



May 11, 2014

Ruth 2

"Romance and Providence"

Pastor Gary Hamrick

The story of Ruth is really a love story on two levels. It's both a literal story between a man and a woman, and in a broader sense, it's a love story between Christ and us. In the last two messages in his series in the book of Ruth, Pastor Gary has titled his teachings: Romance and Providence, and Love and Redemption.

In this study, we'll look at the ways the Lord, in his providence, worked behind the scenes to provide opportunity for Ruth to meet Boaz, and how providence is a combination of the hand of God working with the will of man.

Ruth

1. In [Ruth 3:11](#), we read that Ruth was a *"woman of noble character."*
 - a. The KJV describes her as being a *"virtuous woman."*
2. Ruth had a reputation for being a caring, humble, servant-hearted woman who became widely known throughout her town.

Boaz

3. Rahab was the mother of Boaz.
 - a. She was a Gentile prostitute from the city of Jericho who showed favor to the Israelite spies and in return, she and her entire family were spared when Jericho was destroyed.
 - b. Rahab left her lifestyle and her people and assimilated into the Israelite community, becoming a proselyte to Judaism.

4. Salmon, Rahab's husband, the father of Boaz, was a Jew from the tribe of Judah.
5. In Hebrew, the name Boaz means, "strength."
 - a. [Ruth 2:1](#) tells us Boaz was a "man of standing," as in social standing.
 - b. The KJV says he was "a mighty man of wealth."
6. Boaz must have been quite a man, in that he was successful, wealthy, strong, single, and he loved God!
7. Boaz was a relative of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband.

Romance

8. [Ruth 2:2a](#) - *"And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.'"*
 - a. Gleaning was the equivalent of what we know today as welfare or social assistance.
 - b. In [Leviticus 19](#), we read how God made provision for the poor.
 - i. If you were a farmer who owned a field, when you harvested it you were to leave behind some of the produce for the poor to come and gather as a way to provide for themselves.
 1. If a bundle of grain fell off of the wagon, you were to leave it for the poor.
 2. If a basket of fruit spilled on the ground, you were to leave it for the poor.
 3. You were not permitted to pick every grape cluster off the vine or strip every olive off of your trees or put a sickle to every stalk of grain in the field; you were to cut corners intentionally, so the poor would have a source for food.
 - c. The concept of gleaning teaches two very important life principles:
 - i. If you are wealthy, be generous.
 - ii. If you are poor, work hard, because hard work gives a person a sense of dignity.
9. Ruth and Naomi were "dirt poor" so Ruth went out to glean in a stranger's field during the barley harvest, which was in the early spring.
10. [Ruth 2:2-3](#) - *"[Ruth said]... 'Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.' Naomi said to her, 'Go ahead, my daughter.' So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech."*

11. God has worked it out behind the scene to set the stage for a single young woman to meet a single, successful, wealthy man!
12. [Ruth 2:4](#) - *“Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, ‘The Lord be with you!’ ‘The Lord bless you!’ they called back.”*
13. Boaz had come out to inspect his fields and see how his employees were doing, and the first thing he noticed was Ruth gleaning in the field.
14. [Ruth 2:5](#) - *“Boaz asked the foreman of his harvesters, ‘Whose young woman is that?’ ”*
 - a. Pastor Gary commented on the fact that we don’t know the tone of his voice, but given the context of his character, it’s likely that this was nothing more than an inquiry, versus a wolf whistle!
15. [Ruth 2:8-9](#) - *“So Boaz said to Ruth, ‘My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with my servant girls. Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the girls. I have told the men not to touch you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”*
16. Boaz said two things to Ruth that every man should feel for the woman he loves: I want to provide for you and I want to protect you.
 - a. He told her to glean from his fields, and in so doing he indicated his desire to provide for her.
 - b. He told all of the men in his employee not to come near her, and in so doing he indicated his desire to protect her.
17. [Ruth 2:10-12](#) - *“At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, ‘Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me - a foreigner?’ Boaz replied, ‘I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband - how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.’ ”*
 - a. She referred to herself as being a foreigner because she was a Gentile, and even more specifically a Moabite.
 - i. The Hebrew word for foreigner is nokriy, which means, “stranger” or “harlot/immoral woman.”
 - b. Boaz was saying of Ruth, “Your good reputation has preceded you!”

- c. Boaz spoke of her virtue, and how she was selfless and gave up everything she knew, was servant-like in her care for Naomi, and serious about God.
- d. In many ways, Ruth is like the [Proverbs 31](#) woman.
 - i. She was of noble character.
 - ii. She was hardworking for her family.
 - iii. She was generous toward others.
 - iv. She was a woman who feared the Lord.
- e. The Bible doesn't tell us about her being beautiful on the outside, but the Bible does tell us that what Boaz was most attracted to was her virtue!

Providence

- 18. Their romance would lead to marriage, but how did this start in the first place?
 - a. [Ruth 2:3](#) - “[Ruth] went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out...”
 - i. The literal translation is “it just so happened.”
 - ii. The obvious irony is that this was no coincidence; this was providence.
- 19. As Christians, we don't believe in luck, chance, or happenstance; we believe in a sovereign God who works, sometimes out-front, and sometimes behind the scenes.
- 20. Two aspects of the way God works are his visible hand of miracles, and his invisible hand of providence.
 - a. The visible hand of God performing visible acts include things like the burning bush, the parting of the Red Sea, causing the sun to stand still, Jesus healing a blind man or raising a widow's son from the dead, or walking on water.
 - b. The invisible hand of God, working behind the scenes in ways we cannot see, accomplishing his purposes is his providence.
 - c. The unseen hand of God is just as awesome as his seen hand, but we are usually drawn to the visible miracles, so we oftentimes don't appreciate his awesome works behind the scenes, and the ways he orchestrates events, weaving our lives in a pattern that is nothing short of miraculous.
- 21. Two views of God's sovereignty are fatalistic and passive.
 - a. Fatalistic - This view believes God orchestrates everything, which suggests that we have no choice about anything.

- b. Passive – This view believes God has set humanity in motion, like winding up a clock, and then completely removed himself from the intimate details of our lives.
22. Providence is a combination of the hand of God working with the will of man.
- a. Ruth didn't say, "I'm hungry," and go sit in a cave and pray for a sandwich!
 - i. She said, "I'm hungry," so she got up and went out to glean in the fields, and that's how God provided for her.
 - b. Ruth didn't say, "I need a husband," and then sit around the house and pray for one to knock on her front door.
 - i. She got up and lived her life, and in God's timing and providence, he brought her to the right place at the right time to meet Boaz, her future husband.
 - c. Ruth's story should prompt us to do what we can and then rest in the providential hand of God.
23. Throughout the Bible we see God involving himself in the affairs of men, nations, and creation, as he sees fit; not denying a person's will, but working through and around their will to accomplish his good purposes.
24. When we embrace the providence of God in our lives we will be filled with a greater measure of trust, gratitude, patience, and hope.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Ruth 2:1-12](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. What are some of the ways the Feminist Movement has attempted to create a gender-neutral world that embraces the idea that men are supposed to treat women like they would treat other men.
4. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences regarding the disappearance of chivalry in our society.
5. Spend time talking about the examples Pastor Gary used to help men and women understand the fact that men are wired to protect and provide.
 - a. "Women, when your husband says, 'I don't want you to go there alone' or 'I don't want you driving that far by yourself' or 'I don't want the plumber to come to the house when I'm not there,' he is not trying to be a

controlling micromanager, he's trying to protect you!"

- b. "Women, when your husband says, 'No, I don't want us to take money from your family, I'll go out and get another job,' he's not being proud or stubborn, he's trying to provide.

6. What are your thoughts about believing in luck, change, or happenstance?
7. Looking back on your life, what are some of the visible (out-front) and invisible (behind the scenes) works of God in your life? (See #20 above)
8. Discuss Pastor Gary's statement: "Providence is a combination of the hand of God working with the will of man." (See #22 above)
9. Did you see the events leading up to your salvation or meeting your spouse or where you live and work, as being accidental or did you see that the Lord was intimately involved in the details of your life?
10. Do you really believe that God is arranging and rearranging things for your good and for his glory?
11. Do you have the blessing of a greater measure of trust, gratitude, patience, and hope, because you are resting in the providential hand of God?
12. What do you make of the fact that we don't read anything about Ruth or Boaz being counted among the "beautiful people," when the Bible includes a number of examples of men who are said to be handsome and women who are described as being beautiful,
 - a. David - [1 Samuel 16:12a](#) - *"[David] was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features."*
 - b. Saul - [1 Samuel 9:2](#) - *"... Saul, an impressive young man without equal among Israelites - a head taller than any of the others."*
 - c. Joseph - [Genesis 39:6b](#) - *"... Joseph was well-built and handsome..."*
 - d. Absalom - [2 Samuel 14:25](#) - *"In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom."*
 - e. Rachel - [Genesis 29:17](#) - *"... Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful."*
 - f. Abigail - [1 Samuel 25:3b](#) - *"[Abigail] was an intelligent and beautiful woman..."*
 - g. Esther - [Esther 2:7b](#) - *"... Esther, was lovely in form and features..."*
13. Do you think the Lord wanted the Scripture to be silent on this so that every man and woman could see themselves in the account of Ruth and Boaz?

14. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: “take stock” of their life for the purpose of giving thanks and praising the Lord for the ways he’s worked in the unseen, as well as the visible ways to bring about good things in their life; rest in the providential working of God in their present circumstances, as well as their future; experience a greater measure of trust, gratitude, patience, and hope in God.