Rut (Rut) ~ Part 2

Like **Rut**, we must not be satisfied merely with living on leftovers (2:2), or even receiving gifts (2:14, 16). We must want Him alone; for when we have Him, we also have all that He owns. It's not the gifts that we seek, but the Giver. ~ Warren W. Wiersbe.

Rut and Bo'az Meet

2 [1] Na'omi had a relative on her husband's side, a prominent and wealthy member of Elimelekh's clan, whose name was Bo'az. [2] Rut the woman from Mo'av said to Na'omi, "Let me go into the field and glean ears of grain behind anyone who will allow me to." She answered her, "Go, my daughter." [3] So she set out, arrived at the field and gleaned behind the reapers. She happened to be in the part of the field that belonged to Bo'az from Elimelekh's clan,

Gleaning allowed the poor to go through the fields after the harvesters, picking up the grain left behind, along with the grain landowners were required to leave at the edges of their fields (Leviticus 19:9–10). The phrase translated as *prominent and wealthy member of Elimelekh's clan* could suggest **Bo'az** had wealth and property, but as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that **Bo'az** is also a man of integrity. **Rut** did not know the family connection. Humanly speaking, she just happened to end up gleaning in his field; but there are no coincidences in **God's** program, and this divine appointment proved that the Lord was not against **Naomi**, as she thought (1:20–21).

[4] when Bo'az arrived from Beit-Lechem. He said to the reapers, "Adonai be with you"; and they answered him, "Adonai bless you." [5] Then Bo'az asked his servant supervising the reapers, "Whose girl is this?" [6] The servant supervising the reapers answered, "She's a girl from Mo'av who returned with Na'omi from the plain of Mo'av. [7] She said, 'Please, let me glean and gather what falls from the sheaves behind the reapers.' So, she went and has kept at it from morning until now, except for a little rest in the shelter.

Bo'az noble character was displayed in his care for his workers. Even his greeting was in the name of the **Lord**, and he knew them well enough to recognize a stranger among them. His question did not seek **Rut's** name but her relationships: *Whose girl is this?* The servant's answer twice highlighted her foreignness. He also offered an unsolicited testimony to her diligent hard work in the hot sun.

[8] Bo'az said to Rut, "Did you hear that, my daughter? Don't go to glean in another field, don't leave this place, but stick here with my working girls. [9] Keep your eyes on whichever field the reapers are working in and follow the girls. I've ordered the young men not to bother you. Whenever you get thirsty, go and drink from the water jars the young men have filled." [10] She fell on her face, prostrating herself, and said to him, "Why are you showing me such favor? Why are you paying attention to me? After all, I'm only a foreigner."

Bo'az noble character is again on display in his kind words to **Rut**. Gleaning could be dangerous, especially for a young foreign woman; thus, **Boaz** issued instructions to ensure her safety. He also let her drink the water his young men had brought, saving her the long trip to the well. **Rut** responded by prostrating herself as a mark of respect for a social superior. As a **Mo'avitess**, **Boaz** could easily have ignored her, but he noticed her and showed her kindness.

[11] Bo'az answered her, "I've heard the whole story, everything you've done for your mother-in-law since your husband died, including how you left your father and mother and the land you were born in to come to a people about whom you knew nothing beforehand. [12] May Adonai

reward you for what you've done; may you be rewarded in full by Adonai the God of Isra'el, under whose wings you have come for refuge." [13] She said, "My lord, I hope I continue pleasing you. You have comforted and encouraged me, even though I'm not one of your servants."

The death of a husband exhausted a daughter-in-law's obligations, as **Naomi** herself had made clear (1:11). Yet **Rut** had remained with **Naomi**, leaving her own land and people, which meant entrusting her future to the favor of the deity of the new land. **Boaz** asked the **Lord**, the **God of Israel**, to reward **Rut's** faithfulness to **Naomi** and to shelter her under His protecting wings, as a mother bird shelters her young. **Rut** responded with an expression of thanks for **Bo'az** kind and encouraging words to her, even though she had no claim on him, not even that of a maidservant in his employment.

[14] When meal-time came, Bo'az said to her, "Come here, have something to eat, and dip your piece of bread in the [olive oil and] vinegar." She sat by the reapers, and they passed her some roasted grain. She ate till she was full, and she had some left over. [15] When she got up to glean, Bo'az ordered his young men, "Let her glean even among the sheaves themselves, without making her feel ashamed. [16] In fact, pull some ears of grain out from the sheaves on purpose. Leave them for her to glean, and don't rebuke her."

As an impoverished gleaner, **Rut** would normally have had little or nothing to eat while out in the fields. **Boaz**, however, invited her to eat with him and his harvesters. In contrast to **Naomi's** declaration in 1:21 that she went out full and came back empty, **Rut** went out empty and came back full. There is no hint of romantic interest in **Bo'az** actions. He was simply demonstrating compassion and generosity to **Rut**, who, though a foreigner, was linked to him through **Naomi**. He even instructed his harvesters to leave some grain for her to pick up, an act that went far beyond the demands of the law of **Moshe**.

[17] So she gleaned in the field until evening. When she beat out what she had gathered, it came to about a bushel of barley. [18] She picked it up and went back to the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and Rut brought out and gave her what she had left over after eating her fill. [19] Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where were you working? Blessed be the one who took such good care of you!" She told her mother-in-law with whom she had been working; she said, "The name of the man with whom I was working today is Bo'az." [20] Na'omi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by Adonai, who has never stopped showing grace, neither to the living nor to the dead." Na'omi also told her, "The man is closely related to us; he's one of our redeeming kinsmen."

The measure of **Bo'az's** generosity and Ruth's hard work is demonstrated in the remarkable quantity of grain that she gathered - an ephah (about 26 quarts) of barley. This was enough grain to feed a working man for several weeks. **Bo'az's** generosity showed **Naomi** that the **Lord** has not forsaken his kindness to the living or the dead. This marks a change in **Naomi's** attitude toward the **Lord** from 1:21. The judgment the family experienced was not His final word to them.

Family redeemers (Hb go'el; v. 20) were relatives obliged to buy back family members from debt-slavery or to redeem their fields if they had to sell it (Leviticus 25:25–30). The family redeemer would also receive restitution on behalf of a deceased family member or pursue his killer to ensure that justice was served (Numbers 5:8; 35:12). He might also raise up a child for the deceased relative in order to maintain the

connection between the clan and its hereditary property (Deuteronomy 25:5–10), though **Boaz** had no legal obligation to act in this way.

21 Rut the woman from Mo'av said, "Moreover, he even said to me, 'Stay close to my young men
until they've finished my harvest.'" 22 Na'omi said to Rut her daughter-in-law, "It's good, my
daughter, for you to keep going out with his girls; so that you won't encounter hostility in some
other field." 23 So she stayed close to Bo'az's girls to glean, until the end of the barley and wheat
harvests; and she lived with her mother-in-law. [1]

Naomi's approval of **Bo'az's** invitation for **Rut** to remain until the end of the harvest shows concern for Ruth's safety that is not evident in verse 2. However, the concern may also reflect **Naomi's** growing awareness of her culpability in her family's fate. Her earlier journey to the fields of **Mo'av** was an attempt to glean food "in the field of another" instead of seeking refuge under the wings of the Lord as she should have done. **Boaz's** generosity may have provided food, but **Rut's** need for a home with a husband of her own is still real.

In the hustle of public life, it's easy to become consumed by ambition, just as **Rut** could have been overwhelmed by the need to provide. Reflect on how **Rut** took the initiative but also remained humble, gleaning the edges of the fields. To apply this, take a moment to volunteer in your community, whether through a soup kitchen or service organization. This selfless act can help you cultivate humility and empathy. Engaging in service reminds you that while work matters, serving others is vital to living out your faith and showing **Yeshua's** love.

[1] Rut 2:1-23.