

Pastor Jim Jackson, 1/22/17
Ruth—Life, Loss, Love and Legacy, pt. 3
Ruth 2:1-7

Ruth starts OVER

After losing her husband and leaving her family and friends in Moab, Ruth begins a new life in the foreign country of Israel with Naomi in the small, rural town of Bethlehem. Right away, Ruth becomes proactive, looking to be productive. *God steers moving ships!* Instead of complaining, becoming depressed and giving up or becoming bitter like Naomi, Ruth shows exceptional resilience. *Often, the end of one thing is the start of a new beginning. God loves new* (Lam. 3:22, 23; Ps. 40:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5)! As Naomi was older and may have been physically unable, Ruth goes to collect food for them. Being a widow and foreigner from one of Israel's enemies has put Ruth in difficulty. She could allow circumstances to dictate her actions and do nothing and stay home and sulk, start drinking, become a prostitute, or pursue legitimate work. Despite heartache, discouragement, and prejudice, she bravely and humbly offers to do physical labor, picking up random pieces of barley from the dirt behind the reapers. Laziness is unacceptable. *The godly don't produce excuses, they produce results* (Prov. 6:6-11; 20:4; 26:13; 2 Thess. 3:10-12). Ruth has become a follower of God, and through Naomi's encouragement, is seeking God's plan. *A godly woman supports the life of women who desire to please God* (Titus 2:3-5).

Ruth meets BOAZ

In God's sovereignty, Ruth unknowingly starts in the field of a man named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi (possibly the nephew of Elimelech). He is a godly, worthy man (Heb. *ghib-bore*, 'powerful/chief/valiant man') and wealthy land owner. Around noon, the first thing she hears from Boaz when he visits his field is a blessing from God to his workers. *Men of God are men of God at home, at play, and at work.* Not everyone in a believer's life is a blessing, but God often puts people in their lives to bless them. Though God required Israelites to care for widows and foreigners, because of her situation, it is unlikely Ruth would find anyone allowing her to work or find an Israelite man willing to marry her (Lev. 19: 9, 10; Deut. 24:19-21). But because Boaz is himself a hard worker, and hears Ruth has the same characteristics, he allows her to stay, not offering a hand-out but a hand-up. *Empathy doesn't mean stupidity, empathy seeks the best for the situation.*