

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FORTY-THREE: RUTH 2:21-23

"And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."

Ruth told Naomi that Boaz had invited her to continue gleaning in his fields. He told her to stay close to his young men where she would be safe because he had already warned them not to touch her (v. 9). Remember the story of Ruth takes place during the time of the Judges when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). It was a time of low morality in Israel. Boaz showed his care for Ruth by ensuring her safety as well as providing for her basic needs.

Naomi loved Ruth as if she were her own daughter. She, therefore, responded by advising Ruth to stay close to the female reapers. Perhaps Naomi was concerned for Ruth's reputation. Ruth was a stranger, a Gentile who had come out of a pagan culture. She would be judged more harshly than a Jewish widow in her situation. Naomi may have wanted to ensure there was no occasion for people to misinterpret Ruth's actions. Then, too, Naomi may have just been concerned for Ruth's safety. There was always the off-chance that one of the young men would ignore his employer's warning.

Whatever the motive for Naomi's advice, Ruth followed it. She remained in the company of the female workers for the entirety of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, which followed it.

Naomi and Ruth continued to live together and support each other. They had accepted the reality of their situation and they moved on. Sometimes people get mired down in the unfairness of it all. Why did this have to happen to me? If the current situation is something over which they have no control, acceptance is the only true option. Only frustration and, possibly, depression can result from railing against that which they cannot change.

Naomi and Ruth were widowed. They could either accept the change in their current circumstances and try to make the best of their new reality or they could become angry, bitter, and depressed and waste their lives complaining about how unfair life is. Instead, Ruth chose to deal with a situation over which she did have control: the need for food. Therefore, she went to work every day in Boaz's fields, gleaning and gathering behind the reapers. At the end of the day, she threshed out the grain and took it home to Naomi.

I'm sure it made Ruth feel good to be able to provide the grain for Naomi. She was doing something useful. Her contribution made Naomi's life a little better. Helping others is a good way to take our minds off our own problems for a while. What can you do for someone else today?

*"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;
Distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality. Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
and weep with them that weep." Romans 12:10, 13,15*