

Kindness Sacrifices

(Ruth 2:1-23)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Is...”*

Series Title: *Random Acts of Kindness*

February 10th, 2019

Something to think about:

Today, we come to Ruth 2. Having traveled from Moab to Judah, Naomi and Ruth settle in to the “new normal.” Life as homeless widows, trying their best to make it as best they know how, have to find ways to survive. So, Ruth asks Naomi’s permission to go and gather food for them so they can eat, at least for the day. Let’s pick up their story here...

Ruth 2:1-23 (NLT)

So, what’s the takeaway this morning? Well, it could be worded like this...

Key Point: *“True kindness makes sacrifices in accordance to the needs of others.”*

The kindness and mercy shown in this passage of Scripture is beyond normal, especially in that time period, and in that culture, toward a foreigner. But, Ruth found favor in the eyes of, interestingly enough, one of Naomi’s husband’s relatives: Boaz. There are two acts of kindness in chapter 2 that we should point out this morning:

1. The kindness of Boaz toward Ruth.

Like Boaz, we need to learn to open our eyes and see what God sees. We need to learn to respond in kindness and sacrifice. We need to be open to the possibilities that God is welcoming us into His great story by providing us opportunities to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him¹ by living and acting in loving-kindness toward others.

2. The kindness of God toward Naomi and Ruth.

Like Naomi, are you bitter? Have you changed your name to reflect your circumstances? Have your circumstances defined who you are?

Don’t allow the enemy to destroy you. Don’t allow your circumstances to readjust your focus on what’s wrong. Remember, God desires to walk with you, even in the most difficult of times; even in the deepest darkest valleys of life.²

Something to take home:

What does it take for God to reach you? What did it take for God to reach all of us? Jesus was like that beautiful, perfect flower growing in the lifeless, gray cement of our hardened, broken world. His sacrifice to break through the decay of this world brought us hope and salvation. God’s kindness and tender mercy offers us hope in the most trying times of life as well as in times of abundance and joy!

Key Point: *“True kindness makes sacrifices in accordance to the needs of others.”*

¹ Micah 6:8.

² Psalm 23.

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(Ruth 2:1-23)

Series: *Random Acts of Kindness*

KICK STARTERS:

⇒ What does a random act of kindness look like? Give specific examples...

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Ruth 2:1-23 (NLT)

¹ Now there was a wealthy and influential man in Bethlehem named Boaz, who was a relative of Naomi's husband, Elimelech.
² One day Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it."
Naomi replied, "All right, my daughter, go ahead."³ So Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech.
⁴ While she was there, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters. "The LORD be with you!" he said. "The LORD bless you!" the harvesters replied.
⁵ Then Boaz asked his foreman, "Who is that young woman over there? Who does she belong to?"
⁶ And the foreman replied, "She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi."⁷ She asked me this morning if she could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes' rest in the shelter."
⁸ Boaz went over and said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don't go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field."⁹ See which part of the field they are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well."
¹⁰ Ruth fell at his feet and thanked him warmly. "What have I done to deserve such kindness?" she asked. "I am only a foreigner."
¹¹ "Yes, I know," Boaz replied. "But I also know about everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband. I have heard how you left your father and mother and your own land to live here among complete strangers."¹² May the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done."
¹³ "I hope I continue to please you, sir," she replied. "You have comforted me by speaking so kindly to me, even though I am not one of your workers."
¹⁴ At mealtime Boaz called to her, "Come over here, and help yourself to some food. You can dip your bread in the sour wine." So she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her some roasted grain to eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over.
¹⁵ When Ruth went back to work again, Boaz ordered his young men, "Let her gather grain right among the sheaves without stopping her."¹⁶ And pull out some heads of barley from the bundles and drop them on purpose for her. Let her pick them up, and don't give her a hard time!"
¹⁷ So Ruth gathered barley there all day, and when she beat out the grain that evening, it filled an entire basket.¹⁸ She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her the roasted grain that was left over from her meal.
¹⁹ "Where did you gather all this grain today?" Naomi asked. "Where did you work? May the LORD bless the one who helped you!"
So Ruth told her mother-in-law about the man in whose field she had worked. She said, "The man I worked with today is named Boaz."
²⁰ "May the LORD bless him!" Naomi told her daughter-in-law. "He is showing his kindness to us as well as to your dead husband. That man is one of our closest relatives, one of our family redeemers."
²¹ Then Ruth said, "What's more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed."
²² "Good!" Naomi exclaimed. "Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you'll be safe with him."
²³ So Ruth worked alongside the women in Boaz's fields and gathered grain with them until the end of the barley harvest. Then she continued working with them through the wheat harvest in early summer. And all the while she lived with her mother-in-law.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Describe what is going on in this passage of Scripture.

2. What is the relationship between Boaz and Ruth? What about Boaz and Naomi? Are these relationships significant? Why, or why not?

3. The job of "gleaning" was something that poor people did. It was a Jewish custom to allow the poor to come along behind harvesters in a field and pick up the loose grain that had fallen to the ground in order to have food to eat. Ruth happens upon Boaz's field and is gleaning there. What is Boaz's response to Ruth's gleaning in his field?

4. As in most societies, the poor are not a well respected group of people. Ruth was taking a risk in gleaning (though it was a custom) not only because she was poor, but also a foreigner. What did Boaz do to protect Ruth, and how was this act of kindness significant (vv. 8-9)?

5. In addition to gleaning, and being given protection, what else did Boaz do for Ruth that was a great act of kindness not usually given to the poor (Read again verses 14-16)?

6. After Ruth comes home from a long day in Boaz's fields she brings home nearly 40-50 pounds of grain. Most gleaners would only collect a pound or two in a days time. What is Naomi's response to this (vv. 17-22)?

7. How does Naomi's perspective and attitude changed from chapter 1 to chapter 2 (Reread Ruth 1:20-21 and Ruth 2:19-20)? Ruth goes from being bitter, to blessing God. What made the difference?

8. Why is it so hard to bless God and others when we're feeling discouraged and falling on hard times? How is it possible to do what James instructs in James 1:2-18?

9. Are you feeling discouraged? Have you fallen on hard times? How can you praise God in the midst of it all? Are you willing to bless others in the midst of your trials?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ **WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR GOD TO REACH YOU?**
- ⇒ **LIKE NAOMI, ARE YOU BITTER?** Have you changed your name to reflect your circumstances? Have your circumstances defined who you are? Don't allow the enemy to destroy you. Don't allow your circumstances to readjust your focus on what's wrong. Remember, God desires to walk with you, even in the most difficult of times; even in the deepest darkest valleys of life. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and His loving-kindness in this action, we have hope!
- ⇒ **MEMORY VERSE:** *Ruth 2:8-9 and James 1:2-4.*