

"LEARNING FROM BOAZ"

Date: 2020-11-15AM Context: Emmanuel and Broadcast - AM GRA PM

Series: Resilience in Ruth Title: Learning from Boaz

Readings: Rut3:3-18 Cited:

1. INTRO TO READINGS

There are some who argue that the threshing floor was a place of immorality and that Ruth actually seduced Boaz there.

This is conjecture based on Canaanite fertility practices of the time.

It is more likely that Ruth impressed Boaz by the opposite behaviour.

She was penniless and he was a good catch - some would argue that her only power was the power of ensnaring seduction, but Ruth, through Naomi's guidance makes a noble appeal when others would have expected a seedy entrapment.

2. READINGS

Ruth 3:7 When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 In the middle of the night something startled the man, and he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet.

9 "Who are you?" he asked.

"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer."

10 "The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. 11 And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All my fellow townsmen know that you are a woman of noble character. 12 Although it is true that I am near of kin, there is a kinsman-redeemer nearer than I. 13 Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to redeem, good; let him redeem. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, "Don't let it be known that a woman came to the threshing floor."

15 He also said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out." When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and put it on her. Then he went back to town.

16 When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?"

Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her 17 and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' "

18 Then Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

3. SERMON

3.1. Intro

In a time where gender-based violence is rife and terrible.

In a time where men seem to have faded into the background we have a beautiful example in Boaz

Patriarchy of the Period...

3.2. From Chapter Two

- He's Bold in showing initiative
- Compliments, Reassures and Comforts
- Acts to Protect her
- and Provide for her

From Chapter Three

Boaz full of the success of the harvest...

- Empowering Protectiveness
In the culture of the day, Ruth needed economic and social protection, Boaz is more than willing to provide this, but he does so in a dignifying way. He indicates his willingness to protect Ruth, but affirms her noble character. He does not create stifling dependence but offers empowering protectiveness.
- Integrity
Boaz acts with integrity
 - he does not take advantage of Ruth
 - he also tells Ruth about the other Kinsman Redeemer.
 - he handles the negotiations with integrity too
- Attentive Generosity
Boaz sends Ruth back with six measures of barley, pointedly indicating that these were for Naomi.
We all know the mother-in-law jokes...
In giving the threshed barley Boaz is recognising Naomi's advice to Ruth and showing her gracious generosity.
Authentic men are able to be sensitively generous - especially in allowing others into their lives.
- Core-Determination.
Boaz is determined - Naomi comments that he will act quickly and decisively to tackle the issue at hand.
Many men are slow to deal with key issues and they procrastinate being courageous about core-business.
Boaz is a great example of being Core-Determined about making the things that matter happen.

Conclusion

Times have changed - women have more rights than they did then, but we still have gender-based violence and inequalities in salary and opportunity in the workplace.

Movements about Biblical Manhood are often rejected as toxic manhood when they insist on the man being the head of the house and create the sense of women somehow being secondary...

Boaz doesn't fall into these traps.

He does not need to be centre-stage.

That privilege belongs to Naomi and Ruth and even in ch.4 where Boaz negotiates for Ruth, he moves to the background and lets Ruth and Naomi shine...

It needs to be said that Boaz is seen as a "type" or "forerunner" or "foreshadowing" of Jesus.

Just as Ruth was powerless and helpless - we are powerless and hopeless.

Jesus is our Boaz - stepping in where we could not, bringing us into God's family through His sacrifice.

But the character traits we see in Boaz are the ones we see in Jesus too...

Men today should look to Boaz and to Jesus in how they treat those around them...