

07.12.15 | Under Whose Wings | Ruth 2:10-14

Ruth's Thankfulness (expression; doing, you centered)

10 Then **she fell on her face, bowing** to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

Reason for his treatment, 1) *all you've done ...*

11 But Boaz answered her, “**All that you have done** for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

Reason for his treatment, 2) *He is Yahweh's Servant*

12 The Lord **repay** you for what you have done, and **a full reward** be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, **under whose wings you have come to take refuge!**”

Gratitude (state of being; feeling, me centered)

13 Then she said, “I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for **you have comforted me** and **spoken kindly to your servant,** though I am not one of your servants.”

Last week we saw Boaz's compassion in verses 8-9. I shared that Boaz showed compassion through

- His words
- His welcome
- His provision
- His protection
- His hospitality, and challenged you to show compassion as Boaz.

This week, in light of Boaz's compassion we are going to examine the response to compassion. I hope to answer two questions.

- The question we answer this morning first is "How should I respond to compassion I receive, in light of Ruth's response to the compassion of Boaz?"
- Secondly, "How should I respond in giving compassion in light of Boaz's response to the compassion he gave?"

Last week we learned that true compassion is **giving or receiving something that cannot be repaid**, both in the eyes of the giver and receiver.

Compassion is both mercy and grace in action.

As Ruth heard the compassionate instructions of Boaz she responded with thankfulness and gratitude.

Meanwhile, as Boaz received thanks and gratitude He pointed Ruth to the source of all compassion, Yahweh, the Elohim of Israel.

READ | PRAY

BE THANKFUL

Verse 11 shows Ruth's response to compassion was thankfulness.

THANKFULNESS IS AN EXPRESSION. Thankfulness, like praise, always requires an audience of more than 1. One is required to express thankfulness (Ruth) and another receives thankfulness (Boaz.) Ruth's actions and words appropriately reflect the thankfulness she has for Boaz's compassion.

*10 Then **she fell on her face, bowing** to the ground, and **said to him**, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"*

First, notice Ruth's actions of thankfulness. ***She fell on her face, bowing to the ground.*** Literally, Ruth, "fell on her face and worshipped him."

The Hebrew word behind bowing to the ground carries behind it the biblical understanding of worship. It only occurs here in Ruth and **expresses the physical demonstration of worship**, laying prostrate on ones knees with their face to the ground.

In ancient culture this posture was typical **not only in worship but also in secular greeting** between an inferior and superior. It was a posture of submission in recognition of the superiors authority.

This expression may seem a bit **extreme** to us. We would never fall prostrate with our face to the ground, however in ancient culture this was a typical expression of thankfulness for an act of compassion.

This expression revealed Ruth's humility. She knew she did not deserve Boaz's grace and as a testament of her gratitude and humility for Boaz's kindness she bowed before him.

This physical expression of thankfulness, led to a verbal expression of thankfulness.

Ruth's words reflect awe at Boaz's compassion toward her as a foreigner. **She could not fathom the grace Boaz has shown her.** As a foreigner, she anticipated hostility, and for him to even acknowledge her in Ruth's eyes is unthinkable. Her thankfulness gives way in speech to the amazement of wanting to know **WHY Boaz would act with such compassion.**

Friends, may we treat people with such compassion that they would want to know why!!! We will come back to this though in a moment.

We should learn from Ruth to liberally express our thankfulness to those who have shown us compassion.

Scriptures abound compelling disciples of Jesus to express thankfulness.

In Ephesians 5, Paul begins with the **command to imitate God** in everything we do. From this command he gives **additional lifestyle commands on how to imitate God** in each of our relationships. Paul first addresses how we are to **imitate God in our relationships in the world.** The culmination of imitating God within this world is being filled by the Spirit.

Paul goes on to say, ONE EXPRESSION OF being filled by the Spirit, is ...

*Ephesians 5:20 **Giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,***

The idea behind **giving** is a physical expression of verbal or postural thanksgiving.

Throughout the Psalms we see expressions of thankfulness ranging from

- Singing 7:17
- Re-telling 9:1
- Proclaiming 26:7
- Praising 30:12
- Orchestrating 33:2
- Boasting 44:8
- Sacrificing 50:14
- Freely giving an offering 54:6
- Praying 106:47
- Worshiping 118:19
- Bowing down 138:2

Each of these expressions are based on the compassion of the LORD toward his people. They reveal **how thankfulness is expressed.**

I fear that we are becoming an ungrateful people. We live in a culture that demands our rights, our freedoms, our liberties, and we take, take, take, and buy, buy, buy because we have been told we deserve, deserve, deserve.

There is very little thankfulness in our life because there is very little we feel we don't deserve. Pride keeps us from showing thankfulness.

Friends, Ruth's expression of thankfulness is a challenge for us to express humble thankfulness.

We may not show our humility through bowing down but surely we can express our gratitude verbally by saying "Thank You!"

Last Sunday, every family said, "Thank You! for hosting the party, several times!" That wasn't even a bid deal. However it was an expression of gratitude.

- We can say "Thank you, I am humbled by your compassion." (meeting needs within the congregation)
- We can write, "thank you for your grace." I sat down and wrote an email to John expressing my thankfulness for Camp Manitoumi and the work he oversees.)
- We can tell others of the grace we have received. [The cooks at Camp went above and beyond to help us with Ella's diet!]
- We can offer a service.
- Pray, tell others,

Believers, of all the people in the world to experience compassion, we have received the most!

- We have experienced a redemption we can never repay!
- We have not only been forgiven of our sin through repentance and faith, but we have been given EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING!
- This redemption was bought with the perfect life and atoning sacrifice on Jesus where he took our sin upon himself.
- This redemption was solidified three days later when he rose from the dead.

Believer you have been bought with a price that is invaluable. We are called to experience this world in light of the compassion we have received from Jesus, this means thankfulness in all things, for everything. Express your thankfulness!

Do you see yourself as Ruth? Humbled and thankful for the compassion you have received by others ... and by God?

As Ruth expressed her thankfulness for Boaz's compassion, Boaz's response points Ruth to the ONE behind the compassion she is receiving.

Verses 11-12 contain two reasons for Boaz's compassion toward Ruth.

Reason for Boaz Compassion 1) all you've done ...

*11 But Boaz answered her, "**All that you have done** for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and **how you left** your father and mother and your native land **and came to a people** that you did not know before.*

It's almost as if Boaz is taken back by Ruth's expression of thankfulness. It's nearly as if he said, "You have to be kidding me! After all I've heard that you've done for Naomi, how could I NOT show you compassion?"

Boaz was well aware of who Ruth was. Ruth was oblivious to reports of her faithfulness and kindness from the townspeople and the foreman. Boaz on the other hand, was NOT!

Ruth's devotion and kindness to Naomi resulted in Boaz's compassion, graciously extended toward her. Boaz names three of the top things he has heard about Ruth's devotion toward Naomi.

- 1) *All that you have done for Naomi after Elimelech's death.*
- 2) *You left your father, mother, and people*
- 3) *You came to a people you did not know*

We have noted these sacrifices of Ruth in earlier teaching and have concluded the greatness of them is extravagant. In fact, these acts are equated to the Lord's *hesed*. Ruth's devotion did not go unnoticed by Boaz, or the townspeople.

However, if verse 11 stood on its own, it would lead us to the conclusion that these events were a result of Ruth and Boaz. Boaz' compassion would be seen as man centered.

However, the full force of Boaz's reasoning comes in verse 12 where he explains his compassion is actually the compassion of Yahweh working through him.

This is a lesson all of us need to be reminded of,

GOD IS THE SOURCE OF EVERY BLESSING RECEIVED AND GIVEN!

I appreciate what John Piper says here, “**Boaz says in verse 12 that God is really the one who is rewarding Ruth for her love to Naomi. Boaz is only the instrument of God.**”

Boaz’s compassion, is Yahweh’s compassion because He is Yahweh’s Servant

*12 The Lord **repay** you for what you have done, and **a full reward** be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, **under whose wings you have come to take refuge!**”*

When Ruth asks, “why are you being so kind to me?”

Boaz replies, it is God’s compassion!”

Boaz points Ruth to the LORD, Yahweh, as the one who had directed Ruth and would sustain her.

Boaz tells Ruth it was God would bless her. Not for what she had done, but rather for seeking Him alongside Naomi. Her experience was Yahweh’s divine provision and protection.

First, Boaz sought **the LORD to repay Ruth** for what she has done. *Repay is derived from the Hebrew word meaning peace and wholeness.* Boaz entrusted Yahweh to compensate Ruth for her steadfast devotion to the point where she would be made whole again. **It was Yahweh who could restore to Ruth everything she had lost! A people, a family, a husband, a reputation!**

Second, Boaz sought the LORD to **reward** Ruth. The word **reward in the ESV is literally wage**. Boaz likens Ruth to an employee of Yahweh through her kindness toward Naomi. **Yahweh will not only repay her for her loss, but Yahweh would be the ONE who would give Ruth her just reward!**

Boaz places Ruth under Yahweh’s responsibility to provide and protect. Any provision and protection Ruth received was not a result of any one person but **Yahweh, Elohim of Israel.**

But we have to understand, this compassion, both from Boaz and Yahweh was not earned! **Boaz is NOT saying Boaz’s compassion is payment for Ruth’s love for Naomi.** We can never earn God’s mercy. It is “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”

So why did Boaz have favor on Ruth?

Boaz ends with a beautiful illustration explaining why God's divine care is toward Ruth.

*THE GOD OF ISRAEL, **UNDER WHOSE WINGS YOU HAVE COME TO TAKE REFUGE!***

Just as a bird finds refuge under its mothers wings, protecting it from the elements of weather and danger, providing food and growth, Ruth had found refuge in Yahweh!

Ruth's choices had led her to come under the divine wings of God. **Her refuge was not with Boaz, Naomi, or any other Israelite for that matter. Ruth's refuge was Yahweh.** Yahweh was the one who would provide and protect just a mother hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

This statement is the basis for the numerous statements in the Psalms that speak of seeking refuge **under the wings of the Lord.** This is one of David's favorite pictures.

Boaz did NOT take credit for his compassion,

NOR does he give credit to Ruth for her compassion.

Boaz DOES NOT SAY, "God works for those who work!"

NOPE THAT'S NOT BIBLICAL.

Works have nothing to do with receiving God's compassion.

HOWEVER ... seeking the Lord's compassion with humility, awe, and reverence

THAT IS THE GOSPEL!

For by grace you are saved through faith, NOT of your own doing, it is a GIFT of God, NOT a result of works. For we are HIS WORKMANSHIP!

Boaz speaks the gospel to Ruth. The Lords compassion upon her is because she has sought refuge in Him. Boaz's compassion upon her is because he himself has received compassion under the wings of the Lord.

The result of Ruth leaving her family, people, and gods, in pursuit of Naomi's people and God is the evidence of coming under His wings.

I see the application for us today is in two ways.

First, we must be Boaz! We must point people to the goodness and blessings of God.

James told first century believers, **“Every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the Father!”**

It’s amazing to me how the NT mirrors the OT in so many ways. The book of James aligns with Ruth in many ways. Nearly every sermon I have mentioned it from examining tragedy, to compassion toward the helpless, to faith in action. Here we see the truth that goodness is a direct result from God.

GOD IS GOOD! Everything good in this world is a compassionate gift from the Father, **NOT because we deserve, NOT because we have earned it, NOT because of what we have done ... BUT BECAUSE OF WHO GOD IS.** He is GOOD!

As we become His instruments of goodness, we must reject any pride in our own doing and **point people to source of all compassion.**

As I mentioned last week, that is what Col. 4:6 is ALL ABOUT!

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

Boaz was able to point Ruth to Yahweh because of his compassion. His actions open the opportunity for him share a **Yahweh centered theology.**

- In Col 4 Paul says the purpose of living compassionately and speaking **grace is for the gospel to be proclaimed first by action, then by word.**

Friends, be a Boaz in deed and word!

- Show compassion because you have received compassion!
- Show compassion because you love your neighbor.
- Use compassionate acts to promote refuge in the Lord!

Think about Jesus, His life perfectly emulated this lifestyle. How did he act and what did he say toward those in distress. Whether they were diseased, oppressed, hungry, thirsty, dirty, or whatever circumstances they had in their life, Jesus showed compassion to those who sought Him! Even to those Pharisees who sought him, like Nicodemus! However, through his acts of compassion he spoke words of refuge and gospel.

The basis of his works, was always revealed through his message!

We must live this life, like Jesus! Like Boaz! Compassion pointing to God.

SO last week the challenge was to SHOW compassion, **this week the challenge is to PREACH the compassion that stems from the cross! JESUS IS OUR DELIVERER Just as YAHWEH was Ruth's!**

Our message is to seek refuge under his wings!

When we realize, and others realize, the refuge offered in the Lord, their spirit is filled with gratitude, just as Ruth was filled with gratitude in verse 13.

BE Grateful (state of being; feeling, me centered)

*13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for **you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant**, though I am not one of your servants."*

Ruth's second response to Boaz is one filled with gratitude. Whereas thankfulness is the expression of appreciation, **gratitude** is a state of being. **Verse 13 reveals Ruth emotions and feelings of gratitude.**

Again the Hebrew is messy but it seems most probably that Ruth is expressing a statement of fact, over a future desire. Her encounter with Boaz has led her to realize the compassion of Boaz and the extraordinary grace she had received.

As a result of Boaz' grace **she feels comforted**. The apprehension of being a widow, a foreigner, and a pauper has been removed because of the compassion she has received. She feels protected and cared for even as one of Boaz's own servants, even though she is not.

Secondly she is grateful for Boaz's words.

- In several other OT passages this same phrase is used to describe reassuring speech in a time of distress.
- The Hebrews used this idiom to describe, "speaking to the heart."

Ruth openly confesses Boaz has not merely comforted her fears but spoken to her heart reassuring her of provision and protection not merely from him but from the Lord!

Once again this is the gospel in action!!! Comforting and speaking to the heart!

This gratitude is based upon Ruth realizing her lowly stature. The Hebrew word for servant is two slightly different words. Ruth acknowledges that Boaz has treated her like a servant girl. The word speaks of the lowest class of

servant. However, Ruth places herself even lower than this class, by saying she could never attain such a status. She is viewed as barren, widowed, and a foreigner. No one would want that curse upon themselves. This is not self-pity but rather a spirit of gratitude recognizing her helplessness and what Boaz has offered her.

Is not that what coming face to face with holy God does? When a person grasps the reality of their sin, that it has condemned them, and there is no way they can be good enough to overcome it, there is no way they can do enough to climb out of it, there is no way they can give enough to outweigh it ... when this lowliness of sin enters a persons hearts in light of God's compassion ... confession, repentance, and belief result with a heart of gratitude.

Verse 13 is portrays Ruth's amazement and gratitude for the compassion she has received. She is completely filled with overwhelming appreciation!

We are reminded of Paul's words to a persecuted and destitute church in Thessalonica, "***Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.***"

Or to the believers in Colossi, "***And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.***"

Just as we must be Boaz when giving compassion we must be Ruth in receiving compassion.

We are called have a spirit of gratitude, just as we are called to have a spirit of forgiveness. Our lives should ooze gratefulness because of the compassion we have received. This should be, who we are!

Friends we realize we do not deserve grace and mercy. Our sin condemns us! We are a foreigner to God just as Ruth was a foreigner to Boaz. **Yet in Christ we are fellow citizens with the saints, members of God own house!**

Going back to the beginning, how do we respond to receiving compassion? Ruth expressed thankfulness and a spirit of gratitude. Do you express thankfulness? Do you have a spirit of gratitude.

How do you respond to giving compassion? Boaz pointed Ruth the refuge of Yahweh. Do you point others to God's provision? Do you show compassion to share compassion?