

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON TWENTY-NINE: RUTH 2:3

"And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

Having, secured Naomi's permission to glean, Ruth set off alone to find a field in which to work. She was unacquainted with the layout of Bethlehem. Perhaps she chose the main road and simply followed it, looking for activity in the barley fields. When she spotted reapers at work, she left the road and sought out the man in charge (see verses 6-7). She asked his permission to follow the reapers and gather stalks of barley left on the ground.

By chance, Ruth had wandered onto the land of Boaz, Elimelech's kinsman. Naomi had not given her directions to Boaz's farm. Nor had she instructed Ruth to glean only in his fields.

God had not guided Ruth to this field. Scripture states specifically, "her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz." There's no hidden meaning in the Hebrew word translated "hap." It simply indicates the event happened "by chance" or "by accident." It was not planned.

I have a note written in my Bible that says, "the word 'accident' is not in God's vocabulary." I don't remember where I got it. But I wrote it next to notes on the Providence of God. God's providence can be defined as "the activity of God whereby He makes everything work out according to His will and purposes."

God's plans for Ruth included her marriage to Boaz and her place in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. Her presence in the field that day certainly set off the chain of events that led to a wedding. Ruth ended up in the right place at the right time by chance. What would have happened to Ruth if she had gleaned in Farmer Brown's field that day instead of Farmer Boaz's? She would have married Boaz and become an ancestress of Jesus, anyway. Why? Because that was God's will and purpose for her. His will is not dependent upon our actions.

God gave people free will. Yes, He is in control and His will and purposes for mankind will be fulfilled. But God is so amazing that He can work His sovereign will in cooperation with the free will of man.

Remember Mordecai's words to Queen Esther, "who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Esther's people were in danger of extermination under the decree of Esther's husband, the King of Persia. But she was afraid to approach him because it put her own life in peril. She had a free will choice to make. Mordecai knew that God had made promises to His people that stretched far into the future and, therefore, it was not conceivable that He would allow them to perish in Persia. Esther was warned, "if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement (relief) and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place." (Esther 4:14, emphasis mine). In other words, God's purposes would be accomplished and the Jews would be saved. If Esther chose not to act someone else would, and she would miss out on an opportunity to serve her God and her people. And, God's will would still be accomplished.

Sometimes we fret over a decision because we want to be sure it is God's will for our life. At times we look for a "sign." Or, we pray and have no peace about our choices. We can put a burden on ourselves

we were not meant to bear. We do not have to be perfect and never make a mistake. God is not waiting upon our decision to act. Yes, He has a purpose for each life and, yes, you can miss it if you rebel against Him, refuse to obey His words, or ignore His leading in your life. But, as long as you are obeying His word and walking with Jesus to the best of your ability you are not going to miss His will for you (because that is His will for you). God knows what choice you are going to make before you do. He can work with your normal, everyday choices and bring about His sovereign will for your life.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Philippians 1:6