

Our daily bread tells the story of church near Boise ID where behind the church and alongside the stream was a grove of willows, a length of grass, and a sandy beach. It was an ideal spot for members of the community gather to picnic.

One day, a man in the congregation expressed concern over the legal implications of “outsiders” using the property. “If someone is injured,” he said, “the church might be sued.”

Though the elders were reluctant to take any action, the man convinced them that they should post a sign on the site informing visitors that this was private property. So the pastor posted a sign. It read: “Warning! Anyone using this beach may, at any moment, be surrounded by people who love you.”

The author commented after hearing the pastors response, “Exactly, Grace triumphs over law!”

This morning we continue our study of Ruth where find grace triumphing over law through the compassion of Boaz toward Ruth.

Boaz exemplifies 5 ways to show compassion to **to people like Ruth, people who are destitute and defenseless in this world.**

***8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter,
do not go to glean in another field or leave this one,
but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field
that they are reaping, and go after them.
Have I not charged the young men not to touch you?
And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young
men have drawn.”***

Boaz had just heard the favorable report about Ruth from his foreman.

This report we will learn confirmed the reports that he had heard about Ruth in town.

We know from verse 1 Boaz and Elimelech were close family friends & of the same clansmen.

It seems natural that Boaz would want to speak with Ruth.

Verses 8-9 reveal Boaz's compassion as he ensured special provision and protection for Ruth.

1. Boaz showed compassion through his WORDS.

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter,

Ruth had sought permission from the young foreman to glean and gather, however, now that the master of the field is present, she might not be welcomed. Boaz's compassionate greeting provided a welcoming platform for Ruth.

Boaz's greeting to Ruth reveals 5 significant insights.

- First, "now listen," or literally "have you not heard," carries the sense of the urgent request to "listen carefully." It prepared Ruth for something important to come.

Boaz began by making sure that Ruth's attention is properly directed so she would not miss any of his instruction. This type of greeting could be a good thing or bad thing for Ruth, however **Boaz's term for Ruth, "my daughter," reflects that this would be father-like affection and instruction.**

- Second, "my daughter" is how Naomi has addressed Ruth in the past. Three times Naomi has affectionately called Ruth, "my daughter(s)." [1:11, 12; again in 2:2] In each we see a paternal-like care from Naomi toward Ruth and Orpah. **We should assume nothing more or less from Boaz's words. He addresses her as if she were his daughter.**
- **Third, "daughter" reveals the significant age gap between the two.** It is an introduction to the fact that Ruth is much younger than Boaz. She is probably 25-30 while Boaz is likely older than 45. Remember, Boaz is Elimelech's close acquaintance and so would be near the age of Ruth's, deceased father-in-law. This is the second time we get a sense for Boaz's age. It will become more apparent in chapter 3.
- **Fourth, "my daughter," relays a clan culture's view of providing and protecting their own.** Boaz and Elimelech were Ephrathites. They were of the same tribe & clan we learn back in 2:1. This address willfully acknowledges his care for Ruth as a young widow within his clan.

Essentially, it is a title of family he gives her as a sign of his commitment to provide and protect his own!

- **Fifth, “my daughter,” breaks the racial barrier that the author has overly emphasized throughout the opening of scene 2.** Ruth the Moabitess, has been taken in under the security of Boaz as one of his own. **She should not be viewed as a foreigner but as a family member.**

Boaz’s instructions will provide proof of this care, but the opening words from his lips are nothing but caring and compassionate.

Boaz provides us with a wonderful example of compassionate speech simply within his greeting to Ruth.

Here she is in the middle of a strangers field gleaning as a pauper with no husband, no family, no people group, and the master of the field has just endeared her to, “my daughter.” To me that’s special & significant!

It is a challenge to us to **speak compassionately.**

Paul told the church at Colosse the importance of compassionate speech.

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. Col 4:6

This verse **uniquely applies to Boaz’s speech** in light of Ruth 2:12. Because of his opening words, Boaz is able to direct Ruth’s attention to Yahweh. His immediate address is an opening for **Yahweh centered theology** that is to come shortly.

- In Col 4 Paul has just asked the people to pray that he would make the gospel clear.
- He then commands them to “walk worthy toward outsiders.”
- This command regarding our speech is contextually towards people outside the Christian faith.

Ruth is an outsider. Just as Boaz spoke graciously to Ruth, we are called speak compassionately.

Friends, fill your speech with compassion, especially when speaking to unbelievers, outsiders, and those who have faced tragedy.

Choose your words graciously, mark your tone with compassion, fill your expressions with care.

Whether you're at the **grocery store, the bank, a restaurant, or in the yard**, use words that are going to draw people toward the gospel.

Yet, words without action is hypocrisy, and Boaz proves to be anything but a hypocrite.

Boaz's greeting led to four more acts of compassion. These instructions demonstrate Boaz's care toward Ruth as he goes above and beyond the Law's requirements to ensure Ruth will receive extra provisions and protection.

2. Boaz showed compassion by WELCOMING Ruth to his field.

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one,

Boaz wants everyone to know, **RUTH IS WELCOMED ON HIS FIELDS!**

Not only was Ruth welcome, but Boaz **insisted she remain to glean and gather from only his fields.**

do not go to glean in another field or leave this one,

This statement is redundant, do not go ... do not leave. That is on purpose. Boaz wants Ruth and the others to clearly understand she is welcomed at his fields.

Not only is she permitted, the point is **"please stay!"** Boaz **wants** Ruth **gleaning from his grain.** There is no reason Ruth should look to another field because she is welcomed in his and he wants her to stay.

Boaz demonstrated his faith through welcoming Ruth as the law commanded,

Leviticus 19:34 The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Boaz demonstrates his compassion by welcoming Ruth.

Show compassion by WELCOMING

Friends, if we are to show the world we care, we must have a welcoming spirit. We cannot show people love if they are not within our influences.

I AM NOT TALKING ABOUT CHURCH!!! I am talking about in your personal life! I'm talking about neighbors (old & new), co-workers (old & new), those who

serve you, invite the poor, the elderly, the handicapped, the single mother mother down the road.

Jesus taught this principle in Luke 14. He was invited to a banquet. As he looked around he made several observations about those attending the feast as well as the host. One of those contains Jesus direct teaching on who we are to welcome and why.

12 He (Jesus) said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

Jesus says we are to welcome those who cannot repay us! There is eternal value in doing what Boaz did because at this point, Ruth could never repay him for his kindness.

Friends are you welcoming to all souls? We are called to BE WELCOMING!

3. Boaz showed compassion by providing.

Boaz instructs her not only to remain in his field but to stay near the harvesters. **He cared by providing for her.**

but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them

Young women is often translated harvesters. Typically the **men would cut the stalks of grain** with a sickle while the **women would follow collecting the stalks and tying them into bundles**. Those bundles or sheaves would be taken to the threshing floor at the end of the day.

Gathering consisted of picking the stalks that were **misted** or **had fallen out** of the bundles. It would also **include picking the individual heads of grain** from the ground that had fallen from the stalks. If you could get right behind those who bundled the stalks, you could gather a significantly greater quantity of grain before everything got walked on and trampled into the ground.

Our English translations miss a bit of the force of Boaz’s instruction. “Keep close or abide fast” is the **same Hebrew word** used back in 1:14 to **describe Ruth**

clinging Naomi. Boaz welcomes her to cling to those who were working, gathering the stalks of grain.

One commentator said it this way, “she was welcome to work “with them,” but “behind them.”

Furthermore, Ruth was to **follow them** to whatever portion of the field they went.

Land was not divided by fences or barriers like ours are today. Large areas of agricultural land would belong to many people from several clans often divided by a small land marks such as a stone or a stake. Ruth was not only be careful to stay within the boundaries of Boaz’s land but also to “keep her eyes on the places they were reaping and follow after them.”

Ruth would not know the property lines or customs, therefore she should simply follow those who were working for Boaz. Wherever they went, she was welcomed and encouraged to go too.

Boaz’s compassion led him to provide for Ruth.

Yes, Ruth was doing the work! However Boaz’s invitation seems to be out of the ordinary as gatherers would get in the way and possibly steal if they were to too close to the gleaners. **Boaz was not worried about being taken advantage of, he was worried about making sure Ruth went away with enough provision for her and Naomi. This is compassion!**

COMPASSION IS PROVIDING!

It’s more than words, more than welcoming, it is providing.

Jesus taught in the sermon on the mount,

Matthew 5:42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

This verse is in the same breath Jesus taught to turn the cheek, give your tunic, walk an extra mile, give to those who might take advantage, love and pray for your enemy, and overcome evil with good.

But Pastor what if I’m taken advantage of??? Jesus said provide!

God’s provision comes through his people. God is the one who enables people to give and provide. If we truly care, we will give to those in need.

The writer of Hebrews commands,

Hebrews 13:16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Further we are commanded ...

1 Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

This was Boaz. But he didn't stop with provision, he also ensured protection.

BOAZ showed compassion BY PROTECTING RUTH.

Ruth's closeness to the women would offer **protection from any outsiders**. Those passing by assume she was part of Boaz's workers and would do her no harm. Further, this Boaz protects her from his harvesters as well.

Have I not charged the young men not to touch you?

Touch is a literal interpretation that can *imply striking, harassing, or mistreating*. Boaz has effectively ensured Ruth's safety while gleaning in his field.

Specifically this is protection from Boaz's young men. Boaz prohibits the boys from any mischievous behavior they might intend upon a new comer. In effect, he commands them to treat her like his daughter.

Protection was an important aspect within clan life. As a member of the same clan, Boaz was there to defend the defenseless. Ruth was the **quintessential defenseless person**.

- No husband to defend her, she is a widow.
- No family to defend her, she is childless.
- No people to defend her, she is a foreigner.

Boaz became Ruth's defender, both from outsiders and insiders alike.

Exodus 22:22-24 "You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. "If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry;

One commentator wrote that Boaz's policies should strike a chord within the modern reader as Boaz institutes the first anti-sexual-harassment policy in the workplace which is recorded in the bible.

Boaz's simple statement is enough to issue a command to leave Ruth alone. Boaz's compassion led him to protect her.

Compassion is PROTECTING

Scripture speaks about the godly's responsibility to defend the helpless.

Proverbs 31:8-9 Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

There is a need for us defend the rights of the poor and needy. We must stand up against oppressors, bully's, and abusers. God has entrusted us with the protecting those who cannot protect themselves.

Believer you are here to stand in the gap for the **helpless, orphan, widow, neglected, abused, the aborted, the aging**, and all who are defenseless against oppression.

I am reminded of Paul's words to Titus.

Titus 3:14

And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.

James words

Remember it is James that wrote, 1:27 ***“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction”***

The word visit here does not mean provide company. The Greek lexicon I have says it means to care for, provide, protect, and look after. We are called to protect the defenseless because if Christians will not, in an evolutionary minded society, who will?

5. Boaz showed compassion through Hospitality.

Boaz's fourth **statement was a sign of hospitality.** He gave Ruth an open invitation **to freely drink from the water bucket provided to the workers.**

And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.”

Boaz would not only provide protection from harmful people but also from the heat of the day. Ruth has evidenced dedication to her work as relayed by the foreman. Yet without water, she could not maintain her work through the heat of the day without leaving to draw water for herself or continuing and incurring physical exhaustion. **This water would protect her.**

Further this water would enable Ruth to **be more productive**. She would be refreshed immediately and head back to work with little time away from gleaning. Again Boaz’s instructions reveal his care for Ruth.

Presumably, water would be drawn from a well or cistern and then brought to the field. Most likely, this water came from the gate at Bethlehem where the residential well was located according David. The water would be drawn and placed in pots, then brought to the field.

Culturally, drawing water as a job for foreigners and women. Even today in third world countries, who draws the water? Women and outcastes. Who drinks the water? the men, and then everyone else.

Judean culture dictated that foreigners draw water for Israelites, and women draw water for men. Boaz however mentions this job was assigned to the young men (unless means young people???)

This offer was an extravagant show of hospitality. Here is a Ruth, a foreigner, a widow, a gatherer, a nothing! ... and Boaz invites her to drink water drawn by men for his workers.

This water is a sign of hospitality.

Friends, compassion is hospitality!

The writer of Hebrews is adamant about Christian hospitality. In the beginning of a long list of commands for Christian living that express love he wrote,

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

The direct command is to show hospitality to strangers. To open your home, your cabinets, your refrigerator, and more. Maybe it’s only water like Boaz ... but Jesus says a cup of water given in the name of Christ will be rewarded.

The thing is ... when we care. When we care with our words, our welcome, our provision, our protection, and our hospitality, it reveals our faith!

Your care is a direct reflection of your faith.

James 2:14-17 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

James was writing to apathetic Christians. They didn't care or have compassion! Throughout James letter he emphasis doing is result of faith. James illustrates faith by interweaving it into his commands for acts of compassion that authenticate.

I believe Boaz sees Ruth as a widow in need. He knows she is destitute and defenseless in his society. What can he do? Ha can CARE ...

- He can speak compassionately
- He can welcome
- He can provide
- He can protect
- He can offer hospitality

I think these five things are all tangible ways of showing people we truly care. These are things that you and I can do in one way or another to that says, I care! If you care you will do something!

I woke up this morning
Saw a world full of trouble now
Thought, how'd we ever get so far down
How's it ever gonna turn around
So I turned my eyes to Heaven
I thought, "God, why don't You do something?"
Well, I just couldn't bear the thought of
People living in poverty
Children sold into slavery
The thought disgusted me

So, I shook my fist at Heaven
Said, "God, why don't You do something?"
He said, "I did, I created you"

I'm so tired of talking
About how we are God's hands and feet
But it's easier to say than to be
Live like angels of apathy who tell ourselves
It's alright, "somebody else will do something"
Well, I don't know about you
But I'm sick and tired of life with no desire
I don't want a flame, I want a fire
I wanna be the one who stands up and says,
"I'm gonna do something"

If not us, then who
If not me and you
Right now, it's time for us to do something
If not now, then when
Will we see an end
To all this pain
It's not enough to do nothing
It's time for us to do something

We are the salt of the earth
We are a city on a hill (shine shine, shine shine)
But we're never gonna change the world
By standing still
No we won't stand still, No we won't stand still
No we won't stand still
IF NOT US, THEN WHO

DO YOU CARE ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING?