

# Chapter 2

• I HAVE FOUND GRACE IN THINE EYES •

## Ruth 2:1-3 RUTH SETS OUT TO GLEAN

In verse 2, Ruth said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor." (NIV) What Ruth was referring to there is a practice known as gleaning. Gleaning is particularly noted in the Bible as a form of providing for the poor and the foreigner. Leviticus 19:9-10 (NIV) outlines the law by saying: "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. 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." The Law of Gleaning was God's way of providing for the marginalized of society—widows, orphans, the poor, and the foreigner.

By commanding the landowners not to harvest every last bit of their fields and allowing the less fortunate to glean, God was teaching His people the principles of generosity, community support, and social responsibility. This law was a tangible expression of God's care for all people and an invitation for those with resources to become willing participants in His provision for others. It acknowledged the less fortunate by giving them the opportunity to work for their food while also fostering a spirit of compassion among the landowners.

This was especially important at this time in history, and in this culture, where widows, like Naomi, were left without any form of income or means to support themselves after the loss of a husband or sons. Those who were



disabled, and the poor were often left without any means or welfare to support themselves. In an era without modern social safety nets, the law of gleaning was not just a command for charity; it was a lifeline for the vulnerable.

Verse 3 says, "As it turned out, she [Ruth] was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek." (NIV) Other versions say, "she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz." But here's the thing, nothing happens by accident. The Bible tells us that, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17, NIV)

It's not an accident that you are where you are right now. God is in control at all times. He either puts us in a situation, or uses the situation we're in to accomplish a purpose. Naomi and Elimelek didn't go to Moab by chance, and whether they should have or shouldn't have gone doesn't change the fact that God used their time in Moab for a purpose.

Once again, we see God's hand at work as He leads Ruth to glean in the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelek. This providential encounter is not just about meeting their physical needs; it's the beginning of a larger story of redemption. As Ruth steps into Boaz's field, she unknowingly steps into a role that echoes the ultimate redemption through Christ and forges a direct link through the lineage of King David to the awaited Messiah. Her story is a reminder that our lives are not a series of coincidences but divinely appointed moments. God is using the ordinary moments of our lives—the choices we make, the seemingly coincidental moments, and the everyday interactions we have with others—for an extraordinary purpose within His sovereign design.

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*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

*– Romans 8:28, NIV*

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⓪ How does the concept of gleaning challenge the modern Christian community in terms of social responsibility and care for the poor?

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⓪ As we reflect on the unfolding providence of God, make a list of specific events that have led to this point in our story where Ruth is gleaning in Boaz's field.

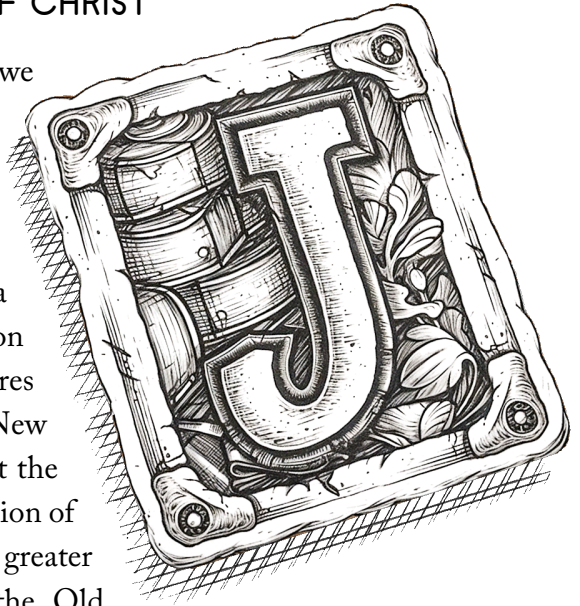
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⓪ Can you recall a situation in your life that, at the time, seemed ordinary or even challenging, but later you saw how it was used by God to lead you to something greater or to fulfill a specific purpose in your life?

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## RUTH 2:4-16 BOAZ, A TYPE OF CHRIST

As we go through the Book of Ruth, we see Boaz as a type of Christ. If you're not familiar with the word "type," it comes from the Latin word "typus," which means an image, figure, or model. In biblical studies, a type is a kind of foreshadowing, where a person or event in the Old Testament prefigures a future person or event in the New Testament. This foreshadowing is not the fulfillment itself, but rather an impression of what is to come, pointing towards a greater reality. Perhaps that's why I love the Old Testament so much—at every turn there's a shadow of Christ waiting to be discovered.



The concept of "type" is beautifully illustrated in the craft of bookbinding, which my husband and I were part of for around three decades. In our bindery, creating elegant hardcover books involved an old-fashioned technique: the base of the type was rectangular with a metal front, raised in reverse. The typesetter's role was akin to an artist, meticulously selecting and positioning each letter with precision for the stamping machine. When the lever was lowered, the type made its mark, leaving a crisp impression in gold foil on the book's cover.

It's called type because what we see imprinted on the book is not the actual letter but its impression. In much the same way, Boaz is an impression of Christ. He embodies the characteristics of the Messiah in a shadow form—his actions and his role as a redeemer in Ruth's life mirror the redemptive work of Christ in the New Testament. As the metal type leaves an imprint indicative of the letter's form, so does Boaz as he points us to Christ, the ultimate Redeemer.

Now, here is where the parallels begin:

- **Arrival from Bethlehem:** Boaz's arrival from Bethlehem echoes the profound anticipation of Christ, fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2. Both are significant figures emerging from Bethlehem, symbolizing redemption in their respective narratives.

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.” –Micah 5:2, NIV*

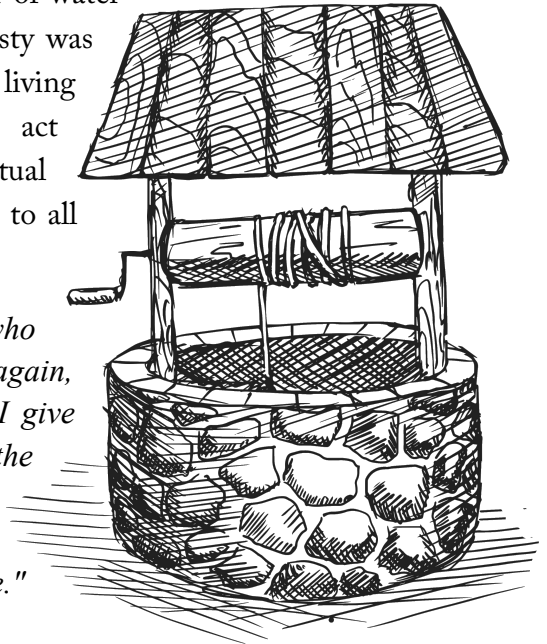
- **An Extension of Grace:** Despite Ruth's Moabite background, Boaz extended grace to her. This was reminiscent of Christ's grace to us while we were sinners.

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. –Romans 5:8, NIV*

- **An Offer of Water:** Boaz's offer of water to Ruth whenever she was thirsty was symbolic of Jesus offering the living water to eternal life. This act prefigured the gift of spiritual sustenance that Christ provides to all who believe in Him.

*Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

*–John 4:13–14, NIV*



- **An Invitation to Dine:** Boaz's invitation for Ruth to share a meal signified the fellowship and unity found in Christ, resembling the communion shared among believers.

*And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. –Ephesians 2:6–7, NIV*

- **Roasted Grain:** If you're perceptive, you might have also noticed the meal Ruth was invited to eat: bread, symbolizing Christ's body; vinegar, representing His suffering; and roasted grain. Notice the sequence: after the bread and vinegar, Ruth was given roasted grain. If you recall from the last chapter, their arrival in Bethlehem coincided with the Feast of Firstfruits. This timing is important as it aligned with the death and resurrection of Christ—a parallel we see in the life of Ruth. Leviticus 23 instructed the Israelites to wave sheaves of grain on the first day of the week following Passover. And so, the sheaf of grain is a symbol of the resurrection of Christ. It's interesting to note here that the Israelites transition from manna to the produce of Canaan in the Book of Joshua took place immediately after the Passover. Interestingly, on the day after Passover, they ate roasted grain.

*On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan. –Joshua 5:10–12, NIV*

- **Protection:** Boaz ensured Ruth's safety by instructing his men not to harm her. His care for Ruth echoes God's protective nature, assuring safety and care for those under His watch.

*"No harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." –Psalm 91:10–11, NIV*

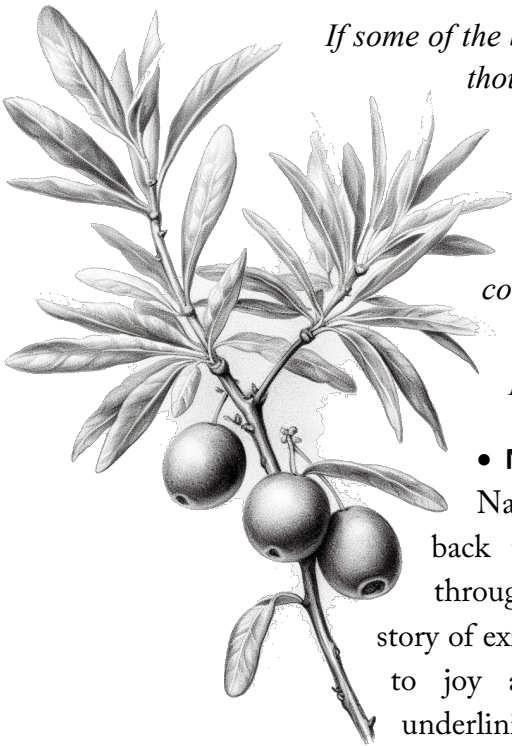
- **Generosity:** Boaz instructed his workers to leave extra grain for Ruth, reflecting God's abundant provision for us, so that we might abound in good work.

*And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.  
–2 Corinthians 9:8–9, NIV*

This chapter of Ruth is rich with imagery and meaning, offering us a glimpse into the nature of God's divine grace, inclusion, and redemption.

Now, let's focus on Ruth and Naomi's representation.

- **Ruth as a Symbol of Gentiles:** Just as Ruth, a Moabite, represents the Gentiles who were outside the Abrahamic covenant and are brought into the sphere of grace, similarly we, as Gentiles, once estranged by sin, are welcomed into God's grace through Christ and grafted into the promises originally given to Israel.

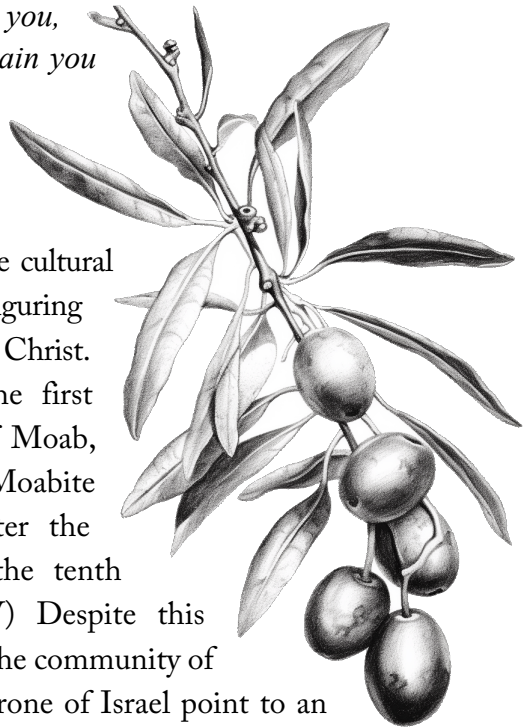


*If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. –Romans 11:17–18, NIV*

- **Naomi as a Symbol of the Jewish Nation:** Naomi's journey from the bitterness of loss back to the fullness of life in Bethlehem through the actions of Boaz reflects Israel's story of exile and return, a journey from desolation to joy and from judgment to redemption, underlining the faithfulness of God to restore His covenant people.

*I will build you up again, and you,  
Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt. Again you  
will take up your timbrels and  
go out to dance with the joyful.*

*—Jeremiah 31:4, NIV*



Both Naomi and Ruth, in their respective cultural contexts, are redeemed through Boaz, prefiguring the all-encompassing redemption through Christ.

Remember at the beginning of the first chapter, we talked about the history of Moab, and how God said, 'No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the Lord, not even in the tenth generation.' (Deuteronomy 23:3, NIV) Despite this commandment, Ruth's integration into the community of God's people and David's rise to the throne of Israel point to an inclusivity that goes beyond cultural and historical boundaries.

In the traditions of Israel, a child's lineage was primarily attributed to the father's heritage, which shaped their societal and religious identity. Joseph's Egyptian-born sons, for instance, were counted among the tribes of Israel, showing us that lineage was traced through the father. This same principle applied to Salmon and Rahab, and consequently to Boaz, whose lineage was firmly established in Israel. Hence, Ruth, a Moabitess, became part of a lineage through her union with Boaz—a lineage marked by divine favor that led from Obed to Jesse, King David, and eventually to Joseph and Mary. This genealogical continuity within the Abrahamic covenant highlights the inclusiveness of God's redemptive plan.

Additionally, Boaz's acceptance of Ruth and God's elevation of David reveal a divine principle: God values the faith and character of an individual above their ethnic background or social status. It's a principle that points to the heart, much like the New Testament teaching that in God's eyes, our true identity and worth come from inward faith and the transformation by His Spirit.

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*A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.*

*—Romans 2:28–29, NIV*

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❓ How do Boaz's actions towards Ruth exemplify the protective nature of God as described in Psalm 91?

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❓ Can you identify some verses in the Bible that convey God's desire to share in fellowship or dine with us? List a few here:

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? In verse 14, Boaz invites Ruth to have some bread, and dip it in vinegar. Do you see any symbolic significance in this verse?

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### RUTH 2:17-23 A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Naomi's excitement in verse 20 reveals a glimmer of hope, as she identifies Boaz as a "kinsman redeemer," or "ga'al" in Hebrew. This term held profound significance, entailing the duty of a close relative to protect the interests of family members in distress, whether by reclaiming property or marrying a widow to preserve a lineage, as outlined in Deuteronomy:



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*If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.*

*-Deuteronomy 25:5-6, NIV*

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The "kinsman redeemer" had a two-fold responsibility: he was to marry the widow to preserve the deceased relative's name and, when necessary, to purchase any land that belonged to the deceased, ensuring it remained within the family as outlined in Leviticus 25:25. This role was about more than property; it was about perpetuating a family's presence and place in the community. If the redeemer chose to buy back the land, this often included the responsibility of marrying the widow, intertwining the revival of land with the renewal of family ties.

While the law served to protect widows from danger and poverty, it was also an important part of the Hebrew culture because of the promise God made to Abraham that the coming Messiah would be born through his seed. To deny a woman her children, would also deny her the opportunity to be a part of the promise and hope of the coming Messiah.

Without knowledge of this Levirate law, the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38 might be confusing to some. Verse 8 tells us that Judah said to his son Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her

as a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your brother." (NIV) And so we see that the duty of

a kinsman redeemer went further than simply marrying a relative's widow and giving her children. It also required the man to raise children in his relative's name.

When Onan failed to do that, the Lord took his life.

It was then Judah's responsibility to ensure the continuation of his son's lineage, a duty he neglected, leaving Tamar in a vulnerable position. Tamar, recognizing the importance of preserving her late husband's legacy within the tribe of Israel, took matters into her own hands. She disguised herself and secured her place in the lineage of Christ. Without Tamar's son



Perez, we wouldn't have Boaz, without Boaz we wouldn't have King David, and without David we wouldn't have Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Tamar's actions, while unconventional, highlight the importance of the kinsman redeemer's role in their society and the lengths to which one might go to uphold this divine obligation. The law is deeply rooted in God's covenant with Abraham, promising blessing, and lineage through his descendants.

Beyond historical and legal aspects, kinsman redemption was a shadow of something much greater as it symbolized the redemptive work of Jesus, our ultimate Kinsman Redeemer. He embodied the concept of "ga'al" by sacrificing His life for ours, fulfilling God's redemptive plan far beyond material or familial restoration.

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*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*  
—1 Peter 1:18–19, NIV

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❓ We talked about the duties of a kinsman redeemer as outlined in Deuteronomy 25:5-6, but what do verses 7-10 tell us about a man who refuses to redeem his brother's wife?

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? In Matthew Chapter 1, there are 5 women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ. List them by name and if you don't see a name, do a little digging to find it.

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? In what ways does Jesus fulfill the role of our ultimate Kinsman Redeemer, as understood from the concept of 'ga'al' in the Old Testament?

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## THE WHEAT HARVEST

Once again, the last verse in this chapter gives us a specific time that these events are taking place. Verse 23 tells us that Ruth gleaned through the barley and wheat harvests, indicating she worked throughout both seasons. The next chapter however indicates that Boaz is winnowing barley, which suggests the timeline is at the end of the barley harvest, just before the wheat harvest begins. So, why is the mention of the wheat harvest important to our story? Because it coincides with Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks.

Britannica.com writes, "Shavuot, ("Festival of the Weeks"), is second of the three Pilgrim Festivals of the Jewish religious calendar. It was originally an agricultural festival, marking the beginning of the wheat harvest. "

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*From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.*

*–Leviticus 23:15–16, NIV*

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The Festival of Weeks, Shavuot, holds dual significance:

1. It marks the wheat harvest's start and commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

2. The festival, occurring 50 days after Passover, is symbolically linked to the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament, which celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the church.

So, what do the giving of the Torah, The Day of Pentecost and the story of Ruth all have in common? God's covenantal faithfulness.

- **Giving of the Torah:** God's covenant with Israel is established through the giving of the Law, defining their covenant relationship.
  - **Pentecost:** Celebrates the new covenant between God and the church through the Holy Spirit, paralleling Shavuot's covenant theme.
  - **The Story of Ruth:** Boaz's actions foreshadow Christ's redemptive covenant with the church.
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❓ Shavuot is one of three pilgrimage festivals. What is a pilgrimage festival? What are the other two, and can you think of any New Testament events that coincide with them?

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❓ In what ways does the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) foreshadow the Pentecost in the New Testament?

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❓ How do the events in this chapter echo the Biblical principle found in Galatians 6:9?

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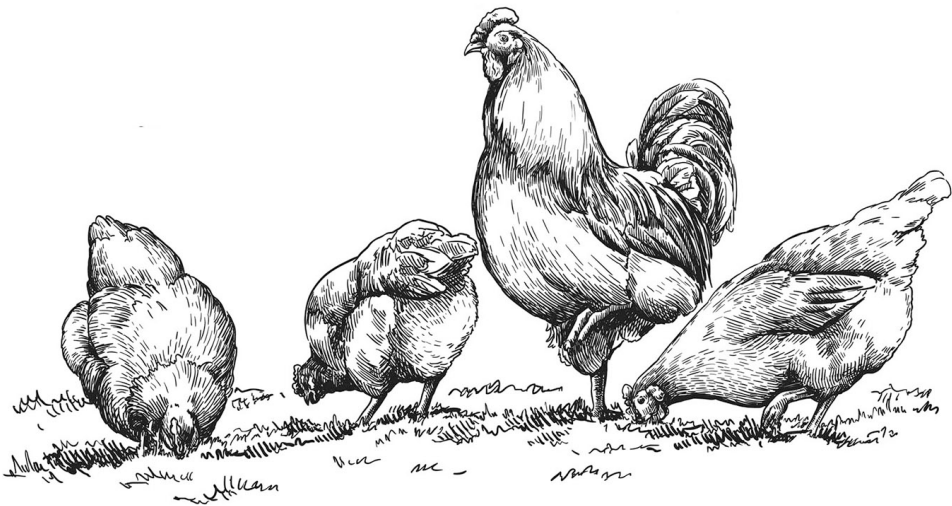
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## GLEANNING FROM RUTH CHAPTER 2

As we close this chapter, consider the depth of grace we find in Ruth's story. Just as Boaz extended kindness to Ruth, a symbol of all of us who feel like outsiders, we're reminded of the inclusive embrace of Christ's love. Naomi and Ruth's bond portrays the beauty of unity in God's family and the powerful act of being grafted in—of diverse lives intertwined to form a new, redeemed story.

Take this to heart: In God's field, you are seen, valued, and loved. You, too, have found grace in His eyes. Regardless of your past, in Christ, you belong. Embrace your place in His harvest, for it is plentiful, and in it, you will find sustenance for your soul.



## SEEDS OF RENEWAL

In what ways have you experienced grace in unexpected places, and how can you extend that same unmerited favor to others in your everyday life?

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What are some practical steps you can take to actively demonstrate the grace you've received to those seeking a sense of belonging in your church or community?

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# Answer Key

## Ruth Chapter 2

**How does the concept of gleaning challenge the modern Christian community in terms of social responsibility and care for the poor?**

The concept of gleaning challenges the modern Christian community to find practical ways to provide for those in need. It calls for intentional actions to support the marginalized, such as donating food, volunteering time, and creating opportunities that allow the less fortunate to maintain dignity and self-sufficiency. It's a reminder of the biblical principle to not exploit every resource for personal gain but to leave room for God's provision for the poor through generosity and kindness.

**As we reflect on the unfolding providence of God, make a list of specific events that have led to this point in our story where Ruth is gleaning in Boaz's field.**

The specific events leading to Ruth gleaning in Boaz's field include:

- The famine in Bethlehem that led Naomi's family to Moab.
- The subsequent deaths of Naomi's husband and sons.
- Ruth's decision to follow Naomi back to Bethlehem despite the uncertainty.
- Ruth's choice to go out and glean in the fields to provide for herself and Naomi.
- The providential guidance that led Ruth to the part of the field owned by Boaz, a relative of Elimelek.

**Can you recall a situation in your life that, at the time, seemed ordinary or even challenging, but later you saw how it was used by God to lead you to something greater or to fulfill a specific purpose in your life?**

This answer will be different for everyone.

How do Boaz's actions towards Ruth exemplify the protective nature of God as described in Psalm 91?

Boaz's actions towards Ruth demonstrate the protective nature of God through his provision of safety and sustenance. He ensures Ruth can glean in his fields without harassment, offers her water to drink, and even invites her to share a meal with his workers, reflecting God's promise of refuge and care as described in Psalm 91.

**Can you identify some verses in the Bible that convey God's desire to share in fellowship or dine with us? List a few here:**

Here are some that I found, perhaps you might find different ones.

- Revelation 3:20: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."
- Luke 22:15: "And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.'"
- Matthew 26:29: "I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

**In verse 14, Boaz invites Ruth to have some bread and dip it in vinegar. Do you see any symbolic significance in this verse?**

The offering of bread and vinegar to Ruth by Boaz can be seen as symbolically significant in two ways. One idea is that it may prefigure partaking in the suffering of Christ, as bread represents His body and vinegar, offered to Jesus at the crucifixion, signifies the bitterness of His suffering.

A second idea is that in ancient times, it was customary to share bread from the same loaf and dip into a common pot during a meal. This practice of communal eating symbolized deep fellowship and unity, echoing the communion Jesus invites humanity into. Through this shared experience, the values of closeness, unity, and trust were cultivated, reflecting the intimacy God seeks with us through Christ's incarnation and sacrificial love.

**We talked about the duties of a kinsman redeemer as outlined in Deuteronomy 25:5-6, but what do verses 7-10 tell us about a man who refuses to redeem his brother's wife?**

The brother's wife is to go to the elders at the gate and declare that the man refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. She is then to remove his sandal and spit in his face, and his family will be known as 'the house of the one whose sandal was removed.' This act signifies a public shaming for not fulfilling his familial and social obligations.

**In Matthew Chapter 1, there are 5 women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ. List them by name and if you don't see a name, do a little digging to find it.**

The five women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1 are:

- Tamar
- Rahab
- Ruth
- Uriah's wife (Bathsheba, though not named here)
- Mary

**In what ways does Jesus fulfill the role of our ultimate Kinsman Redeemer, as understood from the concept of 'ga'al' in the Old Testament?**

Jesus fulfills the role of our ultimate Kinsman Redeemer by:

- Paying the price for our sins, akin to the kinsman redeemer's role in buying back property to restore the family's inheritance.
- Offering us a new life, just as the kinsman redeemer would marry a widow to provide her with descendants and secure her late husband's lineage.
- Redeeming us from the law and its penalties, similar to how the kinsman redeemer would fulfill legal requirements on behalf of the family.
- Bringing us into His family, just as the kinsman redeemer would incorporate the widow into his household, Christ brings us into the family of God.

**Shavuot is one of three pilgrimage festivals. What is a pilgrimage festival? What are the other two, and can you think of any New Testament events that coincide with them?**

A pilgrimage festival is a time when the Israelites would journey to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate and worship. The other two are Pesach (Passover) and Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles). The New Testament event of Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles, coincided with Shavuot.

**In what ways does the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) foreshadow the Pentecost in the New Testament?**

The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) foreshadows Pentecost in that it celebrates the giving of the Torah, which is paralleled in the New Testament by the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church. Both events mark the establishment of a covenant and the empowerment of God's people to live according to His will.

Side note: Boaz's provision and protection point forward to the ultimate provision and protection offered through Christ's covenant with the Church.

**How do the events in this chapter echo the Biblical principle found in Galatians 6:9?**

Ruth's perseverance in gleaning, despite the hardship, is rewarded by Boaz's kindness, which mirrors the biblical promise of reaping a harvest of blessings from diligent, faithful work.