

The Lord's Message: Ruth, God Cares and God Provides

Date: September 11, 2022

Where: Tilghman UMC

Scripture Reference: Ruth 2:1-12

I suspect you probably have heard the one about the lonely frog who goes to see a fortune-teller. He is told not to worry. The fortune-teller tells him that he is going to meet a beautiful girl that will want to know everything about him. The frog excitedly exclaimed, "Where and when am I going to meet her?" The fortune-teller replied, "Next semester in Biology class."

Sometimes in life all our best prepared plans blow up in our face. We are left with wondering is this mere fate or is there some point that we are missing? Naomi is feeling this way. She left with her husband and two sons to go to Moab to escape the famine. She is coming back with no husband and no sons, only her daughter-in-law, Ruth. The Bible gives us a clue to how Naomi feels in **Ruth 1:19-21**. We all can become bitter by life's disappointments and are left to wonder, where is God in all of this. Does God even care? Yes, *God cares and God provides*. Let us have some fun this morning, when I point out to the congregation, I would like for the congregation to respond with *God cares and God provides*. Let's try this.

Let us pray.

In **Ruth 1:22**, we discovered that Naomi and Ruth have arrived at the perfect time of year, the beginning of the barley harvest. Just a little side note, the Jewish celebration of Pentecost includes reading from the book of Ruth. With barley, Naomi and Ruth will be able to make bread and store the grain to provide for their food needs. *God cares and God provides*.

Well, it is one thing to know the barley will be the means to provide for their food needs, but how do you get ahold of the barley. We are provided with a clue in **Ruth 2:1**. We are told that Naomi has a relative on her husband's side named Boaz. If you recall last week, Hebrew names in the story have meaning. Boaz means "in strength."

In **Ruth 2:2**, Ruth sees the barley being harvested, so she asked her mother-in law for permission to go out into the fields to harvest the barley. The machines of today do not leave much unharvested or dropped grain. Whereas cutting the barley by hand with a sickle and picking it up, usually not all the barley got cut or was picked up. Also, there are rules that God gave the farmers to follow when harvesting in **Leviticus 19:9-10 & Deuteronomy 24:19**. Do not harvest to the edge of the fields. A sheaf is described as a bundle. So, if you leave a bundle of grain, do not go back and pick it up. *God cares and God provides.*

In **Ruth 2:3**, Naomi goes to the field, but not any field, the field of Boaz. *God cares and God provides.* Boaz arrives to the field to check on the operation. Pay special attention to the way Boaz greets the workers and the workers greet him in **verse 4**. What would happen if you were to walk into work on Monday morning and say to your co-workers, "The Lord be with you." Some would be pleased, others would probably ignore you, or some may even chastise or make fun of you. This greeting shows the character of Boaz, one who respects and worships God or Yahweh. Ruth has come to glean in his field. *God cares and God provides.*

Boaz sees Ruth gleaning the field. In **verses 5-6**, Boaz has a conversation with his foreman about who is this woman. The shelter was a temporary rude structure that was set up in the field for people to go into to get out of the heat. By erecting this shelter, again shows the care that Boaz goes to protect his workers and others in his field. *God cares and God provides.*

In **verses 8-9**, Boaz again reveals his compassion for others. He instructs Ruth to stay in his field, do not go to another field. Stay with the women that are employed by him and follow along with them. His men will not take advantage of her. She is to drink from the water that his men have filled. *God cares and God provides.*

Ruth is taken aback by the kindness that this owner of the field has shown her. She responds in **verse 10**. Unfortunately, she probably has not been treated with such kindness since coming to Bethlehem. How have you treated a new kid in school? How have you treated a new person moving onto the island? I want to say that you have made us feel very welcome here. I would also like to say that our country needs to find a better way of dealing with the immigrants that come to our borders. Everyone of our families immigrated or were brought here from some other part of the world. There should be a clear path to citizenship in this country. We, as believers in Jesus, should show kindness to others. Jesus showed grace to us on the cross, we should do the same for others, **Ephesians 2:8-9**. *God cares and God provides.*

Boaz has been accurately told the story of Ruth's compassion and commitment to Naomi in **Ruth 2:11**. Boaz continues by telling Ruth of the blessing that she will receive from God, because of her faithfulness, **Ruth 2:12**. *God cares and God provides.*

Boaz is all part of God's plan to care and provide for Naomi and Ruth. God uses us to care for and provide for people. Although we have to admit that you, I, and Boaz are not able to totally care for and provide for people the way that God can. For instance, we cannot remove Sin. Only God could do that. God cared for and provided for us to remove the Sin from us through His Son Jesus. In **John 3:16-17**, it says that God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to die for us. It is through Jesus that we can receive salvation.

Yes, we will have problems in this life. Yes, our plans will not all work out. Yes, it may seem that God does not care about us. Yet we know that the last statement is not true. Just as God cared for and provided for Naomi and Ruth, so God cares for and provides for us. We can be Boaz to be used by God to care for and provide for someone else. God loves us all. *God cares and God provides. Amen.*