

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON THIRTY-FIVE: RUTH 2:11

"And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore."

Ruth asked Boaz, "Why are you being so kind to me?" (v.10). He responded by explaining that he had heard about her kindness to Naomi.

The gossip mill in Bethlehem was up and running. And what could be more interesting than the doings of the little foreign girl who had accompanied Naomi home? Everything she said or did would be analyzed and, no doubt, be put through the filter of racial bias.

Ruth was a Moabite. Moab had mistreated the Jews when Moses brought them through the wilderness (Dt. 23:3-4). Therefore, they were excluded from public worship with the Jews. The people of Bethlehem were not expecting Ruth's actions to be praiseworthy. Just the opposite. And they were ready to pounce upon any perceived slight or insult.

But Ruth surprised them by her devotion to Naomi. She seemed to have won over the town, and succeeded in making Naomi's people her people (see 1:6).

She reminds me of King David, of whom it was said that he "behaved himself wisely" (see I Sam. 18:5, 14, 15, 30). The Hebrew word translated "wisely" means "to be intelligent; have good success; consider; be skilled; prudent; prospered." David was careful because he knew King Saul was jealous and looking for an excuse to kill him. Perhaps, David inherited his prudence from his great-grandmother Ruth.

This same Hebrew word is translated "prudently" in Isaiah 52:13 and describes the Messiah. God the Father is speaking: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently...." The thought is that this Individual is full of knowledge and understanding. In Jeremiah 23:5-6, where the Messiah is referred to as the Righteous Branch, this same word is translated "prosper." That is, the Messiah will reign and prosper in the Millennial Kingdom.

Ruth, David, and Jesus all displayed this characteristic. How about you? Do you behave yourself wisely? Like Ruth, you are being observed by those around you. Solemn circumstances provide an opportunity to show others that our God is so powerful He can calm the storm and give peace to a grieving heart.

Boaz recognized that Ruth had left everything familiar behind, and ventured into the unknown. She was essentially starting over, making a new life for herself among strangers. Gleaning in his barley fields was part of that new life, and Boaz was there to support her.

Jesus is here to support us as well, as we venture into a new phase of our lives: widowhood. We have left the familiar behind, though not by design. We are thrust into a new role whether we're ready or not. But Jesus is there to provide and protect.

"I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when will thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." Psalm 101:2, 3, 6