*” Is this not what the Lord Jesus meant when He said, “ *the Father seeketh such to worship Him.*” (Jn 4:23) My listen to the royal invitation.” “ *Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.*” (Matt 7:7) God wants to meet with you. The Lord has a trysting place with you and His heart must be saddened when you fail to keep that appointment.

“ *Come thou hither.*” Do you come ? Do you come daily to the place of private

communion ? How regular are you when it comes to public worship ? What about the Lord's Table ? Incidentally did you notice what was on this table ? Bread and vinegar. The word "*vinegar*," is from the Hebrew word (*chomets*) which is the word used for sour grapes or grapes that have been made into sour wine. Do you see what's on the Table now ? Bread and wine ! Bread and wine that points us forward to the Lord's Table (1 Cor 10:21) where the Saviour says to each of His own, "*Come thou hither.*" (a)

(b) FOR SUSTENTATION:

Look if you will at (2:14) My is this not the secret of being sustained ? Is this not the key to the victorious Christian life ? Did you notice what Boaz gave her ? He gave her parched corn. Now that is very meaningful. You see, the history of Israel can be divided into three periods. *Egypt, the wilderness and Canaan.* They were brought out of Egypt which symbolises a sinner being redeemed by precious blood. They wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Those forty years symbolise a carnal believer. It speaks of someone who has been saved but never got much further in their Christian experience. But Canaan is a type of the victorious Christian life. Its living in resurrection power. Now did you know that each of those three stages can be described by a particular kind of food ? *In Egypt there was the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.* (Num 11:5) Do you recall what the wilderness food was ? *Manna !* (Exod 16:15) But in the book of Joshua when they had entered Canaan we read "*they did eat of the parched corn.*" (Joshua 5:11) This was the food of a victorious life ! But my its only in the place of communion that we receive from the Lord all that enables us to live victoriously. Ruth sat at his Feet. Is that not what Mary did ? "*Mary sat at Jesus feet and heard His word.*" (Lk 10:39) Do you desire to become like the Lord, to grow through the Lord, to witness for the Lord, then you must sit at His feet.

***“ So sitting at His feet my heart
Would all its love outpour
And pray that Thou wouldst teach me Lord
To love Thee more and more.”***

(3) IN THE FIELD

Look if you will at (2:17) You see, Boaz's liberality and Ruth's industry brought about a rich harvest. Will you notice that she,

(a) GLEANED ABUNDANTLY:

“ *An ephah of barley.* ” (2:17) It appears that an ephah contained ten omers, and that one omer of manna was sufficient for one persons food for one day. (Exod 16:36) You see, Ruth had gathered enough to keep her and Naomi going for about five days. She gleaned abundantly because she was working under the authority and guidance of Boaz. Now do you remember that God made provision for Ruth in the law where she was to glean in the corners of the field where the harvest was not reaped. (Lev 19:9) *But Boaz is going beyond the requirements of the law and he is letting her glean among the sheaves.* (2:15) You know the poor would try and get where the grain was good, and you can well understand that the owner of the field would have to keep them behind his reapers. But Boaz says, “ *You let her come up and glean right where you are reaping.* ” Then he says, “ *When you see that Ruth is just behind you, when nobody is looking, just drop a sheaf back there and go on.* ” When she gets up to it she will call, “ *Hey, you dropped a sheaf.* ” You just tell her you’re sorry but you can’t go back and get it and for her to keep it.”

My do you why she was fruitful in the field ? She was labouring under the authority and guidance of Boaz. How often as believers do we need to be brought to the place where we realise that without Him we can do nothing. (Jn 15:5) The disciples thought one night that they could do without the Lord. Big Simon Peter said,

“ *I go a fishing.* ” (Jn 21:3) The rest joined him. Do you know what the Bible says, “ *that night they caught nothing.* ” (Jn 21:3) Why ? Because it was done in the energy of the flesh, without direction from the Lord. But when the Master said “ *Cast the net on the right side of the ship.* ” (Jn 21:6) Do you know what happened ?

“ *They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.* ” My ... are you labouring under the authority and direction of the Master ? If you are it will be miracle service with God’s power and blessing upon it.

Incidentally (2:16) contains a lesson for every servant of God that we need to grasp. What’s the lesson ? Just this, we need to learn to drop food on purpose so that there might a handful for the youngest believer to pick up, a handful for the more mature to pick up, handfuls on purpose for all to pick up. (a)

(b) THRESHED CONSCIENTIOUSLY:

She “ *beat out that she had gleaned,* ” or she threshed the barley she had gathered.

That is by means of a stick she separated the grain from the chaff and straw. She just wanted to carry pure grain home. Do you beat out that which you have gathered from the Word ? *Now some messages need thrashing for there is a lot of straw and chaff in them !* Not everything that is preached is Scriptural, but some people after hearing a message thrash the preacher with their tongue rather than the message with their stick. Now listen, when you hear a message from the Word, don't take home the straw, just take home the grain. Sometimes the only thing that we take home with us is the straw, the only thing we remember is something we don't agree with. Is that not so true ? C.H. Spurgeon said, “ *Some Christians have less sense than a chicken. A hen will pick over a whole bushel of chaff to find one grain of wheat, but some believers will pick over a whole bushel of wheat to find a little bit of chaff.* ” Listen my leave the straw, take home the wheat. Ruth beat out that she had gleaned. Do you beat out that which you glean from the Word ? When you hear the Word, do you make it your very own ? Are you like the Berean Christians of whom it was said, “ *they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* ” (Acts 17:11)